Taking Stock: Mission in the Last Decade of the Millennium

The woodcutter is forever sharpening his ax; the church is always reforming; and mission engages in unrelenting reassessment. The last decade of the millennium, which began January 1, 1991, invites a retrospective evaluation of the Christian world mission.

In this issue Lamin Sanneh offers a provocatively different reappraisal of the impact of Christian mission in Africa. Sanneh finds not only that the secular critics of mission in Africa overreached in their criticism but that the Christian world as well failed to appreciate the indigenous dynamics that Christian mission mobilized and unleashed. Even the more astute monitors within the mission community, concerned about Western missionary paternalism, underestimated the power of the message and its indigenously inscribed Word to propel African societies along paths of their own choosing. “The most fruitful question,” Sanneh insists, “is what happened to missions on the ground in Africa, and how to distinguish that from the slogans, rhetoric, and popular propaganda in the field and back home.”

On another front, Ralph Covell assesses developments among North American evangelicals in regard to their stance on the uniqueness of Christ. Without yielding on the New Testament manifesto—“Salvation is found in no one else” (Acts 4:12, NIV)—Lausanne-oriented evangelicals, says Covell, in the last two decades “have turned the corner” in regard to certain key attitudes and styles of Gospel witness to people of other faiths.

David B. Barrett, in his annual statistical assessment of Christian mission, focuses on “World A,” the 23 percent of the globe that “is ignorant of Christianity, Christ, and the Gospel.” Barrett asserts that “World A” is the touchstone of missional relevance. Unless the Christian community “massively redeploy[s] its resources into direct contact with World A,” says Barrett, “it will remain virtually irrelevant in the unfolding global drama.” Given that more than 90 percent of all Christian mission effort is directed at populations within the already Christianized world or “evangelized” world (by Barrett’s admittedly problematical definition), what we have here is indeed a radical reassessment of the achievement, present direction, and prospects of the Christian world mission.

Other stimulating features await your reading. May they all help us to sharpen the skills of mission no less than the woodsman sharpens his ax (Ecclesiastes 10:10).

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The Yogi and the Commissar: Christian Missions and the African Response

Lamin Sanneh

In many people's minds Christian missions were responsible for disrupting and destabilizing society in Africa. With malice and forethought, critics allege, missions obstructed indigenous authority and induced surrender to European colonial control.

We have, consequently, inherited a large body of scholarly and popular works occupied with proving that mission and colonialism were bedfellows, and that, although much might be said in mitigation, missions were essentially the religious version of Western political and economic imperialism, offering Africans a pious formula of otherworldly distraction while foreign conquest proceeded unchallenged.

This view of mission dies hard, in part because it is reinforced by a complex chemistry of galvanized guilt and residual paternalism, and in part because massive expansion in former missionary fields has boosted the fortunes of a begrudged religion. On one page, writers press the view of the damaging consequences of Western interference in African societies, with missionaries being among the most insidious influences. On another, writers harp on the idea of African converts as classic victims who henceforth lost their original capability. In any event, the spate of atoning ink spilled in rehearsing the wrongs and injuries done to Africans swamped any possible independent African response, allowing the West to continue as the authoritative outlet of what was, or was not, good for Africa. Similarly, any suggestion that missionary contact, however intended, might have had a positive impact is discounted outright because contact as such is judged bad.

This leaves us with a grim, cyclical picture of history in which missionary dominance of the field persists with the spread of its influence through continuing conversions. Such impressive evidence of conversion could in fact be used to concede intrinsic worth to the subject; on the contrary, writers have wrung from it proof of external manipulation. It is a procedure that reduces religion to a political project, saying, for instance, that the Supreme Being of missionary preaching is synonymous with the worldview of imperialism, and that African converts were yokebearers for colonial subjugation.

It is thus alleged that the two representative institutions instrumental in the colonial takeover of Africa were the school and the church, twin engines that thrust the continent into the path of aggressive Western exploitation, thereby accelerating Africa's disinheritance. Through educated converts, the argument goes, the West came within striking range of societies stripped of their ability to resist. Consequently, the missionary and the colonialist were the yogi and the commissar who complemented each other: the one supplied pacified natives for the other's aggressive strategy.

Even apart from acknowledging the influence of writers who advance such a view of missions, we have to admit missionaries committed many sins of omission and commission, and that their presence initiated wide-ranging changes in the societies affected. However, saying that leaves us still considerably short of the full range of the impact of missions.

This article is concerned with the attempt to lay down some general principles for a fresh interpretation of the materials. It argues that to view missionaries as perennial historical villains is too one sided to be useful for any dynamic understanding of change, and that to view Africans as a victimized projection of Western ill will is to leave them with too little initiative to be arbiters of their destiny and meaningful players on the historical stage.

I attempt a three-part alternative exposition that builds on the nature and practice of missions as well as on the nature and quality of the African impulse and response. Whatever the long-term effects of Western contact, the missionary impact in Africa was not entirely or permanently at the price of a reawakened indigenous impulse. In the first part I raise briefly how the West's ambivalence toward missions has affected its image at home and abroad. In the second, I rehearse some of the negative criticisms against missions, and point out gaps in the material. In the third and final constructive part, I offer an alternative evaluation of the evidence. The paper is concerned chiefly with South Africa, with comparative observations drawn from other parts of Africa.

Mission and the Western Image

In much that is otherwise respectable scholarly literature, the subject of missions is given rather short shrift, often without the relevant evidence. In any case, the subject suffuses the secular West by the upbeat confidence of missions that religion is worthy of world allegiance. It is not that the secular West does not believe that its own materialist worldview has a future beyond its borders but that it sees that worldview as the exclusive successor to the religious order, though somewhat removed from criticism for not having an explicit text. So in the name of secular commitment the West combats the church at home and missions abroad, in spite of the fact that in the latter case it intrudes on societies that it wishes to protect from outside interference. This might explain not just the inconsistency of rejecting missionary interference but also the frustration of Third World scholars who accept at face value Western liberal defence of their societies, only to be stumped by pre-established Western judgments on the matter. Hence the irony of the most liberal religious and academic institutions being also the slowest to include Third World persons in positions of responsibility, a situation that should make us pause about the world prospects of liberal secularism.

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Instead of dismissing missions, secular liberal scholars might have something to learn from Third World responses, especially where those responses include a stringent reworking of Western priorities to produce lessons for cross-cultural encounter. At the least it might indicate the course that secular liberalism is likely to run once it is taken out of its privileged Western context and allowed to have its terms fully contested. It might reveal huge tracts of unexplored assumptions in assertions that masquerade as logical disputation, in habits of evasiveness contending as sophisticated irony, and in open-minded assurances of the relativism of everything that actually couch a new dogmatism. It is, of course, unsettling to have our basic ideas challenged by others, but secular liberalism might then acquire a deeper understanding of Christian missions in their critical Third World transformation, a transformation that spared neither the text of missionary preaching nor the motives of vocation.

It is important to stress that even the exclusive zeal of missionaries brought them sooner to the stage of indigenous reckoning than was the case with those who temporized and sought alternatives in social service, or else doubted and stayed home. Only an exceptional few emerged unscathed from field exposure, whatever the rhetoric to the contrary. Thus the most fruitful question is what happened to missions on the ground in Africa, and how to distinguish that from the slogans, rhetoric, and popular propaganda in the field and back home.

Viewed in this way, missions constituted a formidable problem for colonial rule. On the most superficial level, missionary motives and the colonial strategy coalesced naturally, encouraging the optimistic view that the two forces were predestined also to be allies in practice. In fact, the identity of views between the two concealed a profound disparity in their respective impact. Missionary motives, even where these were openly aired, failed to suppress the consequences of field research and application, enabling Africans, in many cases for the first time, to employ indigenous autonomy. In time all this came to a head with schemes of self-reliance, and a corresponding delegitimization of foreign control, missionary or colonial.

The field setting thus had a decisive influence on local perceptions of the West’s religious and political impact, and is the crucible in which missionary motives and intentions (for long the preoccupation of students of the subject) were relativized or at any rate rendered secondary, more so in the light of field scrutiny and missionary self-evaluation. We are only at the beginning of outlines of the momentous changes afoot with the irruption of world Christianity.

In exploring this field dimension, we should examine two levels of missionary endeavor. In the first place, we should look at examples of interaction rather than just pronouncements by missionaries; second, we should explore how field categories complemented or displaced imported ones.

Such an approach does not deny the important connection between such themes as religion and politics, mission and colonialism, salvation and economics, conversion and culture, foreign powers and indigenous agents, intentions and consequence, and solidarity and individualism. What it does is to recast most of these in terms relevant to field criteria, expanding or varying the use to which they are customarily put. One idea worth pursuing through all the questions is not so much how Christian missions changed Africa as how changes in Africa, long preceding the onset of missions, took a more radical and longer-lasting turn.
Conversion and the Assault on the Old Order

Right at the beginning of the modern missionary movement, voices were raised about the deleterious consequences of unbridled Western intrusion of other societies. The close connection, for example, between Portugal's maritime predominance and the early Roman Catholic missions meant that the issue of collaboration, or, for that matter, conflict, would loom large in calculations on both sides. Portugal assumed, and was also encouraged to assume, that Catholic missions would bring imperial pathfinders and chaplains to the cause, in Africa and elsewhere. In their strategy the great missionary societies (and they were for the most part free associations) were happy, even eager, to work hand in glove with the state, but in their operations on the ground the two sides were often at loggerheads. Francis Xavier represents the conflict by protesting loudly at what he said were the evil practices of Portuguese officials, practices that were in direct conflict with the aims and purpose of mission.

By absorbing missions into the larger designs of colonialism, critics built a prima facie case against both. Hence the well-rehearsed charge that missions repressed indigenous creativity and stunted cultural progress. It would suffice to follow that theme by examining one representative essay that makes its case succinctly, expressing with lucid clarity the sentiment that missions were a negative force in Africa.

In a forceful and influential article published some thirty years ago, Bertram Hutchinson examined the harmful legacy of Christian missions in South Africa, calling attention to the disruptive effects of Christian teaching on African social life and institutions. He takes up the question of the premeditated assault missionaries launched—or are alleged to have launched—upon the fabric of African custom. The chief fault of the missionary, Hutchinson argues, was that the change he wished to introduce in Bantu society was premeditated. Knowing the social changes he wished for, the missionary worked deliberately to achieve them, although, even if we agreed with the notion of Allmacht der Gedanken, missionary wishes often lagged far behind field reality. Here is a description in Natal in 1894–95 of the extreme social dislocation that conversion was said to have created for Africans:

The Natives are averse to the mission stations, as enticing first their daughters, then their sons, and so severing their families. . . . Some become in that way so severed from their parents as to be homeless, and wander to towns or elsewhere and come to grief; but if they remained at home under entire control of their parents, out of school hours . . . whatever little schooling or industry they learnt would be made good use of. Much misery and trouble is brought on parents by the interference and enticing away of their children, and this has become a general grievance, and to such an extent that in several instances owners of kraals have, as a body, objected most strongly to have a school or teacher located in their vicinity.

The thrust of Hutchinson’s argument is that missionaries were intolerant of African customs, instituted measures to discourage or punish converts who observed traditional sanctions, and created widespread confusion of values among the people. Yet, reading between the lines, this frontal attack on missions has to be qualified at least by the fact that missionary numbers and resources were too limited to allow them to have such a comprehensive impact in their operations. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to excuse missionaries entirely from some of the dramatic changes entering African society from the nineteenth century, and in this Hutchinson makes several useful and valid points that deserve careful consideration and response.

On the question of missions as a colonial fifth column, Hutchinson offers the example of Dr. Philip of the London Missionary Society, who in 1828 made the link between missionary pioneering and the penetration of European colonial power into Africa, saying that “Missionary stations are the most efficient agents which can be employed to promote the internal strength of our colonies, and the cheapest and best military posts a government can employ.” This signaled the basis for useful collaboration between missions and the British government in South Africa, although on the ground local chiefs sought missionary aid for precisely the opposite reason: as a bulwark against encroachments of the European settlers, a difference of perception highly relevant to the case I shall presently advance about the repercussions of missionary work in the vernacular. In the context of changes afoot in South Africa, missionaries acted as brokers between the Africans and Europeans, often transmitting more than they realized, but also certainly screening Africans from the glare of Western acquisitiveness in ways more subtle and more enduring than they intended. The missionaries, Hutchinson admits, “gave invaluable aid to the Bantu people in negotiations with Europeans on land questions, on cattle-raiding, frontier incidents, and other matters which exacerbated relations between black and white. The missionary was therefore rarely molested. Even among tribes which had never seen a missionary his reputation preceded him and preserved him from attack.”

At that stage of things, Africans perceived missionaries more as friends than as foes. As a consequence, missionaries were wooed and competed for by Bantu chiefs who sought to attract missions to their areas as a buffer and prestige symbol. There was, of course, an enormous risk in that enterprise, both from the disruptive potential of missions within chiefdoms and the utilitarian uses to which strong-willed chiefs might put missions. Nevertheless, missions had not yet acquired the stigma or opprobrium that might make Africans turn against them. If anything, missions had in fact aroused unrealistic hopes.

A similar ambiguity pertains to the charge of missions as “enclavement,” the practice whereby converts are removed from society and thrown into mission stations within range of white control and direction. Enclavement did occur, and was actively pursued by many missions as a basic element of conversion policy. In addition, enclavement introduced disruptive changes by encouraging atomistic individualism and parasitic dependence. The adoption by African converts of European names and clothing; the consumption of European goods; the use of new tools and implements; enrollment in European schools; the taking up of European habits and tastes—all these and more ruptured tribal bonds of solidarity and reciprocity and induced dependence on foreign customs and manners. Furthermore, enclavement allowed missions to exercise considerable leverage with potential converts, offering economic rewards for joining the mission station, particularly at a time when missions were being given generous land concessions by the government.

However, enclavement can be said to have very serious limitations, and those relatively few Africans who availed themselves of it soon became disenchanted. In addition, African restiveness with the arrangement drained it of its intrinsic appeal for missionaries who began to see the serious obstacles it was creating.
for their work. One missionary in 1840 wrote ruefully about how the scheme had backfired.

“We discovered,” the missionary testified, “that many of the Fingoes who had come to us, did so in the idea that we could procure for them rich pastures for the grazing of their cattle: being disappointed in this hope, their good will was exchanged for bitter enmity; they refused to attend our worship, and spoke loudly against the doctrine of our God’s Word.”

In time opposition to enclavement was raised to the highest levels of traditional authority, with chiefs pointing out the harmful effects of the system in contrast to other parts of missionary practice. As the chiefs saw it, enclavement was, perhaps not unwittingly, promoting missionaries into the role of rival chiefs, encouraging scofflaws to seek asylum there from constituted authority, which cast mission stations in a bad light as inferior dispensers of justice. One representative chief summed up the situation tingly, promoting missionaries into the role of rival chiefs, authority, which cast mission stations in a bad light as inferior dispensers of justice. One representative chief summed up the situation in words that show a partial grasp of the distinction between mission and colonialism, and the danger of missionaries playing into the hands of colonial architects.

I like very much to live with the teachers [i.e., missionaries] if they would not take my people, and give them to the Government; for they are my people. Let these school people pray for me. How is it that the Government takes them to spill blood? How is it that you teachers take them away? Whoever one believes, he goes away from me. Why is it that you call them all to live in one place? Is it God who tells you to do so? I do not like your method of breaking up the kraal. Let the believing Kaffir look to his own countrymen, and not go away, but teach others.

Thus enclavement restricted rather than extended missionary range, and having embarked confidently on that course, missionaries were forced to revise their ideas in light of field results. Instead of capitulating unquestioningly to missionary tutelage, converts were raising awkward questions in defiance. If we take missionary intentions literally and expect to see their enclaves producing commissars, then field evidence would point us firmly in another direction with the outflow of refuseniks. The unenviable missionaries were now stranded square in the swirl of advancing European forces and rising African aspirations, and if in the nature of the case they are not entitled to sympathy, then at the very least they deserve understanding.

In any event missionaries got little of that from senior colonial officials who, seeing how missions had skewed the pitch with Africans, despaired of continuing to rely on the implied warranty of collaboration and began questioning the usefulness of missions altogether. The governor of Cape Colony in 1847 and 1848, for example, spoke of having seen neither substantial conversions nor an increase in demand for European merchandise, and wondered, therefore, what purpose was being served. The doubt and despair quickly hardened into open name-calling, with administrators taunting missions with charges of moral decline among their converts, a theme that has found its way into mainstream literature, such as that of Mark Twain. In 1853, for instance, the governor spoke derisively of missions having only stimulated among Africans the appetite for ardent spirits, muskets, and gunpowder. The harshness of the criticism indicates a profound antipathy toward missions, much deeper than mere frustration at a tactical bungling.

Missionaries were easy targets for criticism. They set very high standards for themselves and for everyone else, and thereby raised the stakes. To compound it all, missionaries were transitional figures, defying the neat categories of “cold colonialist” or “natural native.” Consequently, they got squeezed from the two ends, becoming by their proximity to both, symbols of global intrusion and regional subversion. In South Africa, certainly, this fate befell them, and it continued to dog them in other places, too.

From other parts of Africa we have instances of resistance to the presence of missionaries. For example, when European missionaries first arrived in Ashanti, Ghana, the Asantehene, the king, responded to the call to send children to school by saying that no sensible person could countenance a project that required children to be released from productive labor on farms and have them sit all day idly learning “hoy, hoy, hoy!” An old Ewe grandmother, the repository of her people’s customs and traditions, counseled a royal conclave of her area against sending their children to Western schools then appearing in the country. “I myself,” she remonstrated in one case, “do not approve of Foli learning from books; for the son of a king does not wear shoes nor carry an umbrella before he is a king. If he now goes to school and learns to read, he will adopt the white man’s customs, he will wear shoes and carry an umbrella, and in doing these things he will break the sacred laws of the family.” While it is true that European education, and in particular the dominant segment of it that Christian missions controlled, changed Africa in real and enduring ways, it is difficult to claim it as the source of social and cultural breakdown in Africa. As one missionary wife candidly admitted about missionary schools: “It may be said that missionaries wanted to indoctrinate rather than to educate, but in fact if you teach people to read, even if you only intend them to read the Bible and the catechism, you have started something which it is not in your power to stop.” Thus control of educational institutions failed to guarantee missionaries the power they sought, or are alleged to have sought.

A major fault of missionaries, according to the prevalent view, was their fundamental antipathy to African social and religious values, and to the traditional family institution that embodies them. The African family, therefore, was the logical place for
missionaries to strike in order to bring the changes they saw as a prerequisite for Christian conversion. It was for this reason that the missionaries among the Bantu targeted lobola, the marriage dowry, polygamy, and circumcision for concerted action. Lobola was the custom whereby a young man preparing to marry offers cattle as payment to the bride’s family. That and the other customs were vehemently opposed by missionaries. Lobola, for example, was erroneously described as wife-purchase, and therefore illegal. As for polygamy, it was proof to the missionaries of the proverbial lust of the African, while circumcision provided a cover for barbaric indulgence.

For the missionaries, lobola, like much else, proved a prickly pear to grasp. As an integral part of the marriage system, it safeguarded against abuses in the marriage system, was a protection for the woman against an irresponsible husband, and, in cases where highly valued cattle constituted the lobola, it was tangible evidence of the worth of the woman, a means of reciprocity between the families-in-law, and a warrant giving the woman access to divorce as a remedy. Furthermore, as missionaries soon discovered, they removed a venerable restraint even for Christian converts. So, whether it concerns the stability of marriage or, in divorce, the stability of the kin structure, lobola was covered to their chagrin, lobola acted to encourage fidelity, and it was for this reason that the missionaries among the Bantu targeted lobola, the marriage dowry, polygamy, and circumcision for concerted action. Lobola was the custom whereby a young man preparing to marry offers cattle as payment to the bride's family. That and the other customs were vehemently opposed by missionaries. Lobola, for example, was erroneously described as wife-purchase, and therefore illegal. As for polygamy, it was proof to the missionaries of the proverbial lust of the African, while circumcision provided a cover for barbaric indulgence.

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covered to their chagrin, lobola acted to encourage fidelity, and by suppressing it they removed a venerable restraint even for Christian converts. So, whether it concerns the stability of marriage or, in divorce, the stability of the kin structure, lobola was at the center of the social organism. An attack there would be felt through the entire society, as appears to have happened. Measures were adopted to replace the lobola with church weddings in which no payments were made, although the required European dress involved the parties in relatively high expenditure. Such expenditure was in fact counterproductive, as missionary observers saw. It became evident to them that a greater evil has arisen in connection with these Christian marriages in which a young man spends on his marriage feast quite as much as would be considered sufficient for an ikazi [i.e., lobola]. . . No one is benefited by this waste, which if it had not taken place, the proceeds might have been handed over to the girl's relations, and which in case of need would give her or her children a claim on those who received the ikazi. But upon the whole, in regard to these marriages in which no cattle have been paid, there are quite as many if not more separations than in the case of purely native marriages in which cattle have been paid.

As these and other comments make clear, the measures against lobola failed, or else produced highly unsatisfactory results. Marital infidelity among Christian converts became a widely noted occurrence, forcing missionaries to resort to the unwieldy strategy of two forms of marriage: a lower form performed in the schoolroom or the missionary's study, and a higher form conducted in the church—a split-level distinction that undercut the supposedly single foundation of marriage. One official reported that the Africans who had contracted a "church" marriage incurred a double jeopardy: they had removed themselves from the check of the old customs and were out of range of the sanction of the missionary. "The result," he concluded, "is more widespread immorality and a generally lowering effect on the Native. Both men and women are constantly coming to me with complaints of matrimonial difficulties resulting from these church marriages." A father of two married daughters who had received no lobola voiced apprehensions about the possible outcome of the marriages, for if something went wrong and the women were returned to him, he should have nothing for their upkeep.

What is equally serious, the attack on lobola deterred conversions, or at any rate deterred converts from seeking the fellowship of the church. To take the slightly different matter of polygamous families, one missionary was told by an African elder, who stopped short of receiving baptism in spite of long exposure to Christianity, that he "observed that many who had done so had driven away their wives and children, like so many things of no value; that although he might live with only one wife, yet he liked the others, and he could not think for a moment of driving away his children. Such is the feeling of most of the natives."

The reference to polygamy opens a notoriously intractable problem in the annals of mission. For nineteenth-century missionaries, their moral landscape primed by a short-fused Victorian sensibility, polygamy triggered all the virulent stereotypes of the lustful African. Yet polygamy, an ancient and widespread institution, was scarcely amenable to the simple solutions offered by missionaries, and the African response was to ignore the rule of monogamy required of them by Europeans, or else, as so often happens with hard laws, to show outward conformity hand in hand with inward denial. As missionaries gained a better understanding of the custom, they modified their opposition, as happened with the Anglican bishop John Colenso who wrote a short treatise defending the institution against his astounded missionary colleagues. Colenso's line of defence follows a consistent religious rule: he asked how his missionary colleagues could justify asking polygamists to commit the sin of divorce to remedy the offence of polygamy. Few were willing to grasp that nettle, though many continued to blame him for the confusion of values that was said to result from public disagreement among missionaries before Africans on such a thorny issue. In fact it was claimed that the decline in conversions at this time was due to Colenso's ill-advised pronouncements on polygamy, though it is hard to understand how, if opposition to polygamy failed to bring converts, its advocacy should also fail to win souls. At any rate in this matter, too, the missionaries' engagement with the issue rapidly exposed their inadequacy. The issue of male circumcision in like fashion brought missionaries into acute tension with Africans. Africans considered circumcision as a rite of passage to manhood. Those who were uncircumcised, whatever their age, were regarded as not fully mature, and therefore unfit for responsibility or leadership, including marriage and all that it implied. Girls declined to marry uncircumcised men for fear of attracting the stigma that went with it. Boys who resided in missionary stations were secretly ab ducted and initiated into the rite. And when they possessed the vernacular Bible, Africans could justify the practice from the example of Jesus himself. It could not have helped missionaries to continue to press ahead when by so doing they would set back their own goals.

There is a general thesis that can be discerned in all the negative criticisms of missions thus far considered, and that may be simply stated thus: many people, including missionaries, are said to have assumed that the greatest opportunities for planting Christianity would occur when society was being broken up and
culture in a state of disarray, so that conversion in the religious sphere would find its counterpart in collaboration in the political. In other words, political capitulation by Africans, critics assert, was sought by missionaries for the assumed benefits it held for Christianity. Therefore, creating the requisite social disruption of capitulation would be perceived by missionaries as auspicious for the Gospel, and although it would be unfair to say missionaries in general perpetrated acts of sabotage to upset the equilibrium, some at least sought comfort from the thought. For example, Robert Moffat, a stern judge of Africans, gave vent to feelings that encourage a rather pessimistic view of indigenous institutions. Writing in 1859, he says:

> It is where the social organization is most perfect, and the social system still in its aboriginal vigour, that the missionary has the least success in making an impression. Where things have undergone a change and the old feudal usages have lost their power, where there is a measure of disorganization, then new ideas which the gospel brings with it do not come into collision with any powerful political prejudice. The habits and modes of thinking have been broken up, and there is a preparation for the seed of the word.  

However, all this heady theorizing shares with the other negative criticisms against missionaries little basis in fact, at any rate not in terms of the sensational rhetoric in which they are couched. It is true that political upheavals might make Christianity relatively more attractive, but, on the other hand, such upheavals might do the reverse and create opposition, as seems to have happened in many places in Africa and elsewhere. Such ambiguity is overlooked by confident assertions about indigenous inertia. Moffat himself was less dogmatic than his words might indicate. In practice, he said, the reality may be very different. "I am not," he admitted, "sanguine on this point in regard to the Matabele."  

**Constructive Reappraisal**

When all this evidence is taken together and separately, it points inexorably in one direction. Missionary encounter with African culture, however superficial or sustained, made the indigenous factor indispensable for the religious enterprise to which missionaries were committed. The capitulation of Africans to Western political control, many missionaries found, did in fact conflict with the task of Christianizing the people, or at any rate complicated it.  

The fact that missionaries failed, even where they did try, to impose Western cultural norms on Africans demonstrates the fundamental limitations of Western forms for the appropriation of the Gospel, and to this fact numerous missionaries were alert. Even those who persisted in spite of the evidence helped to define the issues: missionary criticism produced, if it did not provoke others to produce, abundant field evidence on times and issues that might otherwise have dropped out of the historical record. When they condemned customs and practices as heathen, those whom they left behind were significantly lowered. It is therefore crucial for our reappraisal to acknowledge the creative part missionary interest played in the religious and intellectual awakening of Africa, helping to bring the continent into the family of nations through projects of indigenous self-affirmation.

The evidence for such awakening is as impressive in scope and volume as it is remarkable in quality and detail, although we can offer only a few examples here. The modern Zulu scholar, Professor C. L. S. Nyembezi, in a public lecture at the University of Natal, commented that the missionary cultivation of Zulu language and literature was a significant force behind general Zulu awakening. After acknowledging that the great pioneers of the people’s language and literature were missionaries and the Africans they trained, Professor Nyembezi went on to say that missionary interest extended beyond the narrow issue of religious affiliation. It was not simply that "missionaries concerned themselves primarily with grammars, dictionaries and the translation of the Scriptures, but that some of them recorded folklore, proverbs and valuable historical material."  

The missionaries followed a vigorous policy of vernacular development, promoting African languages as complete and autonomous vehicles for bringing God's revelation to the people, with the obvious effect of making Western languages, including Greek and Latin, of limited usefulness in religious appropriation. Zulu received its share of attention in this regard. In 1850 Hans Schreuder published a grammar of the language, as did Bishop Colenso in 1855. In 1859 Lewis Grout of the American Board of
Commissioners for Foreign Missions also produced a grammar of Zulu. Similar attention was devoted to the production of dictionaries: in 1857 Perrin's dictionary of Zulu was published, and in 1857 J. L. Döhne of the American Board came out with his Zulu dictionary. Bishop Colenso wrote his dictionary of the language in 1861, and in 1880 Charles Roberts produced a similar work.

Colenso was instrumental in having published the first account in Zulu by mother-tongue speakers. On a visit to the Zulu king, Mpande, in 1859, Colenso was accompanied by two Zulu boys and a schoolteacher. As a record of their visit, the three Zulu companions produced an account in Zulu of their impressions, thus leaving a landmark in the history of the language.38 These and other efforts ensured that a revitalized Zulu world would be the indispensable context for the new order under Christianity.

Missionaries were as conscious of the relevance of a revitalized Africa for the enterprise as were Africans themselves, and often it was missionaries who set the pace. Such was the case with Rev. Johannes Christaller in Ghana, the former Gold Coast. Christaller arrived in the Gold Coast in the 1850s, serving the Basel Mission there from 1853 to 1868. He finished a translation of the Four Gospels into Twi in 1859, the New Testament in 1864, the Psalms and the Book of Proverbs in 1866, and the whole Bible in 1871 after he returned to Europe. In 1875 he completed his monumental work, the Dictionary of the Akan Language, published in 1881, and acclaimed by experts, both Ghanaian and others, as a masterpiece of scholarship. A modern Ghanaian writer describes Christaller's Dictionary as an "encyclopaedia of Akan civilization,"39 while a Western linguist speaks of it in superlatives as "a dictionary in the first rank of dictionaries of African languages, or indeed of any languages."40

Rev. David Asante, a Ghanaian protegé of Christaller, wrote to him in 1866 soon after the publication of the translation of the Psalms and Book of Proverbs, commending the translation. He said:

The Psalms are translated perfectly and brilliantly. Nobody can read this translation without deep feelings of awe. They resemble in many ways the songs of mourning (kuawuam) in our Twi language; the Twi people will be glad to read them. I want to congratulate you personally and in the name of Africa. 41

Christaller went on to crown his labors with an invaluable and methodical compilation of Twi proverbs and idioms, numbering in all 3,600. He came to acquire a deep and abiding love for the Akan, a love that was reciprocated. In the preface to the collection he appended a sort of manifesto to the vernacular, encouraging educated Africans to cultivate the genre for itself. He wrote:

May this Collection give a new stimulus to the diligent gathering of folk-lore and to the increasing cultivation of native literature. May those Africans who are enjoying the benefit of a Christian education, make the best of the privilege; but let them not despise the sparks of truth entrusted to and preserved by their own people, and let them not forget that by entering into their way of thinking and by acknowledging what is good and expounding what is wrong they will gain the more access to the hearts and minds of their less favoured countrymen.42

In 1883 Christaller also helped found The Christian Messenger, a paper devoted to the promotion of Akan life and culture. From 1905 to 1917, when it was transferred from Basel to Ghana, it published articles in Twi, Ga, and English, and covered local as well as international news. In that regard it reported the Russo-Japanese War of 1904, an event in which Ghanaians took great political interest, Halley's Comet in 1910, and the sinking of the Titanic in 1911. The Christian Messenger belongs as much to the history of modern African journalism as it does to missionary contribution to Africa. The use of the vernacular by The Christian Messenger to report and reflect on world events was a remarkable example of the range missionaries afforded to the indigenous heritage in the emerging world order.

That was the testimony of Dr. J. B. Danquah, considered by the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences a giant, and immortalized with a distinguished annual lectureship, The Danquah Memorial Lecture. Danquah was an intellectual founding father of Ghanaian nationalism, a committed and articulate defender of his people's culture and destiny. He spoke in very thoughtful and lavish terms of the achievement of Christaller. Christaller's work, he said, might be considered the first dispensation for the Akan, the Old Testament canon by which Danquah's own work should be judged a continuation. Furthermore, Danquah insisted, Christaller ensured that the Akan people would bring forward their contribution as part and parcel of the general heritage of humanity.43

Such evidence as this still leaves critics of mission retiring from the field of controversy with a political plea in their ear, and to that theme we must therefore turn once more. The missionary who embodied the politico-religious ambiguity of missions was Dr. David Livingstone (d. 1873), a towering figure over the entire course of the missionary movement. Livingstone arrived in Africa in the 1840s, and died there. He formulated what has come to be known as the three "Cs" for the missionary motto: commerce, civilization, and Christianity must go together as partners. Not only that, but Livingstone had an explicit political agenda that he wished mission to carry out. In a confidential letter to Professor Sedgwick of Cambridge University, Livingstone spoke of his "secret ambitions" that he said he would not divulge in public. In that letter he said he was setting out for Africa not for the mere sentimental reasons of serving the African but for the tangible reason of advancing the interests of his own country. He continued:

I take a practical mining geologist to tell us of the mineral resources of the country, an economic botanist to give a full report of the vegetable productions, an artist to give the scenery, a naval officer to tell of the capacity of river communications, and a moral agent to lay the foundation for anything that may follow. . . . I hope it may result in an English colony in the healthy high lands of Central Africa.44

The course of subsequent events on the ground in Africa altered Livingstone's ideas in remarkably radical ways, and his elevated Anglo-Saxon strategy gave way to the basic reality of African needs and aspirations. Livingstone is justly acclaimed for his scientific discoveries in Africa, and for the astute historical enquiries by which he explored inter-ethnic relations and customs.45 Unfortunately, however, his intellectual contributions tend to be overclouded by popular religious eulogizing. Victorian sentimentalism was in this regard a major source of the difficulty. The Victorians painted him in colors of extreme sanctification, displaying him in stained glass to become a visible target for rock-throwing critics.

Livingstone's real significance lies not in the strategies of Whitehall, in spite of his influence there, nor in the colorful por-
Wednesday mornings, Asbury’s ESJ students and faculty gather as a community of believers bent on making disciples.

See it in their eyes...vision that looks beyond borders, over barriers, to fulfill Christ's call to mission.

Hear it in their voices...the burden of rigorous study enhancing their effectiveness.

Feel it in their hearts...God preparing them at Asbury to go forth to minister to their own people and to other cultures.

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traits of popular adulation, in spite of pockets of genuine appreciation in that sphere. His significance lies on the ground in Africa and in the hearts of Africans. This was the verdict of one modern secular writer who toured the Africa that Livingstone knew and met the dwindling ranks of people who knew Livingstone, or else knew the people who knew him. "The best way to make contact today with David Livingstone," the account states, "is simply to talk to Africans. You could do this anywhere, but perhaps best in Nyasaland [Malawi], his beloved land by the lake, where his influence remains most profound."

One example should suffice to show the depth of impact on Livingstone of his African experience. He came to acquire a deep interest in the work of his father-in-law, Robert Moffat, who began work in Bechuaneland in the 1820s. Livingstone spoke of his admiration for the Sichuana language of which Moffat had been the brilliant pioneer. Livingstone spoke of its richness, its copiousness, and subtlety. Some European students of the subject, he cautioned, may imagine there would be few obstacles in mastering the tongue of a so-called primitive people, but his experience was different.

In my own case, though I have had as much intercourse with the purest idiom as most Englishmen, and have studied the language carefully, yet I can never utter an important statement without doing so very slowly, and repeating it too, lest the foreign accent... should render the sense unintelligible... The capabilities of this language may be inferred from the fact that the Pentateuch is fully expressed in Mr. Moffat's translation in fewer words than in the Greek Septuagint, and in a very considerably smaller number than in our English version."

Livingstone argued that language was the most cogent proof of human intelligence and sensibility, and its development among Africans is warrant of their humanity, too. "Language," he reflected, "seems to be an attribute of the human mind and thought, and the inflections, various as they are in the most barbarous tongues, as that of the Bushmen, are probably only proof of the race being human, and endowed with the power of thinking." 46

These theoretical reflections are designed to show that field experience in Africa affected deeply Livingstone's motives and intentions, whatever these might have been. He had come to Africa perhaps to build a new frontier in continuation with Britain's imperial destiny. Now, however, he was spokesman for the heritage of the vanquished, or soon to be vanquished. In relation to the political and economic schemes by which Africa was being tied to Britain, Livingstone forged links of a different kind to mobilize African aspirations and encourage self-responsibility. His political counterpart in Africa was Cecil Rhodes, "the empire-builder in the hard political sphere." 47

Cecil Rhodes's motto was "philanthropy and five percent," in contrast to Livingstone's "commerce and Christianity." Both men dominated Central Africa, but Rhodes left a legacy of white settler domination and the bitter strife with Africans this created, while Livingstone opened the path for rising African aspirations. The clash of values represented by the two pioneers came into the open in the 1950s with the abortive Central African Federation that grouped together Nyasaland with Northern and Southern Rhodesia, with power in white minority hands. It was a clash between "the Exploiter tradition of Cecil Rhodes, with the settler-politicians as its guardians, and the Tutor tradition of Livingstone," with its guardians in the Kenneth Kaundas, Joshua Nkomo, the Kamuzu Bandas, and the missionaries of St. Faith's Mission in Southern Rhodesia and the Church of Scotland Mission in Nyasaland. 48 The forces that menaced the political dream of Cecil Rhodes were "the spiritual heirs of the other empire-builder, David Livingstone." 49

In a passage of prophetic significance, Patrick Keatley, then the Commonwealth Correspondent of the Guardian newspaper, said in 1963 that "it is not particularly difficult to predict which of the two empires will last the longer, for Livingstone chose much the sounder foundation." 50

In the light of such experience, it cannot entirely be true, as Bertram Hutchinson argues, that missionaries sought as a priority to induce wide-ranging social and cultural changes, with the subsequent course of developments in that sphere completely overwhelming their strategy of selective contact. To cite the relevant text, Hutchinson says that "the history of the 19th-century missionary activity in South Africa is a history of men struggling with only limited success for the religious and social changes they desired, and watching with consternation an aftermath of their intervention which they did not foresee, and could not control." 51 Rather, it would seem it was colonial masters who miscalculated the pacifying effects of missionary activity.

After Livingstone died, his African companions, Susi and Chuma, as an act of pious regard, removed his heart and buried it deep in the earth before carrying the body across 1,500 miles of difficult, treacherous terrain on foot to the coast, whence it was taken to England for burial at Westminster Abbey. Thus Africa and England each retained a token of the missionary, each allowing the other a share in that heritage. It was cross-cultural encounter of the profoundest kind.

The point worth stressing in the missionary involvement with political questions in Africa is the role they enabled Africans to play vis-à-vis the advance of European power, rather than the role they envisaged for themselves, although even that was increasingly seen as a complement to the African role. 52 There were undoubtedly major and lasting changes introduced by missionaries in the nature and composition of tribal Africa, but it would be a stern critic who would insist that all of it was to the detriment of the people.

For instance, in Nyasaland, missionaries were instrumental in fomenting a sense of awakening among the people. They mediated successfully in the wake of the devastation that followed the massive upheavals of the Zulu-Angoni wars. In 1887 a peace treaty was negotiated between the invading Angoni and the native Atonga. The missionaries followed it up with the adoption of the language of the Manganja people, Chi-Nyanja, employing it as the lingua franca of the country. Chi-Nyanja did a lot to create a sense of cohesion and self-identity and was a productive channel for the emergence into modern history of the Nyasas. As one testimony affirms, "the missionaries gave to the Nyasas a heritage of national unity and of deep regard for learning that was to serve them well in the political battles of the 1950s and 1960s." 53

A surprisingly large number of missionaries saw the extreme ambiguity of European designs on Africa, and felt unconvinced that the advancing worldwide system of colonial rule held any prospects for the future of the cause. Few described that ambiguity eloquently as the pioneer missionary in East Africa, Rev. Dr. J. Lewis Krapf. Writing in 1860, he remarked:

Expect nothing, or very little, from political changes in Eastern Africa... Do not think that, because the East-Africans are "profitable in nothing to God and the world," they ought to be brought under the dominion of some European power, in the hope that they may then bestir themselves more actively and eagerly for what is worldly, and, in consequence, become eventually more awake to what is spiritual and eternal. On the contrary, banish the thought that Europe must spread her protecting wings over Eastern

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Africa, if missionary work is to prosper... Europe would, no doubt, remove much that is mischievous and obstructive out of the way of missionary work, but she would probably set in its place as many, and perhaps still greater checks. It is a vital error to make the result of missionary labor dependent on the powers that be... Whether Europeans take possession of Eastern Africa or not, I care very little, if at all; yet I know full well that missionary labor has its human phase, and that it cannot, as if by magic, without any outward preparation of the people for its reception, grasp the life of a nation. But many persons vastly overrate this human phase of our work, and, like the Jew, wish to see the bottom of the water before they cross the river... It is not missionaries, but those who are not missionaries, who see impossibilities in the way of the regeneration of Eastern Africa. 

Concluding Summary

It would be too much to expect that we can lay to rest the political view of missionaries as the religious surrogates of colonialism, for it is built rock-solid into the self-image of the West. This self-image encourages the idea of mission as the driving force of the European imperialist impulse.

Notes


3. The "omnipotence of thought," a phrase that occurs in Sigmund Freud's Totem and Taboo (1913 German edition) as a symptom of neurotic patients. It has come to be employed as a shorthand for the idea of mind over matter.


7. Monica Wilson describes what amounts to "enclavement" for missions in South Africa. She says: "Acceptance of Christian teaching implied a radical change in the manner of life of converts." Consequently, the missionaries "expected their converts to wear a Western style of clothing; to build square houses rather than round ones; to settle in a village round church and school rather than in scattered homesteads; to change the division of labour between men and women, and to abandon ancient festivals, such as traditional initiation dances, which were judged by whites to be lewd, and became illegal west of Cape Province," in Monica Wilson and Leonard Thompson, eds., The Oxford History of South Africa, vol. 1, South Africa to 1870 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 266. Elsewhere Wilson gives details of changes that resulted from the introduction of Christianity among the Nyakyusa, but in that case Nyakyusa converts had in many critical respects adapted the religion to indigenous ideas and categories. For example, the missionary rebukes of African morality were perceived by the Nyakyusa as a form of the traditional curse. Monica Wilson, Communal Rituals of the Nyakyusa (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 166–202.


9. Cited in Hutchinson, "Social Consequences," p. 165. Pious inclination could have led a missionary witness to stress the religious side of African opposition, but a scrupulous habit of recordkeeping would lead many others to jot down other types of evidence, as is clear in the discussion that follows.


14. Barbara Prickett, Island Base (Bo, Sierra Leone, 1971?), p. 229.

15. Commenting on this charge, Professor Diedrich Westermann of the University of Berlin and a former missionary to Africa, said it is unwarranted. He continued: "The Africans rightly defend themselves against the assertion of superficial European observers that women are bought and sold by them. If it were so, the woman would be the slave of the man, which is true neither in law nor in fact." The African To-day and To-morrow, p. 53.

16. Westermann testifies that the "wife herself estimates her value and the consideration which she will enjoy from her husband and his family according to the amount of the bride-wealth paid for her. The position of the husband to his wife and her relatives is from the very first ambiguous if his payments were small, or if any part of them is still owing.... The position of the wife is influenced by the fact that in marriage economic considerations are placed in the foreground." The African, pp. 53, 55.


22. John Colenso, Remarks on the Proper Treatment of Polygamy (Pietermaritzburg, 1855). Colenso astonished his episcopal colleagues at the first Lambeth Conference in 1860 by his support of polygamy.
The Christian Gospel and World Religions: How Much Have American Evangelicals Changed?

Ralph R. Covell

Introduction

The relationship of the Christian Gospel to world religions is a perplexing, perennial issue. My purpose in this article is to assess briefly the current state of some evangelical thinking on Christianity and other faiths, relate this to the Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission (1977–84), and then show how a more sensitive understanding will influence the mandate for evangelism.

Current Evangelical Thinking on Christianity and Other Faiths

American evangelicals are not a unified group; in fact, any rigorous attempt to classify them accurately can lead to frustration. In general, Paul Knitter is right when he puts them into three groups: fundamentalists, conservative evangelicals, and ecumenical evangelicals. The latter two groups can be identified, at least informally, with the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) and its doctrinal and mission commitment. American evangelicals associated with the LCWE come largely from particular evangelical denominations belonging to the National Association of Evangelicals or from interdenominational churches. Some, however, are affiliated with mainline ecumenical denom-
institutions within the Protestant mainstream.

The basic convictions of these evangelicals on Christianity and other faiths are found in the Lausanne Covenant in the section on the uniqueness and universality of Christ:

We affirm that there is only one Savior and only one Gospel, although there is a wide diversity of evangelistic approaches. We recognize that all men have some knowledge of God through his general revelation in nature. But we deny that this can save, for men suppress the truth by their unrighteousness. We also reject as derogatory to Christ and the Gospel every kind of syncretism and dialogue which implies that Christ speaks equally through all religions and ideologies. Jesus Christ, being himself the only God-man, who gave himself as the only ransom for sinners, is the only mediator between God and man. There is no other name by which we must be saved. All men are perishing because of sin, but God loves all men, not wishing that any should perish but that all should repent. Yet those who reject Christ repudiate the joy of salvation and condemn themselves to eternal separation from God. To proclaim Jesus as "the Savior of the world" is not to affirm that all men are either automatically or ultimately saved, still less to affirm that all religions offer salvation in Christ. Rather it is to proclaim God's love for a world of sinners and to invite all men to respond to him as Savior and Lord in the wholehearted personal commitment of repentance and faith. Jesus Christ has been exalted above every other name; we long for the day when every knee shall bow to him and every tongue confess him Lord. 

This statement, claiming the authority of Scripture as its sole basis, clearly declares:
1. God has revealed himself in a general way in nature;
2. This revelation is not salvific and results in condemnation because people reject the truth;
3. Jesus Christ, the God-Man, is the only Savior, because only he is a ransom from sin and mediator between people and God;
4. Christ reveals himself through the Christian Gospel, but he does not speak through other religions and ideologies;
5. Universal salvation in Christ is offered to all, but effective only to those who respond in faith to him;
6. Those who reject Christ are eternally lost;
7. Syncretism must be avoided;
8. That kind of dialogue which assumes that "Christ speaks equally in other religions" is to be repudiated.

Since this was not a church-originated confessional statement, many of those who signed it may not have been affirming their agreement with every jot and tittle. In the subsequent fifteen years (and with a few people even earlier), some evangelical thinkers have modified their conclusions, although not radically.

First, a small number of evangelical writers affirm that the divine self-revelation (whether some type of original revelation or the operation of the Divine Logos) is, at least potentially salvific. This general revelation, recorded in many sections of Scripture, is broad enough to include a sense of God's kindness and mercy as well as God's claim on the human conscience. If the individual responds to this sense of need and gives oneself in "sacrificial abandonment to God's mercy," then salvation is possible. These writers do not claim that this process is operating on a large scale. It would seem to be more what others have called "loophole" or "lifeboat salvation." The more predominant view among evangelicals continues to be that a positive response to God's general revelation prepares hearers to receive the Gospel message when they are later exposed to it.

Second, a corollary to this view is that such salvation does not depend on the hearer knowing specifically about the historical Jesus. The process is compared to those who were saved in the Old Testament period under the law by casting themselves on God's mercy, seen only dimly and partially through the sacrificial system. However, the only basis for this salvation, as for any of God's people, is the atoning death and resurrection of God's Son. Works of merit, so prominent in all religious systems, including Christianity, are specifically excluded as ways of reconciling humanity to God. Evangelicals find unacceptable, even as does an ecumenical theologian like Carl Braaten, the theocentric model proposed by Paul Knitter.

Third, within the evangelical tradition, an option for a few thinkers is that human religious systems are both a response to and a suppression of God's personal and direct revelation. J. H. Bavinck comments:

In the night of the bodhi, when Buddha received his great, new insight concerning the world and life, God was touching him and struggling with him. God revealed Himself in that moment. Buddha responded to this revelation, and his answer to this day reveals God's hand and the result of human repression. In the "night of power" of which the ninety-seventh sura of the Koran speaks, the night when "the angels descended" and the Koran descended from Allah's throne, God dealt with Mohammed and touched him. God wrestled with him in that night, and God's hand is still noticeable in the answer of the prophet, but it is also the result of human repression. The great moments in the history of religion are the moments when God wrestled with man in a very particular way.

The Christian missionary then does not bring God or Christ to another culture. God, the Creator, and Christ, the Logos, who gives light to every person coming into the world, has been working there long before the missionary arrived. Cross-cultural communicators will be sensitive to this fact, both to the positive and negative, even as they proclaim God's love as revealed in the incarnate Christ.

Fourth, dialogue, except as the first step in the evangelizing process, is still a "dirty" word to most evangelicals. They point out, probably correctly, that the broad evangelical community is gradually losing its conviction about the lostness of humanity and that this was one reason for mainline denominations losing their motivation for world mission. If, however, God's revelation of himself may be seen in the world's religions, then there is every reason to engage in serious dialogue. This is no substitute, however, for mission, including evangelism. The primitive New Testament church apparently did not specifically raise the issue of "How will those be saved who have never heard?" For them, to believe in Christ was to participate in his mission and to obey his call to "disciple the nations." It was assumed that the message would go everywhere. Dialogue, however, will help sharpen understanding of Holy Scripture, will give new understanding of human need and alternative responses to meeting it, and will establish personal relationships with others in their unique human situations. We enter into dialogue confessationally and compassionately.

Dialogue will help sharpen our understanding of Holy Scripture.
Even as some evangelicals have pushed their thinking to the parameters of their tradition, they are not ready to give up the label of “exclusivists.” They hold firmly to sola scriptura and affirm that salvation may be found only in Christ, whether many people explicitly or very few implicitly, put their faith in him. This is not the same as saying that Christ is working incognito through other religious systems, and that a person only needs, for example, to be a “better Hindu” in order to be saved.

The Evangelical–Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission

Informally, dialogue goes on between evangelicals and ecumenical Protestants. We see this documented in a book like Paul Knitter’s No Other Name? as well as in the pages of many mission journals, such as Missiology, International Review of Mission, and the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH. Too often, unfortunately, the authors speak past each other, much in the fashion that George Bush and Michael Dukakis did in the so-called presidential debates.

The line between the more progressive evangelicals (whether we call them conservative or ecumenical evangelicals) and evangelical ecumenists not affiliated with the LCWE is often very thin. Where do we place Stephen Neill or even Karl Barth? Lesslie Newbigin was certainly more evangelical in the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Tambaram than any of his fellow ecumenical Protestant participants. David Bosch, while confessing that we “have a partial understanding and experience of God,” affirms that we enter into dialogue with “conviction and commitment.”

Valuable as informal dialogue may be, more is accomplished by formal structures that enable participants to interact with one another on specific topics over a period of time. Such was the Evangelical–Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission (ERCDOM), which took place at three separate sites from 1977 to 1984. While the Roman Catholic participants were named by the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and represented the official teaching of their church, the evangelical participants represented themselves only and came from a variety of backgrounds and traditions.

The areas of agreement emerging from this extended interaction were indeed remarkable and encouraging. Participants reached a general consensus on the uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ and on the reality of God’s activity outside the Christian community. The basic point of disagreement was over the extent of salvation and the way it is mediated. Roman Catholics affirmed the view of Pope John Paul II’s encyclical Redemptor Hominis that “every person, without exception, has been redeemed by Christ, and with each person, without any exception, Christ is in some way united, even when that person is not aware of that.” In one place the document indicated that people must respond to God and be born anew to gain this salvation; another section indicated that most of humankind would receive God’s mercy, unless they “specifically reject his offer.”

Evangelicals, with a more radical sense of humanity’s depravity, make a sharp distinction between those “in Christ” and those who are not. The salvific work of Christ is sufficient for all, but a personal decision must be made to receive him and to be transferred from the “kingdom of darkness” to the “kingdom of his beloved Son” (Col. 1:13).

While some evangelicals do not differ from the official Roman Catholic position that people may receive God’s saving grace without explicitly “naming the Name” of Jesus, they have much less confidence that many will be saved in this way. The Roman Catholic motive for mission is much less to evangelize, as understood traditionally, than it is to inform men and women that they already have a saving relationship with God.

While stopping short of affirming that Roman Catholics and evangelicals might have a common witness in evangelism (as they do have a common witness in many other areas), the document is of great value in sharpening the perspectives of those in both communities. Evangelicals, rightly or wrongly, have less ambiguity in their position: they claim, even with more recent nuances, to have an exclusive Gospel that demands urgency in the task of world evangelization. Roman Catholics have an identity crisis. Robert Schreiter states it succinctly: “How can the church retain its absolute claim to exclusive possession of the truth and of salvation and at the same time affirm the goodness and even validity of other religious traditions?” How can it affirm both “the necessity of mission and the integrity of other religious traditions?”

The Evangelistic Mandate

Because Protestant churches held to the uniqueness and universality of Jesus Christ, they sent missionaries to evangelize in all parts of the world. The message they all proclaimed, at least until 1900, was in the evangelical tradition and would be well represented by the Lausanne Covenant. As they aggressively presented this exclusive Gospel in Asia, they buttressed head-on with the classical religious traditions of these countries—Buddhism in China and Japan and Hinduism in India.

Early Protestant missionaries spoke disparagingly to the Chinese, as well as to their church supporters at home, concerning the pagan idols and “silly ceremonies” that made up Buddhism, whose traditions formed a large part of Chinese daily life. It was a “system of morality without a conscience, a system of philosophy which wears the mask of transcendental mysticism or of nihilistic cynicism…. ” They passed out Christian tracts in Buddhist temple precincts and seldom sought to understand the function of Buddhism in society. Despite this negative attitude, it is paradoxical that many Buddhist terms—heaven, hell, devil, soul, life to come, new birth, advent, sin, repentance, and retribution—found their way into the Chinese Protestant Bible, possibly through the use by Morrison of a partial, early Catholic translation made in the mid-eighteenth century.

In Japan a mutual enmity existed between the Christian faith and Buddhism. To the newly arrived missionaries Japan was the land of “the Gods and the Buddha,” and the Buddhists referred to Christian missionary work as “shinnyu,” meaning “invasion,” “intrusion,” or “aggression.” The missionaries often referred to their work as the “occupation of Japan” and saw themselves as “religious invaders.” Few indeed were the missionaries who tried to relate seriously to Buddhism.

In China the story was different with Confucian ideology. Protestant missionaries recognized that this represented the warp and woof of Chinese society, and in their preaching, writing, and training they tried, with varying degrees of success, to relate themselves to the Confucian framework. In fact, their own mental grid of Scottish realism or “common sense,” popularized widely in many American colleges through William Paley’s Natural Theology, fitted nicely with Chinese “natural theology.” Some missionaries, most notably many from the London Missionary Society, such as James Legge, Walter Medhurst, and Alexander Williamson, followed the path pioneered by the early Jesuit mis-
sionaries, and affirmed that God's self-revelation was writ large on the pages of the ancient Chinese classics. In general, most missionaries were fearful of converts who looked "too Confucian," but some argued for "Confucius plus Christ," noting that a Chinese Christian who performed the Confucian rites, "renounces nothing, nor is he supposed to accept any anti-Christian doctrine." No issue in Asia, whether in China or Japan, offended the sensitivities of the receptor cultures more than the attitude of Protestant missionaries toward the ancestral rites. With very few exceptions these were viewed as religious idolatry, and little attempt was made to understand their social dimensions. As a result, they were rejected out of hand, and this proved to be an insurmountable obstacle to the reception of the Gospel message.4

The manner in which the "exclusive message" was proclaimed is related to the issue of power. In the pre-1842 period, before the missionaries had any of the clout and privilege derived from the unequal treaties imposed on China following the Opium War, they, with some exceptions such as Karl Gutzlaff, acted in a sensitive way toward Chinese culture. Their attitudes, as expressed in what they wrote, were often superior and judgmental, but they had to be careful in what they did. Following 1842, attitudes and actions changed dramatically. Now they had power and privilege, "rights" to throw their weight about. They could do what they wanted, and they did! This atmosphere removed them far from the poor, humble, and persecuted early Christian band who first proclaimed the message of Acts 4:12. Their message and attitude threatened the officials and gentry who were the patrons of the Confucian tradition.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century, Darwin's evolutionary hypothesis, the emphasis on the social Gospel, the rise of the higher critical method in biblical studies, and the modernist-fundamentalist controversy in America began to divide the solid evangelical stance of Protestant missionaries in China. This eventually found organizational expression with the formation in 1920 of The Bible Union, joined by over two thousand missionaries who were disturbed both by growing doctrinal deviation in other expressions of Christian unity in China and by "a more tolerant attitude toward Chinese religious practices."5

In this new climate of alleged tolerance some Protestant missionaries began to feel better about Buddhism. W. A. P. Martin believed that its emphasis on belief in a divine being (in its Mahayana form) and in the immortality of the soul made it a preparatio evangelica for Christianity. He effusively claimed that "praise to the Buddhist divinities was worthy to be laid as an offering at the feet of Jehovah." D. Z. Sheffield of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions replied tartly:

I have no sympathy with that sort of thing and think that Christian men, and above all missionaries, are in the poorest kind of business when they set out to coquet with heathen religions, magnifying their virtues and belittling their vices.6

Timothy Richard, an English Baptist, was enthralled by the Buddhist book, The Awakening of Faith, and called it an "Asiatic form of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in Buddhist nomenclature."7

Karl Reichelt, originally affiliated with the Norwegian Missionary Society, founded the Christian Mission to Buddhists and, although adhering firmly to the uniqueness of the historical Christ, found many creative ways to identify with the "friends of the Dao," seekers after the truth within the Buddhist tradition. Critics referred to his center on Dao Feng Shan as "that Buddhist monastery in Shatin."8 Eventually, Reichelt had to leave his Norwegian mission agency and carry on his work independently.

We must applaud with William Hutchison the creative efforts of many missionary pioneers: "The sensitivity that some missionary theorists brought to the dilemmas of cultural interaction was more than just enlightened for its time—often it was enlightened for any time, our own included."9 Unfortunately, for most missionaries, host-country cultural assumptions, the colonialist-era mentality, the burden of power, lack of anthropological insights, and superficial theological interpretations doomed them to relate inadequately to receptor cultures.

Today we are required to do far better. The world is changing dramatically. Pluralism, long present, is much more apparent; the formal, colonial period has ended; in most areas of the world Christianity has lost or is losing its power base, and the world faces crucial problems, with many calling for less competition and more collaboration among religions.

If evangelical theology has not changed radically in its thinking about relationship to other religions, what may we say about evangelical attitudes and practices? In fact, when there has been formal dialogue between evangelicals and other groups on relationships with other faiths, evangelical attitudes have been criticized more strongly than their theology. Critics have been willing to concede evangelical assertions on the Lordship of Christ and on his uniqueness and universality. They often agree that these doctrines lead logically to the exclusive nature of the Christian faith. What they object to is the way in which evangelicals load these concepts with historical and cultural assumptions that derive from an American worldview. Thus, they accuse them, rightly in more instances than not, of triumphalism, a cocksure attitude, aggressiveness, cold, analytic logic, no sensitivity to people, and a continued colonial mentality.

During the last two decades, we have turned the corner on some of these attitudes. Many evangelical missionaries are receiving in-depth training in cultural anthropology and have begun to give attention not merely to the message, but to the way in which it is perceived by receptor cultures. What changes are occurring?10

1. Even as evangelicals continue to proclaim Christ as the only Savior, they see that this must be done, to use Kosuke Koyama's apt phrase, by "crucified minds, not a crusading spirit." The cross is not merely the center of the message of salvation; it is crucial for Christian living and ministry. We see the need to refuse power, privilege, and position and to walk in weakness and vulnerability. Ironically, this only returns us to square one: the pre-Constantinian church that presented its radical message in the marketplace of competing ideologies.

The churches in China are a paradigm for this. Pre-1949 they were privileged within Chinese society and had a power base within and outside China. Yet they were spiritually weak, few in number, divided, and viewed as foreign. From 1949 until now they have had no privilege or power base, and this has enabled them to throw off the foreign label and experience one of the greatest revivals of church history. Worldly strength produced weakness; worldly weakness is now bringing spiritual strength.
2. Evangelicals are beginning to think more relationally. They see the need to “proclaim the truth in love,” to present Christ, not religious systems, to people. Particularly in Asian countries, truth must be tied closely with personal relationships, and neatly packaged and closely reasoned arguments must take second place. This demands that we come as learners and listen with empathy, that ability to put ourselves in the place of people within the receptor culture and understand their needs as they see them.

3. Evangelicals recognize the difference between evangelism and proselytism. Adoniram Judson, unusual for his day, saw this clearly 150 years ago. He refused to use his scientific expertise to debunk indigenous ideas about eclipses, since he felt that this would enable him to manipulate his hearers into believing the Gospel. The Evangelical–Roman Catholic dialogue reached consensus on “the ethics of Biblical persuasion.” The authority of money, cultural origin, political connection, knowledge, superior formal education, technology, and mission-agency clout must yield to the authority of Jesus Christ.

4. Evangelicals are learning to present the message of Christ within the context of local religious traditions. Don Richardson’s use of the “peace child” as a “redemptive analogy” for Jesus within the Sawi culture of Papua New Guinea, is a good example of this.

5. Evangelicals see the need in our chaotic world to live by the theology of presence. They have already recognized the need for this in a hostile context where nothing else was possible. In some areas of the world where competing religious beliefs have produced extremely fragile intercommunity relationships, it may be wise, as well as Christian, to refrain from overt evangelism that would exacerbate this. Renewed community relationships may be the first priority. We may be called upon to join with those of other religious groups to meet common needs related to poverty, injustice, and exploitation. This has often been required in the past and will be an increasing need in days ahead.

Even as evangelicals recognize the need for a theology of presence, they find it impossible to neglect the evangelistic mandate. The poor and the affluent, the refugees and those with homes, the oppressed and the oppressors, those in war and in peace, those who sin and are sinned against—they are all men and women who need to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, irrespective of what their traditional religion may be. As the end of a millennium draws near, the number of evangelistic programs and strategies to reach all peoples are multiplying. We must be careful about the rhetoric and “hype” that accompany these efforts and that cause the world to think we are mounting another crusade to return to the “Christendom” of old. But guilt from past mistakes must not immobilize us. We need new, creative attitudes. We need to work as if all depended on us, and yet trust God’s grace for those we cannot reach, confessing that God will deal justly and mercifully with them in ways beyond our ability to perceive.

In summary, what may we say? A growing consensus has developed over the past twenty-five years among the evangelical, Roman Catholic, and conciliar ecumenical communities, particularly in how we feel and act toward other religious faiths. We still have a distance to go in our theologizing. We have not resolved our differences in authority and hermeneutics. These are not peripheral, but reflect basic understandings integral to each of our communities. We have a need for continued dialogue and increased mutual trust.

Notes


2. The Lausanne Covenant was signed by Christian leaders from 150 nations at the International Congress on World Evangelization, held at Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974.


5. In a book being prepared for publication, Don Richardson seems to open the door for many more people to be saved through general revelation than has usually been the evangelical view. This is consistent with his view expressed in Eternity in Their Hearts that general revelation was the means for salvation in the period before Abraham; in Don Richardson, Eternity in Their Hearts (Ventura, Calif.: Regal, 1981), pp. 31–33.


7. Phil Parshall related the story in a meeting of the American Society of Missiology at Wheaton College in June 1984, of his deep, personal relationship with a Muslim friend with whom he shared many periods of family prayer.

8. A few evangelical thinkers have developed more philosophical skills for presenting their case and no longer depend on biblical “proof texts.” In his article “Exclusivism, Tolerance, and Truth,” in Missiology 15, no. 2 (April 1987), Harold Netland, a missionary to Japan with the Evangelical Free Church of America, who holds a doctorate in philosophy from Claremont Graduate School, argues that if we are to have a view of the relation among religions that is epistemologically sound and accurately portrays the values and beliefs of the respective religions, something like traditional Christian exclusivism is unavoidable; cf. pp. 77–95. Also see Harold Netland, “Toward Contextualized Apologetics,” Missiology 16, no. 3 (July 1988): 289–304. It does not encourage dialogue on this issue for Wilfred Cantwell Smith to make the statement that “exclusivism strikes more and more Christians as immoral. If the head proves it true, while the heart sees it as wicked, un-Christian, then should Christians not follow the head? Maybe this is the crux of our dilemma.” See “An Attempt at Summation” in Anderson and Stransky, eds., Christ’s Lordship and Religious Pluralism (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1981), p. 202. It is possible to void Acts 4:12 and other similar verses of any theological meaning. I think of Gregory Baum’s “survival language,” Krister Stendahl’s “confessional language, rather than propositional” (See Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky, eds., Christ’s Lordship and Religious Pluralism, pp. 88 and 15, and John Gager’s “cognitive dissonance” in Martin E. Marty and Frederick E. Green, eds., Pushing the Faith [New York: Crossroad, 1988], pp. 57–77). These authors are apparently not comfortable with the narrow focus of these texts; neither am I, but I have no liberty to evade them.

9. I personally am not impressed by the academic rigor of the sociological and/or historical arguments used by some Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars to void Arts 4:12 and other similar verses of any theological meaning. I think of Gregory Baum’s “survival language,” Krister Stendahl’s “confessional language, rather than propositional” (See Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky, eds., Christ’s Lordship and Religious Pluralism, pp. 88 and 15, and John Gager’s “cognitive dissonance” in Martin E. Marty and Frederick E. Green, eds., Pushing the Faith [New York: Crossroad, 1988], pp. 57–77). These authors are apparently not comfortable with the narrow focus of these texts; neither am I, but I have no liberty to evade them.

A Boon or a “Drag”? How North American Evangelical Missionaries Experience Home Furloughs

Robert T. Coote

According to the ideal, a missionary should experience his or her home furlough, or “home assignment,” as a time of personal renewal. Protestant mission agency handbooks typically prescribe a combination of rest and family visitation, medical checkups, deputation or “mission interpretation,” and personal enrichment studies “so the ministry will be enhanced.”

But according to the findings of a recent survey conducted by the Overseas Ministries Study Center of New Haven, Connecticut, furlough time may not always be a boon; sometimes it is experienced as a “drag.” “My Furlough Experience,” as the survey was titled, explored patterns among conservative evangelical missionaries in North America regarding furlough housing and continuing education. Provision was also made for spontaneous comments, and since one out of three respondents volunteered additional information, the survey produced a rather well-nuanced picture of how missionaries experience their furlough periods. The survey was the third in a series conducted by the Overseas Ministries Study Center during the decade of the 1980s, and therefore we are enabled to identify trends as well as current issues.

Conservative evangelicals make up the vast majority of the North American Protestant overseas career missionary force, and therefore fifteen of the larger evangelical agencies were invited to participate in the survey. For the most part, these agencies come under the rubric of “faith missions,” a term rooted in the final years of the nineteenth century, when North American mainline denominational societies could not muster the funds out of their central treasury to support all of the volunteers who presented themselves for overseas service. The denominational societies also emphasized formal educational preparation, and this deterred many of the newer evangelical candidates who at that time often took exception to the mainline emphasis on higher education.

In response, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a number of “faith mission” voluntary societies were formed, financed on the basis of “personal support,” that is, through the pledged support of the individual candidate’s network of friends and sympathetic churches. It would be difficult to imagine today’s vast evangelical missionary community based in North America—some 40,000 career missionaries—apart from the extensive use of this decentralized approach to financing. This means that a significant portion of the evangelical missionary’s furlough time must be spent on the road, affirming and renewing the network of supporters. Some missionaries may be so solidly underwritten, and their base of support so concentrated in one area, that they may be able to keep their away-from-home deputation work down to just a few weeks. The amount of time on the road for North American evangelical missionaries—as reported in all three of the surveys conducted by the Overseas Ministries Study Center—typically ranges from eight to fourteen weeks. Some, however, spend two to three months of their furlough away from home in the fall, plus additional time in the spring. A minority report being on the road as many as 40 to 50 weeks out of their year of furlough.

The fifteen agencies that participated in the 1989 survey are as follows:

Members of the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association
* Africa Evangelical Fellowship
AIM International (formerly Africa Inland Mission)
* Overseas Missionary Fellowship (formerly China Inland Mission)
* SEND International (formerly Far East Gospel Crusade)
SIM International (formerly Sudan Interior Mission)
* UFM International (formerly Unevangelized Fields Mission)
* Worldteam Inc. (formerly West Indies Mission)

Members of the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association
** Baptist General Conference
Christian and Missionary Alliance
Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society
* Evangelical Free Church
* Mission to the World (Presbyterian Church of America)
* OMS International (formerly Oriental Mission Society)

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assignments may be limited to three to six months and come as
affordable housing and transportation and to mission headquar-
ters that increasingly encourage them to seek further education
during furlough in order to enhance their ministry. However, the
words of appreciation are frequently accompanied by sober as­
sessments of the pressures and problems that typically accom­
pany furlough. Sometimes it appears that problems loom large:

- Furlough is a drag.” This missionary couple visited twenty­
five churches to garner support.
- Furlough was “a rude awakening. What we thought would be
  a time of ‘regrouping,’ studying, visiting family and churches
  and deputation has been a time of hard physical labor just to
  pay rent, food and other living expenses. Studying for degrees
  and further education?!” Surely you jest!”
- One family settled down in Washington state but then spent
  much of furlough traveling and moteling through ten states
  stretching all the way to North Carolina.
- A couple on their sixth furlough, with one child living at home,
  found it necessary to spend $725 a month for housing; their
  agency’s housing allowance of $300, they said, was “totally
  inadequate.”
- One family (second furlough; three children) reported being so
  “stressed out” that they are considering leaving missionary
  life.
- Still another couple reported the wife’s commitment to getting
  her master’s degree—“a good but very intense program.”
  Meanwhile the husband traveled the deputation road and con­
  cluded, “I can’t wait to get back to Kenya and have a normal
  60-hour week.”

At the same time, an element of personal style, resourceful­
ness, and general outlook on life must be taken into consideration.
The 1989 survey also included some upbeat comments, such as
this one from a Canadian missionary couple with the Overseas
Missionary Fellowship (OMF), who after six furloughs and five
children testify: “God has provided beautifully for us as a
family during furlough.”

One of the most significant aspects of the 1989 survey is its
representativeness. In addition to the fact that more than seven
out of ten “units” answered the survey (a “unit” is a mis­sionary
couple or a single, unmarried missionary), the survey
dealt with a larger universe of furloughing missionaries than in
the previous surveys, and therefore it garnered a much larger
number of responses: 472 as compared to about 200 in 1981 and
1984. As already indicated, fourteen of the fifteen agencies in
the survey are members of the Interdenominational Foreign Mission
Association (IFMA) or the Evangelical Foreign Missions Associ­
ation (EFMA). The personnel of these fourteen agencies account
for about 35 percent of the total IFMA/EFMA overseas force; there­
fore we can surmise that the survey reflects a reasonably accurate
picture of the IFMA/EFMA community as a whole. And Wycliffe
Bible Translators, the fifteenth agency, is known to be very rep­
resentative indeed of the North American evangelical community.

Continuing Education
At the time of the ﬁrst of the Overseas Ministries Study Center
furlough surveys, in 1981, numerous respondents commented on
the lack of support within the agency headquarters for continuing
education. At that time, the number involved in continuing ed­
cucation (everything from one- or two-day workshops to full ac­
demic programs) was about 40 out of 100, and of these only 14
were engaged in graduate degree programs. In the 1984 survey,
the numbers jumped dramatically to 85 out of 100. The increase
came not in graduate degree programs but in individual courses
taken for credit (but without any stated plan to earn a degree),
or noncredit seminars and workshops/conferences.

The 1989 total remains about the same, but the spread is
strikingly different: Now the proportion pursuing graduate de­
gresses has jumped from 14 out of 100 to 23 out of 100 (109 out of
472). Table 1 summarizes the ﬁndings of the three surveys in this
regard.

Clearly, the stereotype of conservative evangelical mission­
aries as minimally educated enthusiasts is totally inadequate. One
particular statistic, not reported in Table 1, reinforces the proﬁle
of the contemporary evangelical missionary: Of the respondents
in the 1989 survey who were home on their ﬁrst furlough, 55
percent reported that they already hold one or more graduate
degrees. This means that most of them went out as brand new
recruits already credentialed with master’s or doctoral degrees.
The majority of these were not ordination degrees but rather academic
and professional degrees: theology, missiology, education, business administration, linguistics, anthropology, sociology, public health, engineering, counseling, communications, management, etc.

This list of subjects also represents the range found among the reported graduate degree programs-in-progress. Missions/missiology heads the list with 34 reported; linguistics and education follow, with 11 and 10 reported, respectively. In all, 21 missions/evangelical schools are represented and 30 secular and other institutions. The IFMA/EFMA missionaries are three times more likely to enroll in a secular college or university, while members of Wycliffe Bible Translators are almost three times more likely to enroll in an evangelical college or seminary than in a secular one. Overall, approximately seven out of every ten missionaries in the 1989 study now hold or are earning one or more graduate degrees.

Some missionaries, of course, are holders of ordination degrees rather than professional degrees; but what is surprising is that those who hold only an ordination degree (that is, no additional degree in theology, missiology, or some other professional field) comprise only 25 percent of the whole. Table 2 displays the schools and degree categories of programs in progress.

Close analysis of the survey data indicates that EFMA-related missionaries are half again as likely to hold graduate degrees as IFMA missionaries. Much of this difference can be traced to the far greater incidence of ordination degrees among EFMA types. However, when we shift our attention from degrees already held to degrees programs-in-progress, it is discovered that about 20 percent of both EFMA and IFMA types report being engaged in graduate degree programs, suggesting that IFMA types now place just as much emphasis on advanced formal education as EFMA-related missionaries.

In the 1989 survey we find no complaints about lack of support from headquarters. On the contrary, we read:

“Our mission (UFM International) encourages studying, for which I am thankful.”

“I have greatly appreciated the time allowed and the financial assistance given to me by the C&MA [Christian and Missionary Alliance] in order to further my education. This is very important to me and has done much to increase my loyalty to my mission agency.”

Numerous respondents extol the benefits of continuing education for their missionary work:

“My furlough was an extra year longer to allow time for studies which have led to a change from predominantly health care ministry to one which will include Bible teaching in an SIM institution.”

“My graduate experience at Wheaton [College] was excellent. I recommend that all missionaries take continuing education. It certainly has helped me approach ministry on the field much more positively and adequately.” (SIM single missionary)

“I’ve had two years graduate studies at CBC [Columbia Bible Seminary/Graduate School of Mission] and am not really working for the master’s—yet I find it worthwhile.” (OMF single missionary)

A first-termer, who due to unavoidable circumstances missed out on course work during his furlough (“a great disappointment”), asserts that “my felt need for more education sky rocketed as I began to understand better the challenges we face in ministry.”

Still, missionary experiences regarding continuing education are not uniform. Some 1989 respondents maintain that it is necessary to take a leave of absence in order to do “serious” degree work. A single missionary with an EFMA agency, home on a 13-month furlough and on the road for deputation almost every weekend, managed to take four education courses at a community college, but she hesitates to commit herself to a master’s program, “since furlough [deputation] itself takes up so much time. It would be like two full-time jobs [and] I’d go back an exhausted wreck.” Some IFMA missionaries, home on an “educational” furlough, make the comment that this means they do not receive their normal support allowance from the mission. Explains one spouse, “We must live from contributions to the extent that our regular supporters are willing to contribute to our education.”

Another C&MA father with three children writes that he has completed one year of graduate studies and hopes to resume next furlough, although he could not work on the degree this furlough. Another C&MA father has concluded that it is “unrealistic” to pursue academic studies with four children in the family.

A two-term missionary with the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society (CBFMS) reflects the pressure many feel: “There

**Table 1. Missionary Continuing Education, 1981–1989**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate Level Work</th>
<th>1981</th>
<th>1984 = 472 units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Individuals* holding graduate level degrees</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>39%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Individuals w. graduate degrees in progress</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Individuals w. undergrad. degrees in progress</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Academic Coursework for Credit (no degree program indicated)</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<td>5. Not-for-credit C.E. Seminars, etc.</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>41%</td>
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</table>

*Occasionally both spouses report degrees-held or degrees-in-progress. In such instances they are counted as "2" even though representing only 1 unit.

Note: Inasmuch as lines 1 through 5 represent disparate and/or overlapping categories, the total of the figures in the righthand column (1989) exceeds the total number of missionary units reporting in the survey. In particular, note that line 1 overlaps with lines 2-5. There is no overlap between lines 2, 3 and 4.

**Surprisingly, although more than 100 respondents reported working on graduate degrees, less than half identified their furloughs as "educational." That is, their agency executives had not formally granted an education furlough. Evidently, many missionaries are determined to earn further degrees by bits and pieces in the course of normal one-year furloughs; they are not waiting for headquarters to grant educational furloughs.

Note: Out of 109 degrees in progress, 106 were professional or academic degrees other than medical or ordination degrees; only 2 medical degrees and 1 ordination degree were reported.

"Furlough is a year of hard work mixed with ample time to renew ties with family and friends."
was literally no time for serious study this furlough. I am going back to my field assignment spent. [Furlough] is a grueling experience although enjoyable as you seek to make contact with all supporters in 8 months. I believe serious study for me will only occur if ... I take a sabbatical. I hope to do so next furlough."

**Furlough Housing**

In 1984, when the survey of that year was analyzed, we noted a shift from 1981 patterns in housing toward renting on the open market and away from staying with family members/friends. There

### Table 2. Evangelical Furlough Patterns: Graduate Degree Programs in Progress

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<tr>
<th>EVANGELICAL INSTITUTIONS:</th>
<th>AIM</th>
<th>SIM</th>
<th>IFMA*</th>
<th>C&amp;MA</th>
<th>CBFM</th>
<th>EFMA*</th>
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*These are groups fielding 100–300 missionaries, considered "mid-range" for the purposes of the survey analysis.
was also small but apparent movement toward staying in church-sponsored housing or investing in one's own home. Staying in established furlough centers or in campus housing (house-parents, missionaries-in-residence, etc.) showed a slight decline.

In broad strokes, the pattern for married missionaries in 1984 was as follows: 42½ percent chose to rent on the open market; the balance chose, in descending order:

- living with family/friends;
- church-sponsored housing;
- furlough center, or campus housing (house-parents; missionary-in-residence; student; caretaker);
- investing in their own home.

When the current data is compared with this, we find that the picture has not changed a great deal. Renting on the open market remains the preference of married missionaries but has dropped seven points, from 42+ percent in 1981 and 1984 to 35 percent in 1989. Church-sponsored housing is up slightly: 15 percent in 1981, 13 percent in 1984, and 16 percent in 1989. Owning one's own home appears more than twice as often in the 1989 survey as in 1984: 11½ percent in 1981, 7 percent in 1984, up to 16 percent in 1989.

Housing costs have increased on average about 7½ percent per year since 1984. For families with two or more children the increase since 1984 is 33 percent, while housing for couples with one child or no children has increased more than 50 percent. The range in housing costs from one kind of housing to another seems to have narrowed in recent years. For instance, the cost in 1984 for church-sponsored housing for families with two or more children was less than half of the cost of renting on the market, but in 1989 church-sponsored housing was nearly 70 percent the cost of open market rentals. Similarly, in the 1984 survey, married couples with one child or no children paid 75 percent as much as families with two or more children; today their housing costs are almost 90 percent of what larger families are paying. Table 3 displays how housing options are dispersed among the 1989 survey respondents, along with the monthly costs (including utilities).

As was clearly the case in earlier surveys, the 1989 survey demonstrates the pressure some families feel as they seek suitable housing. The 1989 survey turned up assessments like these:

"I am weary of furlough and home-assignment because of inadequate finances and the housing arrangements." (Three children; second furlough. This couple depleted their personal savings in 1989 to pay the bills.)

"Our year home has been very stressful." (One child; first furlough. This family stayed with relatives because they couldn't afford to rent.)

"It is extremely important that missionaries have a 'home base,' but definitely not doubling up with family or friends." (Two children; fourth furlough; now own their own home.)

"The house the church provided was located in the flight pattern of the local airbase. The neighborhood was also dangerous for our teenage daughter." (Third furlough; these concerned parents moved out after three weeks and rented on the open market.)

"Having our own home would enable us to organize our time better." (This seven-member family lived with relatives; second furlough.)

An older couple: "We had a very nice [rented] house the previous furlough, but it took all we had to pay the bills." (This time they moved in with their son.)

A single missionary "moved four times this furlough" (in six months!).

"Locating adequate housing is a crucial issue for furloughs. It could precipitate our withdrawal from overseas service, because family life is too disjointed and transient. This is a critical area, gentlemen." (One child; third furlough. They paid almost $700 a month, in the Midwest.)

"Our rent is $925/month [but] the mission allowance is $650. God has provided the difference through two local church groups and an interested individual. Praise His name!" (Four children; second furlough; in Southern California.)

We take such testimonials seriously. At the same time, we also must note that many of the respondents do not comment on this subject one way or the other. Furthermore, the index used in the survey to measure degree of satisfaction with housing arrangements has remained fairly constant through the decade of the 1980s: it stands between "excellent" and "satisfactory," closer to the "satisfactory" side. Relatively few of the 1989 respondents call their housing "less than satisfactory."

### Additional Observations

As stated earlier, the traditional pattern of four years of service followed by one year of furlough is still the rule among evangelical missionaries; opting for shorter terms is still the exception. The average term of overseas service, as calculated from the 1989 survey, is 3.6 years. It was virtually the same in 1984 and 1981. The average furlough is 10.6 months. Time away from home on deputation varies widely, but averages about 10 weeks. ("Ed-

### Table 3. Missionary Furlough Housing, 1989, with cost per month

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<th>Stayed with</th>
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<td>2+ Children</td>
<td>$372</td>
<td>75½</td>
<td>$569</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>$434</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than 2 Children</td>
<td>33½</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>41½</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>23½</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>4½</td>
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<td>156½</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>55½</td>
<td>57</td>
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Housing chosen by Marieds—

1984/1989: 22% / 20% 42½% / 35% 13% / 16% 7% / 16% 15% / 13%

1984 and 1989 Total av. costs compared:

| 2+ Children | $397 | 529 |
| Less than 2 children | 299 | 467 |
| Single | 188 | 262 |
Educational” furlough periods are excluded from these averages."

When one finds deputation-away-from-home running 25–50 weeks, the implication is that difficulty has been encountered in raising and maintaining support. An unusually large number of missionaries in the “mid-range” EFMA group (for purposes of this study, “mid-range” indicates an agency with 100–300 missionaries overseas) reported being away from home half or more of the furlough year. (The contrast with other groups was so marked that we excluded such EFMA-related respondents when calculating the survey average.) The question arises, Why is such extended deputation reported among the “mid-range” EFMA group? The answer may be found in part in the fact that one-fifth of these missionaries report family size of four or more children; in other words, they have higher support levels to raise through deputation.

Additional observations can be gleaned from the Appendix: "1989 Survey Data Table." (The Appendix is available from the author upon request.) For example, missionaries with AIM International reported the least expensive arrangements for housing in 1989, displacing SIM from earlier years in that respect. Furlough housing centers, we note with surprise, were almost as expensive in 1989 as the average housing arrangement. Church-sponsored housing was not nearly as likely to be deeply "discounted" as it was five years ago. Even those missionaries who stayed with family members or friends (most missionaries in this category are single) paid their hosts 65–85 percent as much as the average housing arrangement. Less than half of the family/friend arrangements were "freebies," which contrasts with 60 percent being "freebies" in 1984.

**The View from the Executive’s Desk**

The response of mission executives to an early draft of this report may be useful in forming a balanced assessment of the survey. For instance, one EFMA executive, reflecting on the grimmer comments of missionary respondents, states that some missionaries have the impression that “furlough is a year ‘off.’ . . . No one in the world gets one year out of every five off . . . . The norm would be pastors [within our denomination]. Churches that are large enough to grant sabbaticals are very few . . . . We see [furlough] as a crucial time for maintaining funds but even more for maintaining missions interest [through missionary deputation].” The agency no longer speaks of “furlough,” preferring “home assignment” to emphasize the furloughing missionary’s ongoing responsibilities.

The foregoing executive would no doubt wish to read more assessments like the following from a C&MA missionary:

The [deputation] tours gave me an opportunity to meet many people and inform them of our work. I did miss my wife and children, as they missed me, but 14 out of 52 weeks is reasonable tour time . . . . I firmly believe in continuing education. I plan to take graduate courses by mail during our second term and more courses during our second furlough (my wife also). I learned (on this, my first furlough) that furlough is not a vacation. It is a year of hard work mixed with ample time to renew ties with family and friends.

An IFMA agency head, noting the proposal to concentrate financial support in a single church, warns that this may backfire. He tells of a missionary couple whose support came from a single congregation. Suddenly the congregation dropped its support and the couple had to use its first furlough raising support from "scratch."

Paul McKaughan, executive director of EFMA, sympathizes with missionaries regarding the hardships they encounter during furlough, particularly the long hours on the deputation road. But, he says, “I know of no pattern that would enable [the North American church] to put the same number of missionaries on the field as does the method of individualized support.” Furloughing missionaries, he points out, play a vital and essential role via deputation in that they contribute to “the overall equity position of the mission.”

McKaughan also observes that the "trend toward professionalization [e.g., advanced degrees] within the missionary enterprise" is accompanied by rising expectations. “As I talk with missionaries I find that their economic and lifestyle expectations are those of the CPA, lawyer, doctor, professor, and large church pastor . . . . These expectations run in direct conflict with the trends that are taking place in North American society. An example is the trend of the working wives due to economic necessities. Missionaries have unrealistic expectations when compared to middle-class America. As mission agencies we have to do a better job of communicating.”

**Conclusion**

The 1989 survey of evangelical missionary furlough patterns reminds us that the pressures and controversies attendant to the personalized support system still register as a boiling-point issue with a substantial proportion of the missionary community. Finding housing that is suitable to a family’s independence and re-

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**The pressures and controversies of the personalized support system are still a boiling-point issue with many missionaries.**

Deputation/fund-raising pressures mentioned at the beginning of this article find echoes throughout the 1989 survey responses. An EFMA-related missionary husband, with three children, on his third furlough, and engaged in a master’s program at Wheaton Graduate School, writes, “Deputational tours are too long and getting longer. Furlough allowances are not enough for meeting expenses in city areas. The spouse must work = stress on the family.” One missionary, looking for a long-term solution to the housing problem, would buy a house if the mission agency would consider “equity sharing with their workers” (presumably, this could take the form of providing the down payment). An IFMA related missionary (fifth furlough, four children) asserts, “Churches should be urged to give their ‘own’ [missionaries] at least 80 percent of their support needs, so that during furlough it would be possible to settle in one place and not have to jockey all over the country.” An EFMA-related missionary represents a frustration common to many others when he writes, “We expend much time in finding house, car, etc., on arrival and then selling again when departing.” And another adds, “It is difficult to rent, because most houses have no furnishings and furloughing missionaries don’t have any either.”
newal remains a daunting challenge in many cases. Simultaneously, professional preparation for overseas, cross-cultural service has been dramatically on the rise, accompanied, no doubt, by rising expectations in many quarters as to lifestyle. How mission executives can communicate to men and women who have often sacrificed dramatically to serve Christ’s kingdom that their expectations exceed middle-class North American standards constitutes a conundrum of the first order—or so it would seem to this observer.

An unanticipated bonus of the 1989 survey is that the selection of agencies happens to represent the leading edge of current growth within the evangelical community. Whereas IFMA/EFMA agencies as a whole have increased in numbers of overseas personnel by about 7 percent in the last five years, the agencies participating in this survey have increased 22 percent in the same period! There is reason to expect, therefore, that the trends identified in this study indicate a pattern that will impact IFMA/EFMA as a whole.

Reader’s Response

To the Editor:

Please permit me to make a few remarks about “The Legacy of Sadhu Sundar Singh” by Eric J. Sharpe which appeared in the October 1990 issue of the BULLETIN. In this scholarly presentation the author thinks that judged by “our usual standards” the Sadhu has not left any legacy (p. 166). Although he writes that the Sadhu’s witness is “compelling” (p. 166) he has not found it necessary to make the Sadhu himself speak to the readers from his writings. The only passage quoted at the end of the article contains the Sadhu’s assuring words to those who repent and pray. Sundar Singh continues to be a silent victim speaking through his writings, the bulk of which do not report versions of his ecstatic visions.

The Sadhu’s “heavens” always directed him back to the earthly level of human life. Evelyn Underhill, who included him in her Mystics of the Church while he was still living, observed that his “homely sense of Divine indwelling balances these transcendental apprehensions. If the Third Heaven is ineffable, the First Heaven is that inward peace and joy which he expects to find in every Christian’s heart as in his own” (p. 255). He found peace and joy in suffering and said that heaven would not interest him if he could not find a cross there.

The author states that Sundar Singh the ecstatic visionary is more appealing to him than Sundar Singh the explorer. For me, and I believe for many, the strongest appeal comes from Sundar Singh the evangelist. While acknowledging the importance of the mission and ministry of the Sadhu, the author says that “without a Sundar Singh, the Christian church in India would have been immeasurably the poorer” (p. 166). This is equally true of the world church which is being enriched by the legacy of Sadhu Sundar Singh. His legacy is to be found chiefly in the new and bold methods he adopted for sharing the gospel with people of many nationalities.

The author feels that towards the end of his life Swedenborg had become Sundar’s guru (p. 165). The loose use of the word “guru” will not fit in with Sadhu Sundar Singh. His one and only guru was Jesus Christ. Sundar referred to Swedenborg in his letter addressed to the Rev. John Goddard of the Church of New Jerusalem, May 30, 1928, as “our most venerable elder brother in the Lord” (quoted in Sundar Singh, A Biography, by A. J. Appasamy, Madras: CLS, 1966).

T. Dayanandan Francis
General Secretary, Christian Literature Society
Madras, India

Author’s Reply

To the Editor:

I thank Dr. Francis for his letter. It is only natural that he and I should look upon the legacy of Sadhu Sundar Singh from different angles, and see it in different lights. That, I take it, is part of what “contextualization” means. I hope, though, that he does not interpret the way I have raised questions about the Sadhu as evidence of a fundamental lack of sympathy on my part. Far from it. It is sad all the same to have the Sadhu cast in the role of “silent victim”: this is more emotive than helpful. On Swedenborg, all I wrote was that “one might almost say” that for a few years he served Sundar in a guru-like capacity. Obviously I meant it metaphorically. I assure Dr. Francis that I did not invent the Swedenborg connection, nor do I believe that I have overestimated it. As to my not quoting Sundar Singh extensively enough, I apologize for what was clearly an error of judgment on my part. But his books, thanks to Dr. Francis, are available, and can be read. What are not being read are the hundreds of thousands of words that were once written about him and his role. Of course, to India he was chiefly an evangelist. To the Christian world at large he was far more, and it is that “more” that I have tried to touch upon in my article.

Eric J. Sharpe
University of Sydney
Sydney, Australia
Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 1991

David B. Barrett

Mission is Contact

The table opposite is designed to help us monitor the progress of world mission. Mission is all about Christians being in contact with non-Christians. If there is no such contact, there is no mission going on. (When Christians minister to other Christians, it is better to term it ministry or pastoralia, reserving “mission” for contact with non-Christians.) The status of the world Christian mission today as compared to five centuries ago is depicted in the accompanying diagram, which divides our globe into three worlds based on how much mission contact exists. World C consists of all those who individually call themselves Christian (line 9 opposite). Worlds B and A cover all who individually are identified as other than Christian (line 19 opposite). World B stands for non-Christians who are in contact with Christians and who have at least some knowledge of Christ and the Gospel. World A stands for non-Christians who have never come in contact with Christians and have no knowledge of Christ and the Gospel (line 71 opposite).

Up until five hundred years ago there was almost no contact between the three major races: Caucasoid, Mongoloid, and Negroid. Some 93% of all Christians then were Whites in Europe. This means that at that time World C was virtually a racial ghetto out of touch with the non-Christian world (almost all of which was in World A, with a mere 2% in World B).

Contact in the 1990s

Five hundred years later, that picture has radically changed. Mass communication, mass transportation, mass migration, and the resultant religious pluralism have put all the races in daily contact almost everywhere on earth. Christians (World C) are now found in some 10,000 different ethnolinguistic peoples; in half of these they form the majority. Christians today are sufficiently in contact with World B—through presence, witness, evangelism, local church outreach, social action, foreign missions, liberation, interreligious dialogue, etc.—for us to describe its 2.3 billion inhabitants as aware of Christ and the Gospel.

However, World A, consisting of 1.2 billion people (see lines 71–73 opposite), remains untouched by Christian missionaries, mission agencies, or the world’s 2.6 million local churches.

David B. Barrett, a contributing editor, has been an ordained missionary of the Church Missionary Society since 1956. Anglican Research Officer since 1970, he is currently Research Consultant to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board; research director, Charismatic Renewal in the Mainline Churches; and Vatican Consultant on world evangelization.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES ON TABLE (referring to numbered lines on opposite page). Indented categories form part of, and are included in, unindented categories above them. Definitions of categories are as given and explained in World Christian Encyclopedia (1982), with additional data and explanations as below. The analytical trichotomy of Worlds A, B, C is expounded, through 33 global diagrams, in a new handbook of global statistics: Our Globe and How to Reach It: Seeing the World Evangelized by AD 2000 and Beyond (D. B. Barrett & T. M. Johnson, Birmingham, Ala.: New Hope, 1990).

9. Widest definition: professing Christians plus secret believers, which equals affiliated (church members) plus nominal Christians. World C is the world of all who individually are Christians.

19. Total of all non-Christians (sum of rows 10–18 above, plus in 1991 some 210 million adherents of other minor religions). This is also the definition of World A (the evangelized) plus World B (evangelized non-Christians).

23. Church members involved in the Pentecostal/Charismatic Renewal. Totals on this line overlap.

25. World totals of current long-term trend for all confessions. (See Our Globe and How to Reach It, Global Diagram 5.)

26–32. The total of these entries can be reconciled to line No. 9 by referring to WCE, Global Table 4, 48–54. Defined as in article “Silver and Gold Have I None,” in International Bulletin of Missionary Research, October 1983, page 150.

53. Amounts embezzled (U.S. dollar equivalents, per year).

55. Total general-purpose computers and word processors owned by churches, agencies, groups, and individual Christians.


63. Total of audiences in line Nos. 64 and 65, excluding overlap.

65. Total regular audience for Christian programs over secular or commercial stations.

71–72. (also 70). Defined as in WCE, parts 3, 5, 6, and 9.

74. Grand total of all distinct plans and proposals for accomplishing world evangelization made by Christians since A.D. 30. (See Barrett and Reapsome, Seven Hundred Plans to Evangelize the World: The Rise of a Global Evangelization Movement, New Hope, 1988.)
## STATUS OF GLOBAL MISSION, 1991, IN CONTEXT OF 20TH CENTURY

### WORLD POPULATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>1,619,866,800</td>
<td>3,610,034,400</td>
<td>4,373,917,500</td>
<td>5,384,575,000</td>
<td>6,251,055,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban dwellers</td>
<td>232,694,900</td>
<td>1,354,237,000</td>
<td>1,797,479,000</td>
<td>2,320,752,000</td>
<td>2,916,501,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural dwellers</td>
<td>1,387,191,900</td>
<td>2,255,797,400</td>
<td>2,576,436,500</td>
<td>3,063,823,000</td>
<td>3,334,554,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult population</td>
<td>1,025,976,000</td>
<td>2,245,227,300</td>
<td>2,698,396,000</td>
<td>3,300,391,000</td>
<td>3,808,426,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literates</td>
<td>286,705,000</td>
<td>1,437,761,900</td>
<td>1,774,002,700</td>
<td>2,257,853,000</td>
<td>2,697,595,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonliterate</td>
<td>739,233,000</td>
<td>807,465,400</td>
<td>924,394,200</td>
<td>1,042,665,000</td>
<td>1,110,969,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### WORLDWIDE EXPANSION OF CITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metropolises (over 100,000 population)</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 8. Megacities (over 1 million population)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tokyo</td>
<td>12,269,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>7,743,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>5,596,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### WORLD POPULATION BY RELIGION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion Type</th>
<th>1991</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atheists</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal religionists</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crypto-Christians (secret believers)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New-Religionists</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal Protestants</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestants</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern America</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal/Charismatic national workers</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationals (all denominations)</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostals/Charisma</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal Protestants</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Indigenous Christians</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestants</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CHRISTIAN FINANCE (in U.S. $ per year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1991</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giving</td>
<td>157 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income of global foreign missions</td>
<td>45,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New commercial book titles per year</td>
<td>3.0 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian periodicals</td>
<td>70 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total monthly listeners/viewers</td>
<td>20 billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1991</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Total Christians as % of world (World C)</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Affiliated church members</td>
<td>225,613,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Practicing Christians</td>
<td>208,738,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Pentecostals/Charisma</td>
<td>118,584,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Average Christian martyr per year</td>
<td>35,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MEMBERSHIP BY ECCLESIASTICAL BLOC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bloc</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglicans</td>
<td>30,573,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics (non-Roman)</td>
<td>229,052,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Indigenous Christians</td>
<td>7,743,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>8,756,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestants</td>
<td>77,892,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholics</td>
<td>66,419,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MEMBERSHIP BY CONTINENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>8,756,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>1,763,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>273,788,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>60,025,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern America</td>
<td>50,578,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>4,311,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>16,347,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>97,002,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS

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

### CHRISTIAN WORKERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National workers</td>
<td>1,005,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostals/Charismatic national workers</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign missionaries</td>
<td>62,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostals/Charismatic foreign missionaries</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CHRISTIAN FINANCE (in U.S. $, per year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal income of church members</td>
<td>270 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal income of Pentecostals/Charisma</td>
<td>250,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving to Christian causes</td>
<td>8 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churches' income</td>
<td>57 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parochial and institutional income</td>
<td>1 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecclesiastical crime</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income of global foreign missions</td>
<td>200,000,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New book titles per year</td>
<td>5,452,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New titles including devotional</td>
<td>3,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian periodicals</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New books/articles on evangelization per year</td>
<td>200,000,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SCRIPTURE DISTRIBUTION (all sources)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bibles per year</td>
<td>25,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Testaments per year</td>
<td>7,500,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CHRISTIAN RADIO/BROADCASTING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio stations</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total monthly listeners/viewers</td>
<td>750,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Christian stations</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For secular stations</td>
<td>650,000,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CHRISTIAN URBAN MISSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Christian megacities</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New non-Christian urban dwellers per day</td>
<td>5,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Christians</td>
<td>159,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Christians as % of urban dwellers</td>
<td>68.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelized urban dwellers, %</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### WORLD EVANGELIZATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unevangelized population (World A)</td>
<td>788,159,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unevangelized as % of world</td>
<td>58.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unreached peoples (with no churches)</td>
<td>3,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World evangelization plans since AD 30</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### JANUARY 1991
The Legacy of Robert P. Wilder

James A. Patterson

Over a century ago, the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions dramatically jolted the lethargic Protestant churches of America toward new levels of missionary enthusiasm and action. This energetic organization supplied denominational mission boards with a steady stream of fresh enthusiasm and action. This energetic organization supplied recruits well into the 1920s. In addition, the SVM spawned a new generation of highly motivated and effective leaders, who infused the missionary enterprise with an optimistic, even triumphalistic vision for world evangelization previously unmatched in American Protestantism.

Robert Parmelee Wilder (August 2, 1863–March 28, 1938) probably exemplified this early SVM spirit as well as any other pioneer, but his contributions have been largely overshadowed by the more visible exploits of mission giants like John R. Mott and Robert E. Speer. In fact, a recent volume by Harvard historian William R. Hutchison virtually relegates Wilder to a secondary role in the shaping of foreign missions during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Unfortunately, Wilder’s career has been the victim of a scholarly bypass; an assessment of his significance and impact is overdue.

In 1863, Robert Wilder was born in Kolhapur, India, the fifth and last child of his missionary parents, Royal Gould and Eliza Jane Wilder. The elder Wilders had served in the subcontinent since 1846, originally under the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). But Royal Wilder, a New School Presbyterian, battled with ABCFM administrators like Rufus Anderson over educational policies, which led to his dismissal in 1860. The Wilders then labored as independents in Kolhapur for a decade, after which they affiliated with the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA. His nurture in a missionary home had a profound impact on young Robert and how kept up his theological studies at Union Seminary in New York. Following a long tour of college campuses on recruiting tours, maintained SVM records, and somehow kept up his theological studies at Union Seminary in New York. He especially succeeded in persuading college students to embrace the missionary cause and he was personally responsible for bringing future notables like Robert Speer and Samuel Zwemer into the Student Volunteer fold. Wilder also emerged as one of the foremost advocates of the SVM pledge, “We are willing and desirous, God permitting, to become foreign missionaries.”

In a special SVM pamphlet, he outlined the necessity, meaning, and use of the pledge, concluding that it was “the Keystone of the arch” of the SVM. At the first SVM convention in 1891, he led a discussion of the pledge and steadfastly resisted any attempts to change its wording. Perhaps his strongest argument was the fact that, in the five years since Mount Hermon, 6,000 volunteers had been enlisted. At that point in SVM history, Wilder had done more than anyone else to boost the young movement to that level.

In 1891, Wilder finished his studies at Union Seminary and was appointed by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions for student work in India. However, he delayed his passage to India in order to spend more than a year visiting students in Great Britain and Scandinavia. Armed with letters of reference from such dignitaries as Moody, Union professor Philip Schaff, Boston clergyman-educator A. J. Gordon, and former Princeton president James McCosh, among others, Wilder arrived in England with the goal of organizing an SVM counterpart in the British universities. After his tour of several campuses and a special conference at Edinburgh in 1892, the stage was set for what became the Student Volunteer Missionary Union of Great Britain and Ireland. In addition to his organizing endeavors, Wilder also continued his pattern of personally persuading students to become missionaries, such as Glasgow’s Donald Fraser, a onetime agnostic.

For the next five years, Wilder made significant contributions of time and energy to the burgeoning SVM. During this period, he valiantly persevered through occasional bouts of illness, the death of his father, and the return of his mother and sister Grace to the mission field in India. Wilder visited several college campuses on recruiting tours, maintained SVM records, and somehow kept up his theological studies at Union Seminary in New York. He especially succeeded in persuading college students to embrace the missionary cause and he was personally responsible for bringing future notables like Robert Speer and Samuel Zwemer into the Student Volunteer fold. Wilder also emerged as one of the foremost advocates of the SVM pledge, “We are willing and desirous, God permitting, to become foreign missionaries.”

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In Norway, Wilder met Helene Olssön and, after several months of courtship, they were married in September of 1892. The newlyweds soon left Europe for India, where they initiated...
At Fuller women are bringing a vital new significance to World Mission

As any field missionary knows, women play a vital role in front-line world evangelization. Historically, women, both married and single, have comprised over 60 percent of North American missionary personnel.

Sadly, however, women are underrepresented among mission leaders. Although their gifts and skills as cross-cultural teachers, translators, administrators, evangelists, ministers and church planters have long been affirmed, encouragement and training for more women to assume these roles has been lacking. This is why Fuller is committed to supporting the ministry of women and their dynamic participation in fulfilling the Great Commission.

Dr. Elizabeth S. Brewster is assistant professor at Fuller’s School of World Mission, where she has developed programs for language and cultural learning as well as an organization for incarnational ministry among the urban poor. She has ministered in over 80 countries and continues to travel extensively to train men and women in the practical skills of adapting to a new culture as they seek to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ throughout the world.
their ministry to students, first in Calcutta and later in Poona. Wilder employed several methods for reaching educated Indians, including lectures to large groups and literature distribution. However, he usually preferred the personal and low-key approach of “private interviews,” which were more appropriate to the cultural context and more in line with his unique gifts.9

The Wilders departed from India in 1897 in response to John R. Mott’s request that Wilder take a temporary assignment as an SVM traveling secretary for seminars in the United States. Mott, by now a leader in the SVM and the YMCA, believed that Wilder could help to strengthen both organizations but apparently did not anticipate the minor crisis his offer would create with the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. The board hesitantly granted Wilder a leave to pursue his SVM duties, but this evidently placed strains on his relationships with some administrators.10

Before the Wilders returned to India in 1899, Robert quietly resigned from the Presbyterian Board to assume a new position as a traveling secretary for the Indian YMCA. This job proved to be physically and mentally draining for Wilder and caused him to be away from his family for long stretches. The pressures of climate, travel, and poor health forced Wilder to take a leave of absence in 1902, most of which was spent in Norway. In 1903, he decided to resign his YMCA post and end his work in India. Several more months of recuperation in Switzerland and Norway followed.11

In 1904, Wilder received an invitation from Tissington Tatlow, general secretary of the Student Christian Movement (SCM), to tour British universities much as he had done in 1891–1892. Wilder’s ministry to students, carried out in 1905, was impressive enough to bring an offer from the SCM in 1906 for a position as traveling secretary based in London.12 Wilder remained in British university work for the next ten years and placed a special emphasis on evangelism. In addition, the SCM generously shared his services with the World’s Student Christian Federation; this arrangement allowed Wilder opportunities to visit campuses in

### Noteworthy

#### Personalia

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Wilbert R. Shenk and Andrew F. Walls as Contributing Editors of the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH. Dr. Shenk, former missionary in Indonesia from 1955 to 1959 and executive director of Overseas Ministries of the Mennonite Board of Missions from 1965 to 1990, is Director of the Mission Training Center, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Indiana. Dr. Walls taught in Africa for many years, was the founding editor of the Journal of Religion in Africa, and is Director of the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World at New College, University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

Michael Griffiths, former general director of Overseas Missions Fellowship (O.M.F.), and past principal of London Bible College, was appointed to the newly-established position of Mission Studies at Regent College, Vancouver, as of September 1, 1990.

John King Parratt became Assistant Director of the Center for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Christian World at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, on January 1, 1991. Parratt had been Professor of Theology and Religious Studies in the University of Botswana. He had also worked in Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, India and Malawi. He is the author of Papuan Belief and Ritual and A Reader in Christian Theology.

Colin Chapman, 51, has been appointed Principal of Crowther Hall, the Church Missionary Society’s training College, which is part of Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham, England. For the past seven years he was a tutor at Trinity College, Bristol, and prior to that he served with CMS in Cairo as chaplain at All Saints’ Cathedral, and in Beirut, where he was regional secretary for the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. He has published Christians on Trial, Whose Promised Land? and Shadows of the Supernatural.

Lani J. Havens, a consultant to the United Nations Development Program and former Church World Service development consultant in East Africa and the Indian Ocean region, has been elected Associate General Secretary for the Church World Service and Witness Unit of the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A. Havens, 52, a member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), served during 1983–87 as development/documentation officer for the National Council of Churches of Kenya.

The Maryknoll Sisters have elected Sister Claudette La Verdiere as President, the seventh Sister to hold that position since the congregation was founded in 1912. She is also the first President whose mission experience has been primarily in Africa, having served in Tanzania and Kenya since 1967. Sister Claudette succeeds Sister Luise Ahrens who has completed a six-year term as President and will be reassigned to a new post in Asia.

Roger Youmans, M.D., of Tulsa, Oklahoma, became President of the Mission Society for United Methodists on January 1, 1991. He succeeds H. T. Maclin, the founding president, who is retiring but will continue his association with the Mission Society as missionary-at-large. Youmans served for many years as a Methodist medical missionary in Zaire, beginning in 1961. For the last ten years he was on the faculty of Oral Roberts University School of Medicine.

The World Evangelical Fellowship has elected Agustin B. (Jun) Vencer, Jr., a Filipino, as International Director Designate. On July 1, 1992, he will succeed David M. Howard, who has held this position since 1982. Vencer, 43, trained as an attorney, has been general secretary of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches since 1978.

Joseph J. Spaë, well-known Belgian Catholic missionary to Japan, died of kidney failure in Belgium on December 8, 1989. He was 76 years old. Spaë first went to Japan in 1939 and was interned there during the war. After the war he earned a doctorate from Columbia University and returned to Japan in 1948, where he served as editor of The Japan Missionary Bulletin and director of the Oriens Institute...
many areas of continental Europe, at least until World War I broke out in 1914. During the war, he served briefly as a foreign student secretary for the British SCM. Another appeal from John R. Mott brought the Wilders back to the United States in 1916. Robert accepted an appointment as secretary of the Religious Work Department of the International Committee of the YMCA, which involved administrative, evangelistic, and conference responsibilities. The entrance of the United States into World War I in 1917 generated new demands on the YMCA, and Wilder assisted with special programs designed for servicemen. He enjoyed a relatively smooth transition from student to military audiences, helped by an updated version of the old SVM commitment card: "I pledge my allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour and King and by God's help will fight His battles for victory of His Kingdom." Apparently he discerned continuities in recruiting efforts for missionary and national crusades.

In the postwar years, Wilder returned to his first love, the
SVM. He began an eight-year stint as general secretary in 1919, never expecting that this would prove to be the most difficult period of his career. Wilder fondly treasured the original SVM spirit, particularly as it was expressed in the slogan, "The Evangelization of the World in This Generation." But he quickly discovered that this goal failed to motivate many in the student generation of the 1920s. The first hints of trouble appeared at the SVM quadrennial convention held at Des Moines, Iowa, in early 1920. Students pushed aggressively for a greater role within the SVM and for a more explicit commitment to international peace and social justice. Wilder, reflecting a concern shared by other SVM pioneers, bravely attempted to maintain a strong focus on evangelism: "Whether a man goes out as an agricultural missionary or as a medical missionary, all the work in the strictest sense of the term should be evangelistic, and we have the opportunity to make it evangelistic." Wilder attempted to accommodate himself to some of the students' postwar agendas, but he consistently refused to compromise on the SVM's founding vision.

for Religious Research in Tokyo. His many books include Shinto Man, Christian Corridors to Japan, Christianity Encounters Japan, Japanese Religiosity, and Buddhist-Christian Emptiness. In 1971 he was appointed secretary general of SODEPAX, the Committee on Society, Development, and Peace, headquartered in Geneva and operated jointly by the World Council of Churches and the Vatican. In 1982 he returned to Belgium and was engaged in research and writing on China until his death.

Raymond P. Morris, librarian emeritus of Yale Divinity School, died of a heart attack on October 21, 1990. He was 86 years old and had lived in Cleveland, Ohio, since 1987. Dr. Morris joined Yale in 1931 and served as librarian of the Divinity School and the Day Missions Library for 40 years, retiring in 1972. During his tenure he developed the China Records collection, in which letters and papers of former China missionaries were assembled. In 1956 he helped to organize the library for the World Council of Churches headquarters in Geneva.

Announcing

"New Prospects for Mission" was the topic for the inaugural meeting of the British and Irish Association for Mission Studies, held July 9-12, 1990, at New College, University of Edinburgh. New College is part of the complex that includes the General Assembly Hall where the World Missionary Conference was held in 1910, and the meeting opened with a lecture in the Assembly Hall itself (where the carpet has remained unchanged since 1910) by Professor Andrew F. Walls of Edinburgh University, to celebrate the eightyieth anniversary of the 1910 conference. The association links scholars, teachers, administrators and practitioners of mission in a fellowship of study, and is fully ecumenical in membership. Its first chairperson is Haddon Willmer of Leeds University. The secretary, from whom further information may be obtained, is Jack Thompson, Department of Mission, Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham B29 6LQ, U.K.

The Association of Evangelical Professors of Missions in the United States has restructured and changed its name to the Evangelical Missiological Society. The new organization will include missionaries, administrators, and students of missions as well as professors. The executive director of the new society is David Hesslegrave of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois.

The American Society of Missiology will hold its 1991 annual meeting at Techny Towers in Techny, Illinois (near Chicago), June 21-23. The theme of the meeting will be "Missionaries in Situations of Conflict and Violence." The Association of Professors of Mission will meet June 20-21 at the same place in conjunction with the ASM. The theme of their meeting will be "Research for Better Teaching of Mission." Robert Schreiter, C.P.P.S., of the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago is president of the ASM, and Ralph Covell of Denver Seminary is president of the APM for 1990-1991. For further information and registration for either meeting, contact: George Hunsberger, Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan 49423.

The Task Force on Historical Research of the Continuing Committee on Common Witness (representing the National Council of Churches and the U.S. Catholic Mission Association) is seeking to assess what work is now in progress regarding the history of joint efforts in mission between U.S. Catholic and Protestant mission bodies working in Asia, Africa or Latin America. It is the hope of the Task Force that persons and groups undertaking such historical research may be cognizant of what others are doing in the field, and what ways may be found to share the knowledge of such efforts in Common Witness. If you or your church or agency has such work in progress, either for publication or as a dissertation, the Task Force will greatly appreciate your sharing such information with the chairperson of the Task Force: Dr. Charles Forman, Chairperson; Task Force on Historical Research, 329 Downs Road, Bethany, CT 06525. Where possible, please include a precis or progress report regarding the work.
Great Britain. In the latter setting, his campus tours in 1935 came from the SVM Executive Committee, leaving Wilder with added fundraising burdens. Publicly Wilder maintained an optimistic posture as he interpreted and defended the direction of the movement, often with obvious conviction. But he was also well aware of the decline in missionary recruits and that many SVM members were questioning more traditional views on evangelism and the relationship between Christianity and other religions. He must have sensed that he was fighting a losing battle against the liberal drif in the SVM, so he relinquished his job in 1927 to accept a much different assignment overseas. This decision, no doubt an agonizing one, effectively ended his association with a missionary agency that had been so close to his heart for over forty years.

For his last full-time position, Wilder moved to Cairo, Egypt, to become the executive secretary of the Christian Council for Western Asia and Northern Africa, which was shortly renamed the Near East Christian Council. For six years (1927-1933), he engaged in ecumenical activities designed to create more unity and cooperation among Christian churches where Islam was a dominant force. He traveled extensively in the region, published several pamphlets, and edited the News Bulletin, the official organ of the Near East Council. But lingering health problems caused Wilder to halt his active missionary service at the age of 70.

Wilder spent his retirement with his wife in her native Norway. However, he was still in demand as a speaker and he continued to promote the cause of missions in Norway, France, and Speer and Mott. Over the years, Wilder performed a much different function in the missionary movement and was not as well recognized or appreciated as some of his former colleagues in the early SVM. Whereas Mott and Speer were primarily mission executives based in the United States, Wilder was essentially a field missionary with only one lengthy period (1916-1927) in North America apart from his schooling. Additionally, Mott and Speer were widely known in American Protestant circles through their prolific writings and their frequent participation in missionary conferences at home and abroad. In contrast, Wilder found writing to be a laborious chore that sometimes interfered with his more urgent missionary tasks. Thus he delayed some major writing projects until retirement, and even then some of his efforts were simply compilations of addresses given during his more active years. Wilder’s overseas appointments also prevented him from accepting some speaking engagements at missionary meetings in the United States, such as those sponsored by the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, at which he rarely appeared. Finally, Wilder’s quiet, almost self-effacing style of ministry was hardly designed to attract attention to himself. Unlike Mott in particular, Wilder seemed content to operate outside the boardrooms and crowded assembly halls.

Wilder’s lengthy involvement in the student world constitutes his most significant contribution to the missionary impulse of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sherwood Eddy, another product of the SVM glory years, aptly targeted Wilder’s formative role in the collegiate agency:

"Although the time was ripe and the occasion ideal, humanly speaking, the Student Volunteer Movement would not have come into being without Robert Wilder. The movement was the result of Wilder’s vision, Moody’s spiritual drive, and Mott’s organizing genius."

Indeed, it was Wilder who channeled the raw enthusiasm of Mount Hermon into something durable, not only because he was a visionary, but also because he threw himself into the recruitment efforts and personal work that sustained the SVM in its initial stages. Across the Atlantic, Wilder similarly combined his idealism with practical skills to help build student movements in Europe. Few exceeded Wilder’s fervor in advancing the movement, its pledge, or its ambitious motto. Few were more disappointed when the SVM derailed in the 1920s. Although the SVM eventually died as an organization, it could be argued that Wilder himself, in the 1930s, passed the SVM torch to Inter-Varsity Fellowship and thus indirectly to the Student Foreign Missions Fellowship and the Urbana triennial missionary conventions.

Of course, Wilder’s involvement with students was not an end in itself but rather a means to help fulfill the controlling passion of his life, "The Evangelization of the World in This Generation." He not only guided the early SVM to accept this lofty goal but also remained one of its most faithful exemplars. Of course, Wilder’s involvement with students was not an end in itself but rather a means to help fulfill the controlling passion of his life, "The Evangelization of the World in This Generation." He not only guided the early SVM to accept this lofty goal but also remained one of its most faithful exemplars. Even after some mission thinkers had discarded the watchword as unrealistic or outmoded, Wilder continued to uphold its relevance, arguing in retirement that "everyone should have the opportunity to hear the Gospel and to accept Christ in our generation." He perhaps defined the evangelistic task more carefully in his later years but that did not weaken his loyalty to it. In fact, his disillusionment with SVM trends in the 1920s and 1930s was largely due to the dimmed vision for evangelism on the part of many students.

Undergirding Wilder’s abiding devotion to world evangelization was an equally firm conviction about the need for student volunteers and missionary personnel to nurture vigorous spiritual
disciplines. Wilder grew up in a home where prayer permeated family activities. Later he structured the meetings of the Princeton Foreign Missionary Society to allow for considerable periods of family activities. Later he structured the meetings of the Princeton Foreign Missionary Society to allow for considerable periods of group prayer. As his career progressed, Wilder consistently spoke and wrote about the essential role of Bible study and prayer in the life of the Christian worker. His extensive experience in student ministry produced several practical pamphlets designed to outline the elements of a dynamic spiritual life. It is clear in these pieces that Wilder was sharing sincerely from his own pilgrimage of faith. 25

On a related matter, Wilder identified the modern age as a dispensation of the Holy Spirit; few of his contemporaries in mainline Protestantism were as eager to link the Holy Spirit to missions as he was. His starting point was the controversial view that the filling of the Spirit was both a crisis and a process subsequent to conversion. This second work of grace endured the believer with the spiritual power required for a life of “Christ-controlled” service. Wilder was not a pentecostal, as his cautious instruction on the gift of tongues reveals. But he obviously found his Presbyterian roots too confining on this issue and instead appropriated the doctrinal precepts of Moody and Gordon, which had so molded the ethos of the early SVM. 26 For Wilder, effective missionary outreach was absolutely dependent on the consecrating work of the Holy Spirit. His unceasing efforts to improve the overall spiritual tone of the missionary enterprise were unassailable, even if some questioned his teaching on Spirit baptism.

In the final analysis, Robert Wilder left his mark in ways that are difficult to measure by the standards normally applied to the missionary leaders of his generation. He was neither a brilliant mission theorist nor an innovative strategist. He is not remembered as an orator who overwhelmed audiences with his eloquence and his published writings are not voluminous or especially profound. Yet Wilder grasped better than most of his contemporaries the real essence of servanthood and discipleship. Through a life of humble and sacrificial service, he faithfully persevered, despite chronic physical problems, in his overarching commitment to world evangelization. Thus he modeled qualities that are vital and relevant in any missionary era.

Notes


3. For the elder Wilder’s views on educational missions, see Royal Gould Wilder, Mission Schools in India of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (New York: A. D. F. Randolph; and Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1861).

4. On the family move to Princeton, see Braisted, In This Generation, pp. 11–14.


11. See correspondence files for 1897–1898 in Wilder Papers, esp. Benjamin Labaree to Mott, May 5, 1897; Labaree to Wilder, June 29, 1897; and F. F. Ellinwood to Wilder, September 13, 1897.


15. For an earlier defence of this motto, see Wilder, “The Evangelization of the World,” Northfield Echoes 6 (1899): 162–70.


20. For his SVM reminiscences, see Wilder, The Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions and The Great Commission, both published in retirement. On his negative evaluation of student movements in the


22. See for example, Wilder, Christ and the Student World (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1935). On his reluctance to write, see Braisted, In This Generation, p. 201.


24. Mott apparently was disturbed over Wilder’s association with IVF, viewing it as a conservative shift. See Hopkins, John R. Mott, p. 632.

25. Wilder, Christ and the Student World, p. 79.

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Selected Works on Wilder
Personality Disorders and the Selection Process for Overseas Missionaries

Esther Schubert, M.D.

More and more attention is being paid to psychological health issues for missionaries, and many mission fields are becoming sophisticated at providing on-site psychiatric care overseas.

Having devoted the last seven years to overseas consultations for several mission boards, preventive care, counseling, and medication treatment of depressed missionaries, I am seeing some patterns that deeply concern me. I strongly believe in treating “healthy” depressions overseas and have been successful in doing so on most occasions. Persons with “healthy” depressions respond well to counseling and medication and usually can return to productive work wiser and more insightful. In addition, these people are saved the “disgrace” of returning to their home country in a depressed condition.

In contrast, I am beginning to see more characterological or “unhealthy” depressions occurring in the missionary community. These people may respond at first to treatment, but we then discover an underlying personality pathology that may preclude their continued missionary service. Individuals with personality disorders may have slipped through the selection process without adequate evaluation. Their presence on the field is usually surrounded by contention, dissention, disagreements, and exhaustion on the part of other missionaries and field executives who try to support them emotionally and spiritually.

A typical scenario might be the following fictional account:

Herb N., a thirty-two-year-old missionary recruit, is sent to a South American country with his wife and three children, aged 11, 8 and 4. His mission organization believes in pre-field psychological testing, but due to the pressing needs on the field, Herb and his wife do not participate in the entire battery of tests, interviews, and follow-up. Herb doesn’t seem to mind the limited evaluation.

On the field, in planning sessions and team meetings, Herb has periodic rages followed the next day by abject repentance, tears, and the promise never to get angry again. He has difficulty submitting to authority or being a team player. The field leader is at a loss to know how to manage the situation, and complaints also begin to pour in from the national church.

Herb’s wife, Mary, makes efforts to keep things smooth at home, trying to avoid conflict, but periodically the two school-age children are seen with unexplained bruises on their faces and bodies. One child shows evidence of chronic depression associated with acting out; the other has frequent medical complaints which cannot be documented on physical exam or laboratory testing.

The family is strongly advised to return to the U.S. for family therapy and treatment of the children. They refuse, withdraw further into the family unit, eventually leave the mission, but remain on the field without accountability to anyone.

Later investigation into Herb’s past reveals that prior to application to the mission, he was in a series of brief jobs followed by three pastorates that ended in termination—none lasting longer than a year.

His childhood was chaotic, with profound disruption occurring in his first five years of life.

Once in college he was seen by a psychologist who told him that lengthy counseling might help his problems with identity and emptiness, but Herb refused to return to the clinician, calling him an unqualified professional who did not know what he was doing.

As we recruit our missionary candidates from an enlarging pool of bruised individuals, the mission board personnel departments will need sophisticated selection tools to avoid placing well-meaning individuals in jobs beyond their emotional skills. It is wise to remember that fifteen percent of the U.S. population has personality disorders (Nicholi).

We all reach adult life with personality traits that affect the way we perceive and relate to our environment and other people. Functional adults have more healthy than unhealthy traits, though we all have some bruised areas and some poorly adaptive characteristics. Unhealthy personality traits carried to the extreme (as in personality disorders) are so maladaptive and inflexible that they impair social and/or occupational functioning. They often manifest themselves in childhood or adolescence, and tend to be fixed throughout much of adult life. Treatment involves long-term intensive counseling over many years; often it is not successful. Many psychiatrists are not willing to see people with personality disorders because of the time commitment involved and the paucity of results.

I believe that the deterioration of the family in Western society, the erosion of stable traditions, and the frequency of child abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, alcoholic and other dysfunctional families contribute to the marked increase in personality disorders seen in missionary candidates and selected missionaries.

Types of Personality Disorders

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-III-R) classifies personality disorders in three clusters. We will briefly note clusters “A” and “C” and then concentrate our attention on cluster “B”.

Cluster A includes paranoid, schizoid, and schizotypal types. These people may appear odd or eccentric and often are eliminated in selection for the mission field by interview alone, along with close scrutiny of letters of recommendation.

Cluster C includes avoidant, dependent, obsessive-compulsive, and passive aggressive. Candidates with these characteristics may seem anxious and fearful, or may be overly compliant, meticulous, and not expressive of strong feeling. They may be judged “too sensitive” to withstand missionary service, and possibly eliminated by selection committees early in the process.

Cluster B personality disorders tend to be more subtle and may slip through the selection process if sophisticated screening is not utilized. Persons with the antisocial, borderline, histrionic, and narcissistic personality disorders often appear dramatic, suave,
emotional, yet deceptively healthy. Their erratic and impulsive, disruptive, and splitting behaviors are not always apparent until they are stressed in the overseas setting. Each of these will be discussed in more detail. They are often the most disruptive of the personality disorders.

A. Antisocial personality disorder was formerly called sociopath, psychopath, etc. The new title is deceptive in that these people are often smooth, good talkers, and sociable on a superficial level. In the United States they are often in trouble with the law or involved in unscrupulous businesses. In the mission setting they make wonderful speakers for deputation, possibly raising their full support in six weeks when the rest of the mission candidates take six months to two years.

Unfortunately they seem to have an inability to make moral decisions, often are involved in shady business deals, do not honor financial obligations, do not function as responsible par-
ents, avoid planning ahead, and are unable to sustain consistent work behavior. Their sociopathic “swiss cheese” conscience may predispose to sexually immoral behavior even while they loudly champion moral purity.

These people are manipulators, and they lack real empathy and compassion. There does seem to be a congenital or genetic component to this personality disorder. These people usually seem different from birth. A child of a sociopathic parent, adopted at birth into a good family will grow up with sociopathic, antisocial tendencies in many cases. It is as if he was born with a social learning disability.

The prevailing pattern of the antisocial personality disorder is exploitation. People with this disorder may be seen as manipulators in mission candidate school and during the selection process.

B. Borderline personality disorder was not defined until the past decade. It is characterized by instability of mood, interpersonal relationships, and self image. Identity disturbance is almost always present. Identity issues are pervasive and include difficulties with self-view, sexual identity, long-term goals and career, choice of friends, and values.

Persons with borderline personality disorder have unstable and intense relationships, often alternating between the extremes of over-idealization and devaluation. They cannot tolerate being alone and they have affective instability and lability (extreme mood shifts). Frequent angry outbursts occur for which they may later be sorry, or they may ignore or deny that they were angry. They often are involved in self-mutilation or suicide gestures.

Borderlines frequently are involved in “splitting.” This occurs on two levels. The first is splitting between the extremes of idealizing a person, then suddenly devaluing the same person. This leaves missionary colleagues with no consistent frame of reference for interaction and relationship. The second level of splitting occurs in group settings and team functioning where several team members will strongly favor the borderline and be manipulated easily by him or her, whereas others see the dysfunctional patterns of behavior and feel that the individual is a detriment to the team effort. With the passage of time most of the team will perceive the destructive impact of continued interaction.

People with borderline personality disorder have lost out on important developmental milestones, some of which cannot be reclaimed. Fear of abandonment is intense and may persist even after therapy. The most serious losses may have occurred around the age of two so that these people often seem to be two-year-olds in adult bodies.

In selection and in orientation programs, these individuals may be observed in frequent anger-remorse-depression cycles. Once they arrive overseas their disruption to the field ministry team is almost as severe as that occurring with the antisocial personality. At times the borderline person appears so “normal” that team members are caught totally off-guard when outbursts or decompensation recurs.

Identity establishment is so incomplete in these people that they find it almost impossible to successfully integrate into a new culture—hence the basic incompatibility of this personality disorder with overseas missionary service.

C. Histrionic personality disorder manifests itself with excessive emotionality and attention-seeking. People with this disorder constantly seek and demand reassurance, praise, approval, and affirmation. They need to be the center of attention. Their emotions seem shallow and rapidly shifting. Loss and rejection, perceived or real, create severe distress. They may be creative and imaginative, but they lack analytical decision-making skills.

Causes of the disorder seem to be early life separations and disturbance in attachments. Self-esteem for the adult histrionic is centered on physical attractiveness, often to the point of seductiveness. This person cannot tolerate delayed gratification and does not wear well on the mission field. The constant need for reassurance and affirmation wears down other missionaries and national workers, creating a level of exhaustion in the entire team.

In candidate school or orientation programs histrionic types seem overly emotional, flighty, and seductive. They may be the center of every party, but in a very superficial way. Letters of recommendation often comment on these characteristics.

D. Narcissistic personality disorder is a pervasive pattern of grandiosity, hypersensitivity to the evaluation of others, and lack of empathy, according to DSM-III-R. People with this disorder think of themselves as “special,” but when faced with the normal disappointments of life, they may fall apart emotionally. They often feel that their problems are unique and that they are entitled to special treatment.

Their self-esteem is very fragile. They have the exaggerated sense of self-importance that small children have. Their self-idealization apparently causes an extremely immature perception of the realities of life. Becoming a missionary “star” may further feed this pathology, though the stardom is usually short-lived. The developmental stages of learning and the ability to face gradual, limited disappointments with parental support may not have occurred. Consequently they don’t develop the mature ability to withstand disappointment and failure while retaining positive self-regard. They then alternate between feelings of grandiosity and inferiority.

Narcissists (as well as borderlines) share the characteristic of being unable to empathize. In the selection process such an individual may be detected by an inability to accept criticism, disappointment, or suggestions. On the field these people talk well, but are unable to think of the needs of others. They make poor team players. In the face of disappointment they may respond with a brief reactive psychosis that can be very disruptive to the work of the mission. (Brief reactive psychosis implies removal from reality for a period of days or weeks; it includes
inability to distinguish between internal and external reality for that period of time.)

It is possible for a person to display mixed features of personality disorder, now titled “Personality Disorder, NOS” (not otherwise specified).

One must distinguish between the “healthy” depression mentioned at the beginning of the article, and the “unhealthy” depression accompanying personality disorders. True depression (“healthy” depression) is a biochemical response to chronic stress, either internal or external. It responds clinically to medication and professional counseling. These patients can usually return to full careers.

In contrast, characterological depressions or “unhealthy” depressions are only symptoms superimposed on an underlying personality disorder. This type of depression occurs when the person with a pathological personality-disordered style is not succeeding in day-to-day life.

All of the above personality disorders have some characteristics that remind us of ourselves. The key to remember is that to diagnose a personality disorder, the patterns must be lifelong, pervasive, inflexible, and maladaptive enough to cause either impairment in interpersonal or occupational functioning or subjective distress.

**Compassion vs. Protection of the Overseas Team**

One of the most difficult issues any mission has to face is what to do when a person with one of these personality disorders slips through the selection process, arriving overseas with all of his or her emotional baggage. This quickly results in credibility gaps with the nationals, exhaustion on the part of field executives, frustration, and sometimes resignations from other missionaries.

Compassion would suggest an extended effort at working with the person in the field setting. Unfortunately the statistical probability of success anywhere, much less in the heat of the battle overseas, is negligible. Meanwhile the work, the other missionaries, the nationals, and the field leader suffer immense pain.

Can a Christian have a personality disorder? Yes. Is that emotional damage solved by a committed Christian experience? Not necessarily. We understand that a person with physical crippling such as polio is not necessarily made whole by salvation and growth. We must understand that psychological crippling is not automatically healed with Christian commitment.

With regard to overseas service the analogy I would draw is that we would not send a person who uses a wheelchair to the battlefront in war. I contend that we must not send our psychological “wheelchair cases” to the spiritual battlefront either. When we do, we compromise the work and expose these people to unnecessary failure. We also expose coworkers to frustration, anger, and decreased effectiveness and efficiency.

In many cases, people with personality disorders are intelligent and educated. They may appear to be very spiritual, and their skills may seem to be just what a particular field needs. Too often, though, we have chosen people to fill the immediate needs overseas without selecting according to emotional qualifications. The result has been disaster for the unwisely chosen individual, the family, fellow missionaries, the nationals, the work, and the field leader. In selection we need to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

A mission that accepts a candidate with a personality disorder who later requires psychiatric hospitalization, may be financially responsible for medical care costing as much as $1,000 per day and lasting for months or years. The workman’s compensation matters involved in these cases can bankrupt a self-insured mission board.

Though this article is geared to detection of adults with personality disorders, families with a child or adolescent who has a personality disorder may also not be able to serve overseas as long as the child is at home. Care needs to be exercised in the selection of candidates, including the testing of problem children prior to overseas assignment. Families who adopt troubled youngsters may find that those children are too damaged (or identity disordered) to adjust to overseas settings.

**Prevention**

It would seem that the obvious long-term solution for the mission resides in the selection process. My suggestions to avoid inadvertent recruitment of personality-disordered individuals are as follows:

1. All candidates and spouses should receive the MMPI (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory). This is culturally and ethnically biased toward white, middle-class Americans; therefore, another personality tool will be needed for candidates of other cultural, ethnic backgrounds. The MMPI is the gold standard of personality inventories, though some authorities believe that the Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory (MCMI) is as good, or can be used complementarily.

These tests, which need to be scored by a skilled interpreter, can help identify characteristics associated with personality disorders. The primary objection is that the cost may range from $50-150 per person. This seems a small price to pay compared to the financial and human toll associated with personality disorders on the mission field.

2. All recommendation letters regarding candidates should be followed up by a personal phone call. Letter writers will often be candid regarding problems if their opinions do not appear in writing.

3. All candidates should submit a detailed occupational and social history that has been verified by outside sources. My experience has been that many people with personality disorders have extremely frequent job changes.

4. In-depth personal interviews must be conducted on all candidates. This should include separate interviews with each spouse.

5. If any questions surface, the candidate should be interviewed in several sessions by a seasoned mental health professional with experience in diagnosing personality disorders.

**Summary**

This article should not be considered a complete psychological handbook for the missionary selection process. Rather, it is intended to help avoid the placement of individuals with personality disorders on the mission field. There may be useful places
of service for these people within the church at large, but not in a third culture.

Selection committees need to be especially careful in place-

ment procedures. Prevention is the best cure, with heavy emphasis on the use of psychological testing and common sense regarding some of the other methods already in use.

Notes

1. Rigid, dogmatic, suspicious Christians who focus their pathology on legalisms, divisive doctrines, and theological deficiencies of others, may have this problem.
2. In the schizotypal, psychotic “religious” experiences may mimic the real thing.
3. Persons with avoidant personality disorders occasionally present themselves in missionary settings as “loners” who function best in a solo setting. Sometimes they are labelled “pioneers.”
4. The individual with obsessive-compulsive disorder may appear just overly conscientious and scrupulous. He or she may be so exacting, however, that conflict arises over criticism of others on the team.
5. Unfortunately, the individual with passive aggressive personality disorder may appear to be a fine Christian who never gets angry. His or her obstinacy and anger will be expressed indirectly with procrastination, delay, and discreet refusal to follow orders.
6. The personality disorders listed here are applicable only to individuals aged eighteen or older. Comparable childhood conditions have different titles.
7. MMPI-II was formulated from a broader population base and may correct for some racial and ethnic bias.

Bibliography


Book Reviews


The fifteen stimulating essays in this compilation are an outgrowth of the Stuttgart Consultation on Evangelism (March 1987), which brought together forty-five evangelical and ecumenical Christians (about equal in number, with considerable overlap) for a serious discussion of biblical evangelism, at the invitation of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches. These studies were contributed by thirteen participants from five continents, including chapters by the editors, Vinay Samuel (India), who is General Secretary of Partnership in Mission—Asia, and Albrecht Hauser (West Germany), who served as a missionary in Pakistan and Afghanistan prior to joining the missions department of his denomination.

This collection was presented as a Festschrift in honor of the sixtieth birthday of Walter Arnold, the Executive Secretary for Missions and Ecumenical Relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Württemberg, which hosted the Stuttgart meeting. Albrecht Hauser, in an essay paying tribute to Walter Arnold, roots the title of the book in the life and ministry of Arnold as a faithful disciple personally committed to proclaiming the Gospel in Christ’s way—through both word and deed.

The subtitle of the book introduces a new phrase coined at the Stuttgart Consultation. “Integral evangelism” brings together worship and public life, evangelism and social responsibility, kerygma and diakonia as integral parts of the Christian mission that belong together. The Stuttgart Statement on Evangelism, which comprises the concluding chapter, might well be read first as background for the resulting essays. The individual contributions are of varying significance. Especially interesting are essays on “Evangelicals and Wholistic Evangelism” by Christopher Sugden, “Evangelisation and Culture” by David Gitari, and “Christian-Marxist Dialogue: An Evangelical Perspective” by Peter Kuzmič.

John Stott, the only contributor to this Festschrift who was not present at the Stuttgart meeting, effectively summarizes the focus of the book in these well-chosen words:

I . . . like the Stuttgart vocabulary of “integral evangelism,” in which “kerygma and diakonia are integrated.” For surely there is always something exceptional, even inauthentic, about a Christian witness which is either verbal without being visual, or visual without being verbal. “Good news” and “good works” belong inextricably to one another, so that people are permitted to see as well as hear, and so to glorify God (Matt. 5:16).

—Warren Webster

INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH


A revision of D'Costa's 1986 Cambridge dissertation—which has not fundamentally altered its methodical and somewhat mechanical format—this book offers the most thorough analysis to date of John Hick's work on religious pluralism. No individual has figured more prominently than Hick as an advocate of a new pluralist approach in theology, one that would decisively reject the notion of any exclusive or decisive revelation in Christ (or indeed in any religious tradition). The focus of the book is strictly limited to Hick, but it offers a compact and telling critique of a major movement in contemporary theology.

D'Costa argues that Hick's developed approach fails to overcome a fundamental dilemma: if his conviction of the equal validity of all religions is in fact based upon an argument from the loving nature of a God who would not arbitrarily privilege some, Hick violates his own pluralistic principles and in fact privileges a monotheistic and essentially Christocentric belief over others. If Hick insists, as he sometimes does, that all religious traditions and representations are equally conditioned and fallible modes of relation to an unknown eternal reality, he escapes the charge of theistic chauvinism, but at the expense of giving up any basis for asserting the validity of religious versus nonreligious views of reality or for characterizing the nature of that divine transcendent reality.

A Roman Catholic who is deeply indebted to Karl Rahner, D'Costa has developed his own version of an "inclusivist" approach to religious pluralism (see his Theology and Religious Pluralism: The Challenge of Other Religions). That constructive statement in tandem with this substantial critique establishes D'Costa's work as essential reading for anyone interested in these issues.

—S. Mark Heim

S. Mark Heim is Associate Professor of Christian Theology at Andover Newton Theological School, Newton, Massachusetts. He is an American Baptist and author of Is Christ the Only Way?

The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology.


This is an important book. It is as comprehensive an introduction to the place of anthropology in missiology as has yet appeared. It is encyclopedic in its coverage of the interfaces between anthropology and general missiology, theology, contextualization, ecumenism, and a good bit of missiological history. Behind the book lies a truly amazing breadth of reading and re
search. The book will be a sourcebook for all of us to refer to frequently for years to come.

Of particular value are the introductory and concluding chapters, entitled "The Theological Foundations of Missiological Anthropology" and "Anthropology at the Service of Faith." These provide the context within which anthropology applied to gospel communication must function. Chapters two through four effectively explain what missiological anthropology is, discuss models of mission theoretically and historically, and describe current trends in the church worldwide that affect missiological thought and practice.

Anthropology as anthropology is treated in three very long chapters. Among the outstanding features of those chapters are the author's treatment of the dynamics of culture change, his discussion of culture stress ("shock"), and his ability to combine the insights of several schools of anthropology.

There are, however, a few things that disappoint me about the book. It should not carry the same title as Luzbetak's earlier book. This is a new work and cannot be used as we used the earlier book. Dividing nearly four hundred pages of text into only eight chapters makes the book hard to read and use, even for reference. Though his coverage is excellent, there is simply too much about too many topics for one volume. I fear that even most professionals will not have the breadth of interest demanded of the reader. I would have liked to have seen more anthropology in the book. Though I found myself in agreement with nearly all of his anthropology, it disturbed me that he didn't connect worldview better either to culture or to the "mentality" of a people. Nor did he clearly distinguish it from religion.

Most of my criticisms are, however, picky and should not be allowed to detract from the great value and importance of the book.

—Charles H. Kraft

Announcing 1991-1992 Senior Mission Scholars in Residence

The Overseas Ministries Study Center welcomes into residence this year Drs. Eric J. Sharpe, James A. Scherer, and Harvie M. Conn as Senior Mission Scholars. In addition to sharing in the leadership of OMSC's regular Study Program, these highly respected colleagues will offer to our missionary and overseas residents personal consultation and tutorial assistance. Write for Study Program Schedule and Application for Residence.

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Meet Your New Neighbors at OMSC

Charles H. Kraft is Professor of Anthropology and Intercultural Communication in the School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary. He served as a missionary in Northern Nigeria from 1957 to 1960 under the Brethren Church (Ashland, Ohio) and taught in African Studies for ten years at Michigan State and UCLA before going to Fuller Seminary twenty years ago.

East Meets West: The Jesuits in China, 1582-1773.


Based on a conference commemorating the 400th anniversary of the arrival in China of Matteo Ricci, S.J. (1552-1610), this excellent and erudite volume explores the varied Jesuit efforts to make the Christian faith take root in China, especially their pioneering personal immersion in Chinese culture and their sharing of European skills, particularly in the sciences, with the Chinese. The essays helpfully situate Ricci among his precursors and successors, and develop comparisons that illuminate the Jesuits' thinking. In

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Francis X. Clooney, S.J., Assistant Professor of Theology at Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, taught at St. Xavier's School in Kathmandu, Nepal, during 1973-75. His Ph.D. from the University of Chicago is in South Asian languages and civilizations, with a specialization in Hindu theology.
three essays Chinese reactions to the Jesuits are examined, the contextual meaning of conversion is analyzed, and cases of Jesuit-Chinese dialogue are explored in detail. Finally, three essays offer insights into less explored materials: the (mainly technical) Jesuit influence on Chinese art, Jesuit map-making, and the political-cultural context of the Jesuit translation of the Confucian Four Books. Oh's very helpful introduction succinctly previews the essays and summarizes key points from the discussions that followed the presentations. All involved with this volume are to be commended for their success in transforming conference papers into a lasting scholarly contribution.

The nonspecialist will do well to read this book in conjunction with earlier volumes such as Dunne's Generations of Giants (1962) or Spence's The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci (1984), which more amply narrate the story of Ricci and his fellow Jesuits. But East Meets West poses for all readers timely questions about the value and limits of inculturation. We cannot help but be impressed by the heroic labors of these men, their saintly patience and admirable learning, and must be grateful to them for initiating a missionary method so respectful of local culture. Yet these essays compel us to ask why, then, the goal of a Christian China was never reached. One gets the impression that inculturation at its best was ultimately no more the solution than other missionary methods. Moreover, the Jesuit endeavors apparently mirrored and contributed to larger cultural and intellectual shifts (in China and Europe), which only partially intersected with their objectives. In any case, these detailed studies enable the interested reader to ponder the potential and limits of inculturation in today’s world.

—Francis X. Clooney, S.J.

**Fifteen Outstanding Books of 1990 for Mission Studies**

The editors of the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH have selected the following books for special recognition of their contribution to mission studies in 1990. We have limited our selection to books in English, since it would be impossible to consider fairly the books in many other languages that are not readily available to us. We commend the authors, editors, and publishers represented here for their contribution to advance the cause of missionary research with scholarly literature.

**Bonk, Jonathan J.**

*The Theory and Practice of Missionary Identification, 1860–1920.*


*Carpenter, Joel A., and Wilbert R. Shenk, eds.*


*Christensen, Thomas G.*

*An African Tree of Life.*


*Y. Costa, Gavin, ed.*

*Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theory of Religions.*

*Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books.* $34.95; paperback $14.95.

*Douglas, J. D., ed.*

*Proclaim Christ Until He Comes: Calling the Whole Church to Take the Whole Gospel to the Whole World.*

*Lausanne II in Manila: International Congress on World Evangelization.*


*Draper, Eddyth, ed.*

*The Almanac of the Christian World.*


*Dyrness, William A.*

*Learning About Theology from the Third World.*


*Martin, David.*

*Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America.*


*Neils, Patricia, ed.*


*Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe.* $39.95.

*Shuster, Robert D., James Stambaugh, and Ferne Weimer, comps.*

*Researching Modern Evangelicalism: A Guide to the Holdings of the Billy Graham Center, With Information on Other Collections.*


*Stanley, Brian.*

*The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.*


*Stine, Philip C., ed.*

*Bible Translation and the Spread of the Church in the Last 200 Years.*


*Stoll, David.*

*Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth.*

*Berkeley, Calif.: Univ. of California Press.* $24.95.

*Walls, Andrew F., and Wilbert R. Shenk, eds.*


*Wilson, Frederick R., ed.*


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**African Catholicism: Essays in Discovery.**


Hastings's undeniable stature as the leader among contemporary historians of African Christianity—chiefly because of his books *African Christianity* (1976) and *African Christianity: Essays in Discovery.*

Simon E. Smith is Executive Secretary of Jesuit Missions for the United States and Canada. He was a missionary in Iraq and more recently headed the Jesuit Refugee Service in Africa.
A History of African Christianity 1950–1975 (1979) assures a warm welcome to this valuable collection of a dozen of his essays. Most of them were published in the 1980s in a variety of sources not readily accessible.

The essays cover various aspects of Catholic life in black Africa: from the interplay between traditional religions in Uganda and the arrival of the White Fathers there to how this affected the role of women; prophets, mediums, and martyrs; Ganda spirituality; African theology; the vicissitudes of translation; post-Vatican II developments; Archbishop Milingo and healing; 150 years of church-state relations in southern Africa; why the church in South Africa matters; and so forth.

The essays are of immensely varying focus, historical, theological, analytical, descriptive, exhortative, and each of them is a tight little gem. Hastings does not hesitate to challenge received wisdom or even hierarchs. In this same spirit he may accept a few criticisms.

First, his concentration on anglo-

MISSION IN THE 1990s

Edited by GERALD H. ANDERSON
JAMES M. PHILLIPS
and ROBERT T. COOTE

The contributors to this comprehensive resource bring into focus the priorities and central themes of authentic global mission for the 1990s, addressing its task and purpose and the various challenges it will face in the remaining years of this decade, such as religious pluralism, secularization, the preferential option for the poor and liberation theology, the modern Pentecostal-Charismatic movement, and recent developments in Eastern Europe. The book also features encyclopedist David B. Barrett’s unique global statistical table — a striking perspective on the status of today’s church and the extent of its outreach.


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Phone Africa is understandable enough, given his own experiences as a missionary in Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia during the sixties and then in the eighties as a professor of religious studies in Zimbabwe. Yet this narrow geographical concentration is also regrettable, because Catholicism under French and Portuguese tutelage evolved in ways significantly different from that in the English-speaking colonies.

Second, francophone Africa, especially Zaire and Cameroon, has already produced far more in both theological research and practical experimentation than the countries Hastings writes about. It is a grave disappointment that this wealth of output gets only scarce mention in one of his essays.

Third, although he is correct to stick to his own experience and not extrapolate too often from any specific case (e.g., from Uganda to all of Africa), whoever titled this book did Hastings and us a disservice if African is meant to be taken as comprehensive.

This book is needed, welcome, and informative, and it is a tribute to Hastings and to the church about which he writes. No one should miss his chapter on the church in South Africa.

—Simon E. Smith, S.J.

Faith and Revolution in Nicaragua: Convergence and Contradictions.


If, as many apparently assume, the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the defeat of the Sandinista Front in the February 1990 Nicaraguan elections signal the demise of Marxism and liberation theology, then this book will be little more than a bit of historical curiosity. Others, however, knowing that it was not Marxism that produced liberation theology but oppression, poverty, and injustice coupled with a rereading of the Bible from the perspective of the poor, will find Faith and Revolution crucial to understanding the past decade in Nicaragua.

The book represents the second half of a larger work entitled Sandi-
nismo, Marxismo, Cristianismo: La Confluencia (1987) and is ably translated by Philip Berryman, a recognized authority on Central America. Berryman's introduction is a valuable addition, summarizing the first half of the original edition and providing a helpful sketch of the author's life and work.

Guilio Girardi, son of an Italian diplomat, Salesian priest, and professor of philosophy, became involved in Christian-Marxist dialogues in the 1960s. By the early 1970s he was prominent in the Christians for Socialism movement, an involvement that eventually led to his dismissal from teaching and expulsion from his religious order. His firsthand study of the Nicaraguan revolution began in 1980, and his conclusion—stated forcefully and eloquently—is that what took place in Nicaragua represented an unprecedented collaboration between committed Marxists and Christians in the building of a new society.

Though one may question Girardi's confidence in the future of the Sandinista revolution, especially in light of recent events, his explanation for the alliance between the Nicaraguan hierarchy, elites, and the U.S. government is indisputable. The vacuity of many of the accusations leveled against the Sandinista Front to justify the contra war is exposed, accentuating the tragedy of the thirty thousand lives lost in the last eight years.

—Alan Neely


David Burnett makes an important contribution to modern missiological thought in this analysis of folk religions. In the past, missionaries in tribal societies often assumed that the tribal religions would die as Christianity came in. In peasant and urban societies, they consciously confronted other high religions such as Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism, and overlooked the widespread animistic beliefs of the common folk. There were notable exceptions. Elmore and Whitehead did pioneer work on folk religions in India, Junod in Africa, and MacDonald and Zwemer in the Islamic world.

It is now clear that folk religious beliefs often do not die when people become Christians. Rather, they continue and go underground, because the people fear the condemnation of church leaders. Today witchcraft, magic, ancestor veneration, spirit possession, healing, and divination are central issues in many churches around the world, including those in the west. How should Christians respond?

Burnett provides us with a well-organized discussion of various beliefs and practices found in primal and folk religions. He draws on anthropology to help us understand the phenomena as the people themselves see them. This is important, because a sound evaluation of these practices must begin with understanding and not with prema-

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To simply condemn their old ways will not cause these ways to die.

The author covers a wide range of subjects. He examines beliefs in gods, demons, humans, ghosts, ancestors, totemic animals, and other spirit beings. He looks at divination, taboo, witchcraft, sorcery magic, and related beliefs in supernatural forces. He discusses shamans, mediums, mystics, and other religious leaders and analyses the rapid explosion of new religious movements. Throughout he draws widely on the insights of anthropologists and missionaries and uses illustrations from around the world to show the relevance of his analysis to missions and the church.

Burnett is fully aware that we must go beyond a phenomenological approach to folk religions, to questions of ontology—what is really going on, of theology—what is the biblical response, and of missiology—how do we help the people move from where they are to a biblical worldview. He provides initial reflections in a number of areas and a good introduction to a discussion of the Christian worldview, in contrast to both primal and modern secular worldviews. It is on these levels of analysis that a great deal of work still needs to be done.

This book is an important aid for missionaries and missiologists, helping them understand the religious beliefs of the common folk, which they have often misunderstood. It will also help church leaders in the west as well as in the Two-Thirds World deal with practices they have long ignored.

—Paul G. Hiebert

Toyohiko Kagawa: Apostle of Love and Social Justice.


American writer and activist Robert Schildgen was chosen by the American Committee for the Kagawa Centennial Project, 1988, to fill the need for a critical biography of Toyohiko Kagawa (1888-1960). The introduction assesses the Japanese and international views of Kagawa and introduces many ideas and activities. Twelve chapters deal thematically with roughly progressive periods in his life. The epilogue weighs some of the contradictory and differently viewed attitudes toward Kagawa, seeking to recognize the deficient and to reaffirm the lasting parts of his work.

Kagawa was a pacifist; brother to slum dwellers (1909 to 1923, with time out at Princeton Seminary and as organizer of Utah workers); organizer of trade and farmers' unions and of cooperatives, fiercely rejecting violence; enabler of passage of a Universal Suffrage Bill (1925); explosive writer of some two hundred pamphlets, books, and poems whose profits supported widespread projects; world traveler and ecumenist; preacher of the Kingdom of God movement and seeker of a million new believers in Japan (1927 onward). Denouncer of United States World War II acts and suppliant to MacArthur for retention of the emperor in 1945, Kagawa was accused of and almost tried for collaboration. In post-World War II Japan, he helped defend the new constitution and found the new Socialist

Robert W. Northup, now retired, was a Presbyterian fraternal worker in Japan (1956-1965); then served as executive secretary to the Japan-North American Commission on Cooperative Mission (1970-1989), and director of the Japan and Hong Kong Office in the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (1972-1989).
Party, continuing his widespread evangelistic efforts.

The rich use of Kagawa’s own writings and thoughts, the mature assessment of his settlement, trade union, and cooperative roles, and the helpful notes, pictures, and bibliography are commendable. A fuller study of mass evangelism and of Japanese Christian theologians such as Tokutaro Takakura would round out the assessment, as would Kagawa’s self-stated dependence on Calvin for relating theology to social action. The omission of studies by M. Takenaka and J. Trout and of United States church theologian historians Iglehart, Drummond, Germany, and Phillips is puzzling. The ongoing turmoil over Kagawa’s unfortunate and unscientific categorizing of Buraku persons needs fuller statement. Recognition of Confucian and other social influences would adjust the portrait of Kagawa, the indifferent father. This revealing record suitably celebrates the centennial of Kagawa’s birth and his many contributions.

—Robert W. Northup

My Persian Pilgrimage.


William McElwee Miller is a Presbyterian evangelistic missionary who for the better part of half a century (1919–1962) took a leading part in the Christian mission to bring the Gospel of Christ to the people of Iran. Miller has written the story of his life, and it is aptly titled My Persian Pilgrimage. Throughout his career he was the epitome of the humble, friendly, doggedly persistent, immensely resourceful missionary evangelist. He lived by choice in modest quarters, never had a car, never even learned to drive. He usually did his evangelistic and pastoral work afoot. On his repeated tours of the churches, he may have traveled more miles in Iran than any foreigner in history. In the early days the travel was by donkey-back or horse-drawn diligences, and later in buses and third-class train carriages (he never traveled first class if he could help it).

Miller, from a Southern Presbyterian minister’s family in Virginia, graduate of Washington and Lee University and Princeton Theological Seminary, is living and active in Philadelphia at the age of ninety-seven. He is a scholar, author of significant books about Islam and Bahaism, and theological educator, but he is distinguished by his single-minded devotion and sense of call to bring the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ to those who have not heard—principally Moslems. His autobiography is a direct, unassuming narrative filled with fascinating details of life in Iran, in city and village and by the roadside, through the changes of forty-three years. Although a good deal of geography and history of Iran comes to notice incidentally, it is Miller’s mission of the evangelization of Moslems that is the book’s constant theme, the “highway made straight.” A reader can only be grateful for the inspiration of a life with such a central, undeviating, contagious dedication.

—R. Park Johnson

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The Theology of the Churches and the Jewish People: Statements by the World Council of Churches and its Member Churches.


This valuable and provocative resource is the product of a task force of the WCC's Consultation on the Church and the Jewish People that was charged with distilling fundamental convergences regarding Jews and Judaism in official statements of the WCC and member churches. Allan Brockway, former WCC secretary for Jewish-Christian Relations, Paul Van Buren and Rolf Renttorff, of the University of Heidelberg, and Simon Schoon, of the Council of Christians and Jews in the Netherlands, chose 120 pages of statements for Part I and wrote the commentaries of Part II.

Their central thesis is that churches are moving to recognize that God made an irrevocable covenant with the ancient Hebrews that still constitutes them as the "people of God." Christians are given a share in that chosen peoplehood through "Jesus Christ the Jew" (p. 165). The biblical foundations for this view are Romans 9-11, plus Old Testament passages that stress God's permanent choice of Israel. There is almost no reference to the prophetic and New Testament passages which stress the conditional nature of that election. In this view all evangelism of Jews, even if done out of love for them, is wrong. Their conversion is unnecessary and would imperil the survival of the Jewish people descended from Abraham, which is theologically imperative.

Observing the debate on "The Hope of Israel" at the Evanston Assembly of the WCC in 1954, Visser't Hofft discerned that "the spectre of Hitler" was present; that is, national delegations were voting according to the depth and intimacy of their experience of Nazism (p. 134). That specter is still visible as one observes the sources of the church statements and the concerns they register. Brief quotations from a Palestinian and a Ghanaian theologian reflect the refusal of much of the world Christian community to accept or even make sense out of the proposition that the word anti semitism has a different and deeper theological meaning than other forms of racism, or that God chooses Jews (or any other people). "God is the God of all people," they say. "If God is seen as an electing God ... it narrows down God's image" (p. 182).

The other specter that haunts this useful book is never frankly faced: Israel's struggle to secure land and peoplehood through dominance in Palestine and the effort of the Jewish diaspora to enlist international support. This is one form of political theology in interesting counterpoint to the political "theology of liberation" that enjoys wide support in the ecumenical community.

"A gold mine of information about American evangelical missions over the last century — their motives, methods, message, and mistakes."
— Gerald H. Anderson*

*David M. Stowe has been a missionary in China and Lebanon and associate general secretary for Overseas Ministries of the National Council of Churches. He is now executive vice president emeritus of the United Church Board for World Ministries and adjunct professor at Andover Newton Theological School.
The Missionary as a Cultural Interpreter.


This book is a study, based largely on primary documents and interviews, of the cultural understandings and impact of Methodist missionaries in the Tshwa area of Mozambique from the 1880s to 1975. It is part of Series VII (Theology and Religion) of American Universities Studies. Ms. Mandelbaum was involved in medical missions in Mozambique, though apparently without learning Xitswana, from 1969 to 1974. She is now at The Johns Hopkins University.

The book addresses the following questions: How did missionaries understand the concept of culture, and the Tshwa culture in particular? Where did they get their information? How did they analyze, learn, and use the Xitswana language? What westernizing influence did they have on Tshwa culture? How did they present Tshwa culture to their home constituency? All are most important and fascinating questions in an area where sweeping generalizations are more frequent than careful analysis.

The book has a good deal of value. I am personally indebted to the author for some useful factual information. Unfortunately, she is only partially successful, partly because of her lay status in relation to the key sciences, partly because of her failure to pinpoint a specific audience. For missiologists and anthropologists, the book is distressingly imprecise in its handling of theoretical concepts. This is most evident in the chapters on theories about culture and communication and missionaries. For a wider public, far too much background information about Mozambique and about the relevant sciences is unexplained. Finally, the book is photographically reproduced from inadequately edited and proofread typescript, which makes its price of $34 excessive. Libraries need this, but few individuals can afford it.

—Charles R. Taber

Charles R. Taber is Professor of World Mission at Emmanuel School of Religion, Johnson City, Tennessee. He was a missionary in the Central African Republic and a translations consultant of the United Bible Societies in West Africa.
Dissertation Notices

Adrian, Marlin Wayne.
“Mennonites, Missionaries, and Native Americans: Religious Paradigms and Cultural Encounters.”
Ph.D. Charlottesville, Virginia: Univ. of Virginia, 1989.

Batstone, David Bruce.
“From Conquest to Struggle: Jesus of Nazareth in the Liberation Christology of Latin America.”
Ph.D. Berkeley, Calif.: Graduate Theological Union and Univ. of Calif., 1989.

Chancellor, James Darrell.

Garrison, V. David.
“A New Epoch in Christian Missions: Global Changes Since World War II.”

Greider, Brett Eugene.
“Crossing 'Deep Rivers': The Liberation Theology of Gustavo Gutierrez in Light of the Narrative Poetics of José Maria Arguedas (Peru).”

Meyers, Ronald R.
“An Analysis of the Confucian Marriage and Family System in Modern Korea and a Christian Alternative.”
Ph.D. Pasadena, Calif.: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1989.

Nickoloff, James B.
“The Church and Human Liberation: The Ecclesiology of Gustavo Gutierrez (Peru).”

Prescott-Ezickson, Robert Davis.
Ph.D. Louisville, Kentucky: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1986.

Seddon, John Thomas, III.
“The Spirituality of the Reverend Thomas Frederick Price, M.M.”

Sunquist, Scott Williams.
“Narsai and the Persians: A Study in Cultural Contact and Conflict.”

Swanson, Tod Dillon.

Yriarte, MarQuita Elisa.

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"The course stretched me and showed me where I need to grow."
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"Lessons for Mission from the Church in China" is the topic for Ralph R. Covell's course Jan. 28-Feb. 1, 1991. David Bosch explores "a new paradigm for mission" April 15-19; Ted Ward deals with third world leadership training April 22-26; and Samuel Escobar teams up with Ray Bakke for an urban mission seminar April 29-May 3. These and other seminars are waiting for your input and inspiration. Tuition $90 unless otherwise indicated; room and meals $116-$136.


Feb. 11-15: "Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture." Reading Week with Dr. Lamin Sanneh, author of the book. (No tuition charge.)

Mar. 12-14: Theology and Mission: The Connection Between Blacks in Africa and the Americas. Dr. Gayraud Wilmore gives three lectures cosponsored by the Richmond Theological Center, at the Presbyterian School of Christian Education, Richmond, Va. $35

Mar. 18-22: Doing Theology in Missionary Contexts: Risk and Reward. Dr. Dean Gilliland, Fuller Seminary.


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Braybrooke, Marcus.  
*Time to Meet: Towards a Deeper Relationship between Jews and Christians.*  

Cobb, John B., Jr., and Christopher Ives, eds.  

Fountain, Daniel E., ed.  
*Let’s Build Our Lives (Team for Evangelism and Development, Church of Christ of Zaire).*  

Kinne, Warren.  
*The Splintered Staff: Structural Deadlock in the Mindanao Church.*  

Kornder, Wolfgang.  
*Die Entwicklung der Kirchenmusik in den ehemals deutschen Missionsgebieten Tanzanias.*  

McGavran, Donald A.  
*The Satnami Story: A Thrilling Drama of Religious Change.*  

Parker, F. Calvin.  
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