Youth: Mission’s Neglected Priority

According to Bryant Myers in the lead article of this issue, every third person in the world today is a youth under the age of fifteen, and almost four out of five are growing up in non-Christian settings.

Three-quarters of today’s urban slum population—more than 400 million—consists of young people under the age of twenty-four. As many as 100 million under fifteen live on city streets. There are half a million prostitutes under the age of twenty in Brazil, 800,000 under sixteen in Thailand. Every year upward of a million children are forced into the sex industry. Children in many regions of the globe are being exploited as child laborers in ways some of us might have supposed had ended in the last century.

Wondering to what extent children of earlier generations have been identified as a category for special mission concern, we invested an afternoon in the Day Missions Library at Yale University Divinity School—and found relatively little. Edwin Munsell Bliss’s landmark Encyclopedia of Missions, published in 1891, offers under the topic of “Woman’s Work for Woman” a brief column on the education of Western children about world missions but nothing about the status of children in the world as a whole. (With satisfaction Bliss noted the enrollment in the United States of at least 200,000 in 10,000 children’s missionary “bands.”) James S. Dennis’s Christian Missions and Social Progress (1899) features a twelve-page review of the welfare and needs of children in various parts of the non-Western world. Yet it is acknowledged that Christian missions “have not been able to do much as yet in the direction of organized effort.”

The world missionary conferences of 1888 (London), 1900 (New York), and 1910 (Edinburgh) followed Bliss in giving more attention to the education of Western children about missions than the needs of non-Western children as recipients of mission. Although conference reports touched on the education of children in mission lands, they failed to identify children per se as a category meriting special missionary energy and focus.

Finally, in 1925, the Foreign Missions Convention (Washington) gave attention to the issues of child mortality and the exploitation of child labor in the Far East. Jerusalem (1928) and Madras (1938) dealt substantially with the educational task of mission but again failed to identify youth and children as a major category in their own right. Not until New Delhi (1961) was formal notice taken of youth as a category. The Youth Department of the WCC identified a new phenomenon—“youth culture”—and announced: “The present-day population explosion has made our world a world largely populated by youth.”

The Lausanne Movement has devoted some attention to children as a focus of mission, but as Myers notes, “Most missions focus on people groups and send adults to reach other adults.” Conclusion: It is time to address the youth lacuna in world mission!

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Bryant L. Myers

This essay examines in broad strokes the state of the world's children from the perspective of Christian mission. My thesis is that understanding the situation of children and youth in the world is a significant blind spot in Christian mission. If children and youth are as central to the mission task as I believe, then our way of thinking about mission and contextualizing the Gospel today will be seen to be inadequate.

Why Are Children and Youth Important?

First of all, children and youth are important because there are so many of them. One-third of the world's population, 1.8 billion people, is under the age of fifteen. Eighty-five percent of these children, or 1.5 billion, live in the Two-Thirds World.

The population pyramids for the developed and developing worlds reveal a stark contrast (Fig. 1). In the so-called developed world the bulge—such as it is—represents the twenty-year-olds. Compare this to the Two-Thirds World, where almost half the population is under the age of nineteen. This is not our experience in the West. When Western folk walk down their streets, they see roughly equal numbers of children, youth, adults, and older folk. But in the Two-Thirds World, every other person one encounters is under the age of nineteen. We in the West need to recompose our mental image.

When we examine the number of children and youth in the countries of the world as a proportion of their population, Africa stands out. More than 45 percent of its population is under the age of fifteen. The disproportionate number of youth will intensify as Africa's high population growth rate increases the number of young people, at the same time that their parents are dying from AIDS. The Middle East, Mexico and Central America, Bolivia, Pakistan, and Afghanistan also stand out.

If we examine the absolute number of children and youth in the world, there are many countries with large numbers of young people. Countries with more that 25 million children under the age of fifteen include the United States, the former USSR, most countries of South Asia, China, Nigeria, Indonesia, and Brazil.

The second reason children and youth are important from a missiological perspective is that, by far the great majority of people, at least in the North American context, become Christians between the ages of four and fourteen. According to information in Lionel Hunt's Handbook on Christian Mission, important, life-shaping decisions are made when people are young (Fig. 2). This has been confirmed by informal research done by Frank Mann of Child Evangelism Fellowship and by evangelist Harry Trover.

The third reason children and youth are important is that, according to MARC estimates, 78 percent of the world's young people—1.4 billion of the 1.8 billion—are growing up in non-Christian settings. This situation reflects two factors: 1) A substantial portion of the children in nominally Christian countries live in nonreligious families, and 2) over the last twenty years the growth rate of Muslim and nonreligious populations has outpaced the growth rate of the world population as a whole (Fig. 3).

The expanding number of nonreligious is largely a Western phenomena. A recent church census revealed that of the 1,000

The situation of children and youth is one of the most significant blind spots of Christian mission.

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people leaving English churches every week, 700 were under the age of twenty one. We do not have far to look for the reasons. A Catholic study on family values and transmission of values in Europe showed, not surprisingly, that “in the majority of cases, children adopt the religious attitude of their father and mother.”

A Church of England study recently concluded that “the nominal Christians of yesterday beget the non-Christians of today.”

Who Are These Children?

Many of the world’s children are dying. Every day almost 40,000 children under the age of five die.9 If we examine child mortality rates around the world, children are in danger in Africa, Brazil, the Andean countries of South America, the Middle East, South Asia, Cambodia, and Indonesia. Looking at children whose lives are at risk from another perspective, half of the world’s 36 million refugees and displaced people are children.

Most of these children are living in cities in the Two-Thirds World. Everyone is aware of the phenomenal growth anticipated in the cities in the Two-Thirds World. Of the 600 million people living in urban slums today, 74 percent are children and young people under the age of twenty-four.11 Mexico City has a population of over 17 million and is heading toward 25+ million early in the twenty-first century. Some estimate the median age of Mexico City as being fourteen and one-half.

Many are unwanted. Two important indicators point toward this sad conclusion. Abortion is one. For every five live births in the world today, there are two induced abortions. In much of the world, largely in the West, the number of abortions exceeds 200 per 1,000 live births. It is ironic that comparable rates for deaths of children under the age of five are considered unacceptably high and evidence of Third World underdevelopment. Apparently countries are “developed” if children are killed...
Since 1970 the world’s population has increased 1.7 times. In the same period, the number of Muslims has increased 2.2 times and of Christians 1.6 times. 

**Fig. 3. Comparative growth rates of major religions, 1970-90.**

Since 1970 the world’s population has increased 1.7 times. In the same period, the number of Muslims has increased 2.2 times and of Christians 1.6 times. The growth rate of Muslims is higher than that of Christians. The growth rate of the non-religious population, more than 1.8 times. From David Barrett, “Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 1990,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 14 (January 1990): 26-27, and from 1991 World Population Data Sheet.

Before they are born, but “underdeveloped” if they die during the first five years of life.

The second indicator that many children are unwanted is the number of street children around the world. Although accurate estimates are hard to come by, some believe that 100 million children—18 percent of all children under fifteen—live or work on city streets. Latin America has the greatest number of street children; Brazil alone has as many as 7 million.

Many are exploited child laborers. The estimate of the number of children under the age of fifteen who are being exploited for their labor ranges from 90 million (ILO) to 145 million (UNICEF). These children are being exploited in the very same ways that we in the West thought had ended in the last century. Just last year Peruvian authorities discovered 6,000 children working under slavellike conditions in a jungle gold mine. Asia has the largest number. A recent report from Thailand revealed that as many as 5 million Thai children between five and fourteen are working and not in school.

Child labor within a family reflects tradition and necessity. Child labor for an outside employer reflects acute poverty. The ultimate cost of child labor is high. When children are working, they are not going to school. In addition, child laborers are often treated as expendable parts, easily replaced by the next young child with good eyesight and nimble fingers. Uneducated, sometimes handicapped, these children grow up to be a permanent drain on their economies.

Many are exploited as sex objects. Global figures are impossible to come by, but some estimate that as many as 10 million children are caught up in the sex industry—specifically in child prostitution, sex tourism, and pornography. A Norwegian government report to the UN Working Group on Slavery estimated that 1 million children a year are forced into the sex market. Although most severe in Asia, the problem is known to be widespread elsewhere. It is estimated that there are 500,000 prostitutes under the age of twenty in Brazil and 150,000 in the United States.

Poverty is the pimp. Of Thailand’s estimated 1 million prostitutes, 80 percent are under the age of sixteen. In his book *From Peasant Girls to Bangkok Masseuses*, Professor Pasuk Phongpaichit demonstrates with case after case that the decision to become a prostitute was an economic decision. “These women were not fleeing from family background or a rural society which oppresses women in conventional ways. They left to help their families survive.”

The worst off are girls. The saddest part of the story of the world’s children is the fact that the girl child is significantly worse off. Two-thirds of the estimated 130 million children in the world with no access to primary schools are girls. When we examine survival rates, the girl child comes up significantly short. Other things being equal, girls have a slightly better chance of surviving the early, vulnerable years. But things are not equal. In the Two-Thirds World, female children consistently get less food, less health care, and less education. The actual survival rates in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan reveal that as many as 1 million fewer girl children survive than do boys. They die because they are female. In another example, China’s population-control policy—allowing only one child per family—resulted in 500,000 “missing” girl babies per year in 1985, 1986, and 1987.

### The Missiological Implications

The state of the world’s children is not good. Children are growing up in an ugly and hostile world. If they survive, they are being forced to become premature adults. Furthermore, adults are the primary cause of the problem. There is not much good news if you are young.

In the faces of these children we can see the pain caused by society’s shortcomings. Because the world’s children are in no way to blame for what they have to endure, they represent a mirror to us of the evils the world otherwise tolerates, accepts, or excuses. In many ways there is still no room at the inn. How should we respond?

First, these children need to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They need to learn that there is good news for them. They need to hear the liberating word that God hates what is happening to them and that his love extends to each and every one of them. They need to know Jesus Christ weeps for them and has finished the work that forgives anything they have done or been forced to do.

To stop at this point, however, is not enough. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is about the emergence, slowly and quietly, of the kingdom of God on earth. This means we cannot be satisfied with saving the disembodied souls of children with promises that things will not be this way in the next life.

Advocates for child rights say that the cornerstone of change must be laid in the hearts and minds of individual adults. Until a society provides the caring and the will to rescue children from neglect, abuse, and oppression, change will never come, they say. They are right; this is what is needed. The problem is that secular societies cannot deliver this kind of change. This kind of change does not come from laws or even economic incentives. It comes
from another source altogether—a source that can change hearts of stone, one that has the authority to drive the demonic from the corridors of power and from the comfortable offices of the marketplace.

Second, the Christian church must demand its rightful place in the public arena and announce the good news that the Gospel of Jesus Christ calls the actions of society into account. The framework of societies must be rebuilt if growing up is not to be a life-damaging ordeal. This means values must change; radical transformation is required. Ethical and moral standards that value children and life must be reintroduced into governments, churches, and the businesses of this world. Greed that justifies working six-year-old children sixteen hours a day without a meal must be exposed and called to repentance. Lust that justifies abusing young boys and girls must be publicly denounced and ended. This means that poverty so acute that families are driven to treat their children as economic assets to be sold must be eradicated. These actions are driven by the Gospel. They are the business of Christian mission.

Third, responding to the needs of the world’s children calls for a holistic Christian Gospel. The good news of Jesus Christ must be about proclamation and prophecy, the personal and the social, about saving and liberating. Many children do not believe adults have any good news. The pain, alienation, and lostness of children is inseparably part of who they are and how they perceive themselves. The call for repentance must be directed at everyone—the children, their parents, the rich and the powerful, even those who abuse the children. Working for justice, social welfare, education and literacy, empowering development—all must find their place in Christian mission. Anything less than a whole Gospel is not enough.

Finally, responding to the needs of the world’s children demands that we reexamine our strategies for mission. We need to be sure our strategies make sense for a world of children who live as just described. Six areas of strategy need to be examined.

1. We need to rethink the strategic mission tool, the people group concept. In mission today, “people group” almost always means a linguistic or geographic unit. Descriptions of people groups often reveal that we are really talking about adults. When so many millions of children are working and living on the streets, or are laboring in factories or sex parlors, or are separated from family and clan because they are refugees, our understanding of people groups may need to change to remove its adult bias.

2. We need to rethink our understanding of contextualizing. Traditionally, the Gospel was contextualized in order to communicate more effectively in a particular culture or people group. We have tended to do so however, by viewing these groups through the eyes of adults (ours) and by listening to adults (those in the group). We need to ask some new questions. What does it mean to contextualize a Gospel that children can understand, particularly children who have been forced to become premature adults? How do we present the good news to damaged children in a way that both saves and heals? What does it mean to have adults as the carriers of the message meant for children and youth?

3. We are going to have to learn a lot more about mission in the city. A large proportion of the world’s unreached are found in the slums and squatter settlements around and in major urban centers; most of them are poor. Enormous numbers of these unreached people are children, living on the streets, struggling to survive in the informal economy with its crime, drugs, and prostitution. There is a Macedonian call for effective urban mission to youth. Who is ready to respond?

4. Mission agencies will need to rethink their assumptions about who should reach children. Most missions focus on people groups and send adults to reach other adults. Child and youth evangelism is left to child evangelists and campus ministries—the experts on youth. There are so many youth and children in the world today, and there are so many more on the way, that this division of labor needs to be reexamined. In the future, no mission is going to be able to avoid developing expertise for ministering to children.

5. We need to rethink our understanding as to how best to encounter children and youth. In Western societies, the great proportion of children and youth are in schools or on university campuses. This is not true in the Two-Thirds World. In the Two-Thirds World, campus ministries may be effective among those rich enough to go to school, but the overwhelming majority of children and youth will be missed. Furthermore, relationship evangelism, "earning the right to be heard," will take on a different and more poignant meaning when dealing with children who spend their lives selling their bodies for sex or are living by their wits on the streets.

6. Finally, we need to come to grips with the importance of women. This is because it is right to do so and because we will not be as effective if we do not. In recent years, there has been an explosion of data from many countries and across different countries, which shows that there is a strong correlation between female literacy and child mortality. This correlation is very high, with a coefficient of determination (r^2) of 0.89. From The State of the World’s Children: 1991 (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1991).

**Fig. 4. Correlation between child mortality and female literacy.** Generally, the higher the female literacy, the lower the child mortality; the correlation is very high (r = 0.89). From The State of the World’s Children: 1991 (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1991).
socioeconomic groups showing that education of women is associated with the lowering of child mortality rates (Fig. 4), improving child care and nutrition, reducing average family size, increasing literacy in succeeding generations, and improving family income. On the basis of anecdotal evidence, some speculate this may extend to improving the acceptance of the Gospel. In most places in the Two-Thirds World, women are the keys to change and have the most impact on the lives of children.

**Summary**

What is the state of the world's children? First, there are an awful lot of them, most in the cities of the Two-Thirds World. Second, they are not doing very well. The world's children are often hungry, sick, and brutally exploited. Third, a huge proportion of them are growing up in homes or settings where it will be hard for them to hear the name of Jesus Christ. If the kingdom of God belongs to children, and if the children of this world are not doing well, then Christian mission needs to rethink its priorities, strategies, and methods.

**Notes**

3. Ibid.
The Study of Pacific Island Christianity: Achievements, Resources, Needs

Charles W. Forman

The Pacific Islands have been the stepchild of mission studies during most of this century. In the nineteenth century, Pacific missions received much attention because of the remarkable series of mass conversions that took place and because of the writings of a few missionary heroes, primarily John Williams in the first half of the century and John G. Paton and James Chalmers in the second half. With the twentieth century, when most of the peoples had been nominally Christianized, there was less need for heroism and less interest in the region. (The region is here defined to include the island nations of Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia but not, because of space limitations, New Zealand or Indonesia, which contain Polynesian or Melanesian minorities.)

From Neglect to Abundance

From this region in the present century there came some missionary reports and reminiscences and some anthropological studies made by missionaries (cf. references in Boutilier, Hughes, and Tiffany 1978: 45-46; Langmore 1989: 111-12; Lutkehaus 1983), but there were few serious studies of the churches and missions themselves. What there were can be quickly named. Christian Keysser’s writings about his method of work were highly important (1929a, 1929b), and there were six Catholic and three Protestant missionaries who wrote sizable histories of their own mission societies’ labors in the islands (Blanc 1926; Destable and Sédès 1944; Doucéré 1934; Dupeyrat 1935; Sabatier 1939; Leenhardt 1922; Luxton 1955; Fox 1958). The Fiji missionary John Burton contributed to the famous World Dominion Survey of Protestant missions and collaborated in a short history of Methodist work (Burton 1930, 1949; Burton and Dean 1936). The first three studies by nonmissionary scholars appeared, one semiacademic and the other two serious (Wright and Fry 1936; Koskinen 1953; Guiart 1959), and in the early 1960s the German missionary Georg Pilhofer produced what is still the largest history—three volumes—of a single Pacific mission (Pilhofer 1961-63). But other than these there were no substantial works in the field until the 1970s.

In the last twenty years, however, the scene has changed markedly. The stepchild has become almost a full member of the family, and good numbers of historians, anthropologists, and missiologists have begun to write about Pacific Christianity. In the field of history the initial credit for the change may well be given to a historian of the Australian National University, Niel Gunson, who not only contributed his own scholarly work but trained a succession of graduate students to make further contributions as Pacific church historians (Gunson 1978; Douglass 1974; Hilliard 1978; Larkey 1976; Thornley 1979; Wetherell 1977, 1981; Cummins 1980). One fundamental contribution of Gunson’s work was his careful attention to the theological grounding and outlook of the missionaries. Stewart Firth, one of the leading younger historians of the Pacific, has recently said that, with a few exceptions, “historians of Pacific missions have been divided into two broad camps over the last twenty years: the pietistic and the reductionist. The first school of thought proceeds from Christian assumptions, the second reduces everything to other, less noble motivations, psycho-sexual ones for example. Neither offers a satisfactory explanation of what drove the missionaries to their task” (Wagner-Wright 1990: ii). Gunson has provided a counterweight to the reductionist tendency, as has Sandra Wagner-Wright in her recent book on Hawai’i. It is my impression that the professional historians of recent years who have written monographs analyzing Pacific missionaries have been less inclined to reductionism than have those writing on African or Asian missionaries (cf. Grimshaw 1989; Langmore 1989; Zwiep 1991). To get a full picture of the treatment of missionaries by historians, we must look beyond the works that concentrate on missions. The general histories of each of the island countries provide much detailed information on missions and churches (e.g., Howe 1977; Rutherford 1977; Newbury 1980; Beaglehole 1957; Gilson 1980; Schütte 1986; MacDonald 1982; Gundert-Hock 1986). This is to be expected because, as Stewart Firth has also said, “the history of Christianity is central to the history of the Pacific” (Wagner-Wright 1990: iii).

Anthropologists seem to have discovered the importance of Pacific Christianity at about the same time as the historians. Major credit for this should be given not so much to an individual as to groups, primarily to the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania, an organization formed in 1972 by young Americans who had done their anthropological fieldwork in the Pacific Islands. The meetings of this group have frequently included papers touching on the cultural forms of Pacific Christianity, and two major symposia on Pacific Christianity have been held at these meetings and have subsequently been published (Boutilier, Hughes, and Tiffany 1978; Barker 1990). Similar group studies have been produced by the Société des Océanistes (1968) and the Southwestern Anthropological Association (Saunders 1988), though the latter study is concerned with more than the Pacific. The younger generation of anthropologists seems to have grown beyond the acerbic reactions toward missions that characterized earlier scholars like Malinowski or the blindness to church life shown by people like Margaret Mead, whose Coming of Age in Samoa gives little attention to church activities, despite the fact that in Manu’a, where she did her work, the church is a central feature of social existence. In the present generation, anthropologists recognize Pacific Christianity as an important subject for analysis and study in its own right, rather than as a regrettable or ignorable replacement for the traditional religion and mores. Partly as a result of the new anthropological interest, there has

The history of Christianity is central to the history of the Pacific.
been a desire to make accessible the early missionary writings, which provided much information on the life of the islanders. No less than six books published in the nineteenth century by missionary pioneers have been reprinted in recent years (Buzacott 1985; Farmer 1976; Gill 1984; Rowe 1976; Turner 1984; T. Williams 1977), and three that were not published in their day have now received publication (Davies 1961; Geddie 1975; Cargill 1977).

Pacific anthropologists have shown the same tendency as African anthropologists to write especially about the new religious movements that have arisen out of Christianity, the independent or indigenous churches of Africa, and the adjustment movements or cargo cults of Melanesia. These have been of special anthropological interest because they illustrate the transition from small-scale to large-scale societies, and they have attracted attention out of proportion to their size (cf. seven studies from Melanesia listed in Barker 1990:27). However, for little understood reasons, movements of this type in the Pacific show much less staying power than do their counterparts in Africa. They have displayed meteoric careers, but most have gone into decline, and henceforth anthropological attention is likely to concentrate more on the standard churches, which themselves are also examples of social transition and which sometimes carry cargoistic undertones.

A few of the recent books by anthropologists on Pacific Christianity deserve mention even in a short report like this one. James Clifford’s study (1982) of the famous missionary Maurice Leenhardt is one of these, for Clifford has at last done justice to Leenhardt’s dedication to the Kanaks and his insight into their thought world. Raymond Firth’s book on religion in Tikopia (1970), particularly on the process of conversion to Christianity, is another, as are two studies of the church-centered islands of Kosrae and Isabel (Peoples 1985; White 1992). Mary Taylor Huber has written with insight on the Divine Word Mission in New Guinea (1988). The importance attached by anthropologists to Pacific Christianity is suggested by the fact that a newly published collection on family and gender in the Pacific has eight of its ten contributors writing on mission and church themes (Maclntyre and Jolly 1989).

When historians and anthropologists have been producing so much, it is not surprising to find that missiologists have begun to pay more attention to the Pacific. A quick count turns up the names of at least twenty missiologists who have produced substantial works on the Pacific since 1970. Such interest is in sharp contrast to the indifference that characterized earlier years. As a result of their work, we now have, in addition to the books already mentioned, a three-volume general history of Pacific missions and churches (Garrett 1982, 1991, forthcoming) and an exhaustive history of the first years of the Catholic missions (Wiltgen 1979), which will soon be extended to cover later years. We have histories and cultural analyses of Solomon Islands Christianity (Tippett 1967; Whiteman 1983), Hawaiian Congregationalism (Loomis 1970), Vanuatu Presbyterianism (Miller 1978-90), Tahitian Protestantism (Vernier 1985; Nicole 1988), and Tahitian, Wallisian, Vanuatu, Papuan, and Micronesian Catholicism (Hodée 1983; Poncet 1972; Dubois 1985; Monnier 1987; Delbos 1984; Hezel 1991). We have general histories of the Mormons, the Adventists, and the Methodists in the Pacific (Britsch 1986; Clapham 1985; Ferch 1986; Wood 1975-87; cf. Brown 1989), and an account of the roads taken by the various churches to achieve independence from the missions (Forman 1982). Three valuable surveys by missiologists of Melanesian religious movements have appeared (Flannery 1983-84; Brennan 1970; Trompf 1991). With their usual thoroughness, the Germans have contributed several major historical and cultural studies, mostly on New Guinea and its Lutheranism (Tomasetti 1976; Ahrens and Hollephant 1977; Bürkle 1978; Fauth 1983; Ahrens 1986; Mroso 1986; Wagner and Reiner 1986; Wagner, Fogmann, and Jansen 1989; Müller 1989; Aerts 1991). The one united church in the region has been provided with two histories (Williams 1972; Threfall 1975), and the Pacific Conference of Churches with one (Forman 1986).

To all these books must be added dissertations and journal articles too numerous to be mentioned individually. A growing number of journals now welcome articles on Pacific church life. The long-established missiological journals of Europe, North America, and Australia are among these, as are a few of the long-established Pacific studies journals, such as the Journal of the Polynesian Society and the Journal de la Société des Océanistes. But in addition to these there are new journals, founded during the past quarter-century or so, that either concentrate on Pacific churches or frequently carry articles about them. Such are the Journal of Pacific History coming from the Australian National University, the New Zealand Journal of History coming from the University of Auckland, Pacific Studies from Brigham Young University-Hawaii, the Contemporary Pacific from the University of Hawaii, Ilsa from the University of Guam, Catalyst produced by the Melanesian Institute for Pastoral and Socio-economic Service in Goroka, the Melanesian Journal of Theology from Lae, and the Pacific Journal of Theology from Suva. Most recently the field of Pacific mission studies can boast a journal of its own, the South Pacific Journal of Mission Studies, published by the South Pacific Association for Mission Studies, located in Sydney. One ongoing publication that is not really a journal, but rather a series of very useful books, is Point, which, like Catalyst, comes from the Melanesian Institute in Goroka, Papua New Guinea, and which provides extensive information and analysis on the relation of Gospel and culture.

Growing Role of Resource Centers

The mention of this institute calls to mind the many resource centers that now exist to help the student of Pacific churches. The Melanesian Institute itself is a notable example of a center, maintained in this case by the churches, for the study of church life and community needs. The most rapidly growing resource center is the Center for Pacific Islands Studies of the University of Hawaii, which is fast building up large library and archival holdings. Two others are the Micronesian Area Research Center at the University of Guam and the Melanesian Studies Resource Center at the University of California, San Diego, specializing in Micronesian and Melanesian cultures. Though these centers do not concentrate on churches and missions, they have abundant materials on those subjects because of the role played by churches and missions in the islands.

Looking south of the equator, counterparts to these centers are found in the Mitchell Library in Sydney, the Institute of Pacific Studies at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji, and the Centre for South Pacific Studies at the University of New South Wales, the last-named being the producer of a newsletter that surveys all resource centers and new journals for the Pacific. Of wide usefulness is the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau of the Australian National University, which makes its extensive manuscripts available in microform to selected libraries around the world. National archives are being built up, notably in Fiji, Kiribati, and the Solomons, in which many church documents may be found. Smaller resource centers are the library of the deceased missionary anthropologist and missiologist Alan Tippett, now housed at St. Mark’s Library, Canberra; the Alele...
Museum in Majuro; and the Micronesian Seminar created and sustained by the Catholic missionary Francis Hezel, recently moved from Chuuk to Pohnpei. Another Catholic missionary, Hermann Janssens, who started the Melanesian Institute in Goroka, is now on the staff of the Missionswissenschaftliches Institut Missio e.V. in Aachen, where a strong emphasis on Oceania is maintained. Honolulu has two important depositories beside the one at the university, namely, the Bishop Museum and the Mission Houses Museum Library. No one can work in Hawaiian church history without examining these treasures.

Beyond all these specialized centers there are the archives of mission societies scattered around the world. The main ones for the Pacific are in Boston, London, Paris, Barmen, Neuendetelsau, Rome, Sydney, and Auckland. Some of these archives, notably those in Boston and London, have been put into microform and so are available without requiring travel to those cities. Father Theo Kok of the Marist Missions has carried out a tremendous process of examining and microfilming all the papers found in the Marist mission centers around the Pacific and assembling them now in Rome. Resources in Paris have been strengthened by the work of the Institut Français de Recherche Scientifique pour le Développement en Coopération (formerly the Office de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique d’Outre-Mer, or ORSTOM), which has produced a number of brief but illuminating studies of Pacific churches, particularly those in francophone territories (Barbadzan 1982; Kohler 1980, 1981, 1982, 1985). And for the study of recent developments the archives of the world’s ecumenical bodies have become indispensable because they show how the world’s churches have cooperated in relation to the Pacific, and even more because they store the information about the Pacific that the churches have cooperatively assembled. The World Council, the Pacific Conference of Churches, and the national councils in the United States, Australia, and New Zealand all provide useful resources, those of the Pacific Conference being in pressing need of better preservation.

Some scholar or scholars could give valuable assistance to all researchers by publishing guides to these various archives and resource centers, the kind of thing done for China by Archie Crouch and his colleagues (Crouch 1989). As far as the Pacific is concerned, this has been done only within Britain in the Guide to Historical Sources of Missionary Activities in the Pacific Islands Held in British Institutions produced on microfiche by Fabian Hutchinson. Hutchinson has also produced for UNESCO a feasibility study for a guide to all Australian archives on the Pacific (1981, 1990).

It is evident from all this that the study of Pacific missions and churches must be an intercontinental effort. The resources are found scattered around the world. Australia probably takes as far as written resources are concerned, but they do have materials, often in out-of-the-way places, that need to be recovered and used. Government archives, found in most island countries, have already been mentioned. Each island denomination usually has a church magazine that has been published for decades, and partial files of these can often be found in the central church offices. Probably none of these files is complete, but some steps toward completeness can be taken by piecing together the parts found in different places. The work of finding and cataloguing those parts is one of the most difficult challenges before mission scholars. The magazines are mainly devotional, but they often have bits of news and opinion. There is need to search out also the diaries and letters that have sometimes been kept by individuals and families of Pacific Island missionaries who have gone to distant places. Islanders have not been and are not inclined to writing letters. A true Christian, it is said in the islands, is one who answers letters! But the Islanders who went abroad as missionaries did at times keep records and write to their home churches. Ron and Marjorie Crocombe have performed an indispensable service in finding and publishing journals and other primary materials from Cook Islander and other island missionary (Crocombe 1968; Crocombe et al. 1983; Maretu 1983). Securing primary material from the missionaries’ families often presents problems. A student researcher in Samoa found that families sometimes would not let these resources out of their possession because of concern about property rights or because of negative statements that might be contained in the writings.

If the islands are poor in written sources, they are rich in oral sources, and these have scarcely been tapped. People who have been church leaders in the generations just passed can still be interviewed, and much can be learned from them. The last generation of missionaries who went from one island country to another is still living in retirement in the homelands, and these men and women should have their memories recorded. Here, as everywhere, oral sources need cross-checking where possible because, as a recent study of Pohnpeian tradition has shown, there can be much variation in oral accounts (Peterson 1991). The only students who have been consistently making use of oral resources in the church are the students in theological colleges, primarily the Pacific Theological College in Suva and, to a lesser extent, the Rarongo Theological College near Rabaul. Some of the theses they have written are of considerable value because of the oral resources incorporated in them, and at least two university libraries, those at Canberra and New Haven, have been ordering copies of these written at Suva. Recently one of the Suva theses has been published independently, and three more have appeared in a single volume (Wete 1991; Forman 1992).

These theses are among the first breakthroughs by Pacific
Islanders are also becoming more interested in exploring the interaction between their Christianity and the ancient beliefs and social structures of their people. Here is another challenge for further study. A number of works by outsiders have addressed it (May 1990; Barker 1990; Renck 1990; Siikala 1982; and the Point series), but the islanders’ contribution is still very limited (cf. the conference reports listed above). The rise of ecological concern is one force that is pushing island people to reexamine ancient beliefs, which in past days apparently supported an environmentally sound society.

A further direction in which Pacific church studies need to press is toward a better understanding of the relation between Christianity and nationhood. In other parts of the world where European empires once ruled, Christianity has often been seen as linked to imperialism and antagonistic to nationhood. Studies in those other regions have concentrated on the relation between Christianity and imperialism. In the Pacific the problem tends to be the opposite one. Christianity has had closer links to the indigenous population than to the imperial powers, which were frequently in tension with the churches (e.g., in Tahiti, Samoa, Fiji, and Kiribati). The recent period in which the indigenous population emerged into national independence has revealed how closely the churches are tied to nationalism and the problems that result from these ties. In Vanuatu it was often the ordained ministers who led the struggle for independence; an Anglican priest led the independent country till 1991, revealing all the compromises in which churchmen have to be involved when they become political leaders. Even now the president of the country is a Presbyterian minister, who certainly has to be wise as a serpent and cannot be harmless as a dove. In New Caledonia the Protestant church was the first national, nonpolitical body to call for independence. A former Catholic seminarian became the principal leader of the independence movement, and it was a former minister of the Protestant church, a graduate of the Pacific Theological College, who assassinated that leader when he made a compromise agreement with France in 1989 because the nationalist cause seemed to have been betrayed. In Fiji, after the Fijian nationalist military coup of 1987, the Fijian nationalist wing of the Methodist Church forcibly seized control of the church offices and bound the Methodists in a close alliance of mutual support with the anti-Indian, pro-Fijian government. Such events show the need for much deeper understanding and analysis of the relationship between church and nation.

Another side to church life cannot be forgotten in any single-minded absorption with nationhood. Christianity came to the Pacific islands as a world religion, represented by missionaries who had a world-embracing view. It was accepted by the islanders in large part because it had a perspective that took into account the wider world that had broken in on them and that had not been seriously addressed in their traditional, localized religion. Therefore a global outlook has always been a latent element in the island churches, and this is a third area calling for study. Continuing generations of foreign missionaries kept some of that historical work going, but Pacific church history is now the major field of teaching alongside Western church history.
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When radio communications appeared in the 1930s and air contacts began in the 1950s, the churches began to expand their outlook as long as they remained in the islands. The establishment of ecumenical organizations in the 1960s and the gradual entry of island churches into world-church structures brought the greatest opening up of these territorial horizons. The establishment of ecumenical organizations in the 1960s and the gradual entry of island churches into world-church points of view. Neither can be ignored in any analysis of church life.

The nationalist perspective has received help from another quarter, namely, the new Pentecostal, conservative evangelical, and Mormon missions that have recently been spreading through the area and attracting many members from the old, nationally oriented churches. These groups are sometimes interested in nation building, but not in nationhood. Though they are antiecumencial, they produce some of the same results as the ecumenical movement in breaking down the alliance between church and nation. They bring religious pluralism and consequent individualism into church and society. They also often bring in foreign money and Western ways. They, like the ecumenical movement, have attracted little attention from students, though a three-year study of them has just been published by the Pacific Conference of Churches (Ernst 1994).

The field of Pacific church and mission studies is in some ways “white for harvest.” The harvest has begun in the studies of the past two decades, but the resources are available for a much greater in-gathering. In this part of the world, the modern Christian missionary movement has seen its most universal acceptance and integration into new cultures, its fullest participation in the life of whole peoples and of new nations. The rest of the world, and mission students in particular, have much to learn from this unique region.

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The 1888 London Centenary Missions Conference: Ecumenical Disappointment or American Missions Coming of Age?

Thomas A. Askew

History has not been kind to the Centenary Conference on the Protestant Missions of the World held in London, June 9-19, 1888. Yet by all standards, this gathering at Exeter Hall was the largest, most representative interdenominational, international assembly to that date. The statistics are impressive: 1,579 delegates from 139 different denominations and societies representing ten countries. Adding to attendance totals were rallies for the general public.

Nevertheless, the gathering has enjoyed scant interest. The 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference, with its ecumenical outcomes, has received far greater attention from scholars. The lesser-known 1900 New York Ecumenical Missionary Conference, graced with an address by President William McKinley and almost 200,000 guests, appears much more noteworthy than the 1888 event.

The disappointments registered by some participants in 1888 add to the obscurity of the Centenary Conference. Even the centennial name drew criticism when first announced. Those familiar with missions history realized that 1888 marked no specific hundredth anniversary of any event. The Anglicans, Moravians, and others had engaged in mission efforts long before 1788, and Baptist William Carey did not sail for India until 1792.

Anglican delegates regretted that all Church of England societies did not participate. The High Church-orientated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, and the Universities Mission to Central Africa were absent by their own choice. As one periodical observed, "The Church of England will thus be only half represented." Nor did the Salvation Army cooperate, though it hosted an international convention during the same week in London. Attendance by the general public fell below expectations. Even the local clergy showed tepid interest. An Anglican missions executive later noted, "Clergymen and non-conformist ministers were conspicuous by their absence."

Unfortunately, concrete outcomes were less than anticipated. No formal resolutions were passed on issues of substance, since no delegates held commissioned authority and no executive mechanism existed to coordinate mission strategy. To meet this latter need, some speakers proposed establishing a permanent international standing committee; such a body would not become a reality until after 1910.

Finally, the quality of presentations varied. Preparation time was inadequate for desired editorial control, and no limits were placed on who would have opportunity to speak. The result was a mixture of informed presentations, punctuated with numerous impromptu rhetorical homilies. One impatient participant later complained, "A great deal of inept nonsense was spoken in those miserable periods, quite irrelevant to the subject of discussion, [but] garnished with scripture quotations."

Given these shortfalls of performance, why does the 1888 London conference merit fresh consideration? In retrospect the Centenary Conference is important for at least three reasons:

1. It is the first international ecumenical conference planned and executed on such a scale. Simply stated, the 1888 meeting brought together diverse Protestant missions and church leaders representing more societies and regions than ever before assembled under one roof. As such, it was a bold undertaking that set precedents for worldwide gatherings in 1900 and 1910.

2. The topics addressed provide a taxonomy of issues faced by late nineteenth-century Protestant missions during a transition period in the world missionary movement. If solutions were not forthcoming, at least important questions were raised.

3. The affective and informal outcomes of the 1888 conference were significant. This essay suggests that the 1888 meetings facilitated a heightened level of mutuality among English-speaking mission leaders, elevated British respect for the Americans present, and prepared the way for increased Anglo-American missionary cooperation. By the century's end this collaboration resulted in North America assuming larger responsibilities for supplying money and personnel for overseas missions. In other words, London 1888 marks the coming of age of North American foreign missions after a century of decided British leadership.

London 1888 marked the coming of age of North American foreign missions.

London 1888 as Precedent

The Victorian religious press built high expectations, featuring the conference as unique in church history. The opening session proved so stirring that missions advocate Arthur T. Pierson reported back to America, "I said to myself, this is indeed the grandest ecumenical council ever assembled since the first Council of Jerusalem."

For some delegates, London 1888 represented the culmination of three decades of smaller international consultations, especially those held in Liverpool in 1860 and London in 1878, where it was recommended to hold decennial conferences. Direct impetus for the 1888 gathering came from the monthly caucuses of the executive secretaries of the London-based mission societies. Specific planning started in 1886 when an all-British coordinating committee named Scots Presbyterian clergyman and author James E. Johnston to be secretary for the proposed conclave. When written invitations produced few North American registrants, Johnston took a hurried recruiting trip to the United States and Canada. To ensure American ownership, a New York executive committee was established, with Presbyterian missions secretary F. F. Ellinwood as chair. Though Johnston did not visit the Continent, a coterie of Europeans accepted the written invitation. Thus, London 1888, unlike previous conferences, included a number of non-English-speak-

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ing representatives and a large contingent from across the Atlantic. As would be expected, Great Britain and her "colonies" dominated the roster, with 1,319 persons and 55 societies listed. A total of 219 traveled from North America: 30 Canadians from 9 societies, and 189 Americans from 58 societies. There were 41 continentals representing 18 societies based in Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland. 10

A perusal of the roster reveals a number of distinguished names, including a half-dozen titled persons. Preeminent among these was the earl of Aberdeen, who served as conference president and convener. To the Americans the best-known Britshers present were probably J. Hudson Taylor of the China Inland Mission, Professor Henry Drummond representing the Free Church of Scotland Foreign Missions Committee, and Baptist missions promoter H. Grattan Guinness. Methodist missions secretary Alexander Sutherland from Toronto was the most prominent Canadian. Most visible among American participants were A. J. Gordon, A. T. Pierson, and F. F. Ellinwood. Adding prestige to the American presence were historian Philip Schaff, social gospel leader Washington Gladden, best-selling author Josiah Strong, and multimillionaire Cornelius Vanderbilt II, all delegates at large. No non-Occidental names appear on the roster; nevertheless, non-Westerners attended. A. T. Pierson noted with satisfaction the presence of "natives who have been converted and transformed into evangelists, pastors, teachers—they are all here." 11 Among black participants were the beloved octogenarian Bishop Crowther of Niger and Baptist pastors J. A. Taylor of Richmond, Virginia, and J. J. Fuller from England.12

In summation, London 1888 was primarily a consultation among senior male leaders of denominationally related societies with some interdenominational and women's societies also present. Most women on the roster were wives of male delegates, but a few females spoke from the platform, most notably Canadian Baptist Hannah Maria Norris Armstrong, the only woman to address a plenary session. Absent were voices for the newly organized Student Volunteer Movement or such emerging leaders as American A. B. Simpson and Canadian Roland Bingham. Nevertheless, the Centenary Conference marked a significant step toward international consultation, an initiative that led directly to New York in 1900 and Edinburgh in 1910.

Topics and Issues Engaged

English Baptist E. B. Underhill's welcoming address enumerated vital issues that demanded attention.13 These included social customs such as polygamy and caste, intermission competition, the place of medical missions, female missionaries, and the relation of missions to commerce, especially the effects of liquor and opium. Added later to Underhill's agenda were the role of education in mission strategy, the proper training of missionaries, and suitable self-governance for native churches. To grapple candidly with these topics, twenty-two closed sessions were scheduled. In addition, sixteen public assemblies were devoted to surveying the world's mission fields and non-Christian religions. Displaying a Victorian commitment to descriptive accuracy, the presentations were laced with statistics, a feature editor Johnston commended in his preface to the proceedings.

In retrospect, the most evident characteristic of the very numerous conference presentations was their congruence of outlook. In the 1,061 pages of text only a few genuine disagreements arose, despite the troublesome nature of many of the questions raised. Three factors, at least, contributed to this spirit of cooperation:

First, information and viewpoints were shared, but no final judgments or policies were adopted. Second, everyone appeared anxious to reach across ecclesiastical boundaries; foundational theological questions that might prove divisive were avoided. Finally, a common set of unexamined assumptions undergirded the Christian worldviews of most speakers and conditioned their approach to problems. Among these assumptions were:

1. The unity of the evangelical faith. As editor Johnston observed, "We say with truth that every Evangelical Church in the world, having any agency for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, was represented there at the conference."14 Thus, under an umbrella of generic evangelical comity, the likes of Washington Gladden, Henry Drummond, and A. T. Pierson could cooperate, along with Anglicans, Wesleyans, Lutherans, Quakers, and others.

2. A new era had dawned: modern missions will lead to worldwide Christian triumph. Historian Philip Schaff's remarks at the final session best describe the confidence that animated the presentations. "There are three epochs of Missions in history—the apocalyptic, the medieval, and the modern. The result of the first was the conversion of the Roman Empire; the result of the second was a Christian Europe; and result of the third will be the conversion of the whole world."15 Perhaps reflecting Enlightenment-inspired optimism, delegates assumed that human progress would take place as Christ triumphs over the powers of darkness. Nevertheless, foreign missions faced a crisis. The forces opposed to Christianity were formidable and population statistics alarming. Early in the conference A. T. Pierson argued in his world missions survey, "There is something radically wrong in the prosecution of foreign missions."16 More missionaries, more resources, more information and commitment from the churches are required to implement the task, but it will be fulfilled.

3. The Gospel as a civilizer. Underlying the belief that the Gospel could both redeem and civilize was the confidence that the native populations of the world could adapt and elevate their lives by embracing Christianity. This was possible because of the essential unity of all humankind, a view then under challenge by late nineteenth-century racist arguments. High hopes were frequently expressed in the superior ability of nationals to evangelize other nationals. Of 36,000 missionaries worldwide in 1888, 30,000 were native evangelists, according to the statistics cited. Thus the Gospel as salvation and civilizer heavily depended on native messengers, who were considered essential participants in the missionary task.17

4. The Anglo-Saxons are God's special agents for missionizing the world. The conference discourse simply assumed the presence of the West in foreign lands. Indeed, the mood was anticipatory; communications, transport, and medical advances now presented unparalleled opportunities for successful world evangelization. And carrying the thrust would be the Anglo-Saxons. Early in the conference Anglican R. N. Cust boldly stated the bias
shared by many delegates, "But to the great Anglo-saxon race on both sides of the Atlantic the history of this century will record, that to them were committed the oracles of God, that they were chosen by Divine grace to be the chief ambassador for Christ."18 One wonders how the Swiss and French reacted to such pre-supposition. The conferees, however, were not naive about the evils Western trade had caused, and some speakers showed sensitivity to the inherent dilemmas colonization caused for missions work.19 Strong reservations were raised about the direction Western societies themselves were heading. The materialism and skepticism found in the West made it risky to send native converts there for education. Repeatedly, severe condemnations were leveled at the disastrous effects of the opium, liquor, firearms, and slave trades, all conducted with Western complicity. Since conference rules forbade the passage of action resolutions, a postconference caucuses voted antivice resolutions to present to governmental authorities. Happily, the caucus could report that one of the evils, British-licensed army brothels in India, had that week been outlawed by Parliament. Prominent in the activist caucuses were Britons J. Hudson Taylor and H. Gratton Guinness and Americans A. J. Gordon, F. F. Ellinwood, and A. T. Pierson.20 In all the deliberations about missions, commerce, and diplomacy, the concern was how to promote the missionary cause and protect native populations from exploitation. Nevertheless, it should not be surprising, that with Western imperialism reaching its zenith by the 1880s, the conference viewed Western colonial advances as advantageous for preaching the Gospel, not the reverse.21 The problem was not imperialism itself but the irresponsibles who traveled in its wake.

Amid the aura of optimism, two topics did spark heated debate: polygamy and the establishment of a permanent standing committee to arbitrate differences among missionary societies. Not surprisingly, there was unanimity that a man becoming a church leader could have only one wife, as the New Testament taught. Beyond that, no satisfactory solutions were found as to the status of polygamous converts. The debates centered on how far European customs could be imposed on native converts and how to avoid inflicting one evil when attempting to remove another. As the discussion became more intense, the chair requested a pause to pray. After the prayer J. Hudson Taylor called for charity and related how he had moved to a more moderating position because of his experience of working with polygamists. It eventually became clear that no single policy could fit each field context.22

The initial call for promoting comity, cooperation, and arbitration between societies came from Congregationalist A. C. Thompson of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, with the Netherlands Missionary Society and others filing a similar request. Surprisingly, the strongest case for a permanent central committee was made by a person absent from the gathering. Though Gustav Warneck, the pioneer missiologist, was unable to attend, he sent a paper to be read. In broad strokes he argued for a representative international committee, hopefully headquartered in London, which would plan an international conference every ten years, publish a scholarly journal, and arbitrate differences between missions. Only then would the "pious expression" of unity be "outwardly recognizable in our practical relations with each other."23 Warneck's prescient proposal was two decades premature. Prevailing Anglo-American opinion advocated only informal consultation and cooperation.

American Credibility Enhanced

One evident outcome of London 1888 was the new respect earned by American missions leaders. Viewing the conference from ten years' perspective, Anglican Eugene Stock wrote in The History of the Church Missionary Society, "The American delegates were quite in front for ability and culture and eloquence. England had scarcely anyone to put alongside such men as Dr. Gordon, Dr. Ellinwood, Dr. Pierson, Dr. Post, Dr. Judson Smith and Dr. W. M. Taylor."24 Likewise, Anglican Robert N. Cust, who had criticized the quality of many speeches, editorialized a week after the event:

There is something in the personality, the expression of countenance, the utterance of words of an American that attracts and conciliates friendships. They are not as we are in Great Britain, but there rests in their choice of words and formation of sentences nothing of the archaic peculiarities of our common ancestors, and a mobility of presence and an independence of bearing which on good, holy men . . . is particularly fascinating; their eloquence is all their own, and, in spite of the obvious peculiarities of expressions and tones, goes to the heart. Some of their speeches were simply magnificent, and can never be forgotten by those who heard them.25

In the valedictory session F. F. Ellinwood lavishly thanked the English hosts and stated, "We feel drawn to a closer fellowship, and kinship, and love towards our brethren of these British Isles than ever before."26 "Tonight we were all Englishmen, because we were all Christians."27 Likewise, Professor Schaff said, "Your language is our language; your laws our laws; your institutions are our institutions; your Bible is our Bible; your Christianity is our Christianity. We have inherited it from you; and to old England and new England, combined, are entrusted the future destinies of Christianity."28

Given the amount of praise and attention accorded the Americans, one again wonders how other delegates felt. The most prominent Canadian present, Alexander Sutherland, confessed at the valedictory that he felt uneasy about being asked to speak on behalf of foreign delegates. "For, as a Canadian, I can not admit for a moment that I am in any sense a stranger. I claim, my Lord, . . . to be a fellow-citizen with every Englishman, whether he resides in the Great Britain of these Isles, or in the greater Britain which lies beyond the sea."29 Only two continental briefly spoke at the valedictory, possibly because of language difficulties. One of these, Rev. C. H. Rappard of the St. Chrischona missionary society at Basel, extolled the spirit of brotherly love; he recommended that continents ought to carry their Bibles to worship and learn to read them more, as he had seen the English do.

The Scots and the Americans became especially friendly and cooperative, to the displeasure of at least one Englishman. In the sessions devoted to the relationship between home and foreign missions, a Wesleyan journalist complained that American and Scots Presbyterians were too dominant and spoke too presumptuously from their common ecclesiastical viewpoint.30 Further
evidence of Scots-American bonding is confirmed by a spontaneous invitation to A. J. Gordon and A. T. Pierson to conduct missionary crusades throughout Scotland. Dropping continental vacation plans for July and August, Gordon and Pierson spoke in Edinburgh for a week and then held mission rallies at twenty-one locations attended by 35,000 people throughout Scotland.30

The social events accompanying the London 1888 conference also cemented British-American relationships. Delegates were shown every hospitality, including formal receptions, teas, luncheons, garden parties, and an opportunity to meet William Gladstone. In addition, the American delegates expanded networks by engaging in an array of churchly activities. These included temperance rallies, women’s meetings, denominational conclaves, missionary ship departures, pulpit supply, and speaking at the Mildmay Park spiritual life conference.

While it is difficult to demonstrate cause and effect, at least three specific American missions advances followed the 1888 London gathering. The first was an important contribution to the later ecumenical movement. In London, thirty-two American and four Canadian women joined to form the World’s Missionary Committee of Christian Women, headed by Abbie B. Child of Boston and eventually connecting with British women as well. As R. Pierce Beaver observed, “The women were far ahead of their time in conceiving of mission as world mission.”31 The second was the annual Foreign Missions Conference of North America. Initiated in 1893 by F. F. Ellinwood and others, this annual gathering continued for two generations until absorbed into the National Council of the Churches of Christ in 1950.32 The third concerns the founding of the Boston Missionary Training Institute in 1889 by A. J. Gordon, with assistance from H. Gratton Guinness, whose London missionary training school Gordon had visited. Within a decade fifty missionary alumni went overseas from Gordon’s fledgling institute, which eventually evolved into Gordon College and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.33

Concluding Observations

In 1889, one year after the London gathering, A. T. Pierson assessed its effectiveness in the Missionary Review of the World.34 While he appreciated the inspirational values generated, he enumerated definite shortcomings: too many sessions, rotating chairmen, and deficient addresses. He also regretted the rule prohibiting formal resolutions and the failure to establish a permanent standing committee to arbitrate disputes.

One Pierson criticism was prescient—the failure of the delegates to recognize the emerging student movement for missions, which in America alone saw 3,000 youths volunteer (500 of them women) in the late 1880s. By the 1890s the avalanche of young male and female candidates, the worldwide extension of the YMCA, and the fresh leadership exemplified by John R. Mott, J. H. Oldham, and others would alter foreign missions dynamics.

**London 1888 celebrated the passing of the heroic formative century of modern missions.**

The rise of the “faith missions”35 would complicate the context, as would developing theological tensions by the end of the century. London 1888 anticipated none of these potentialities.

How, then, should London 1888 be understood? Children of their age, as we all are, the delegates hoped to plan for the future but in actuality were celebrating the passing of the heroic formative century of modern missions. They were mostly of the generation who personally remembered Adoniram Judson, Alexander Duff, Robert Moffatt, and David Livingstone. They were buoyed by a benign, loosely defined confidence in evangelical unity and the beneficence of Western civilization, confidences that would not long endure.

London 1888 thus was not the harbinger of things to come but a milestone event during the zenith years of the nineteenth-century trans-Atlantic evangelical united front. Two results are indisputable. The precedent for decennial missions megaconferences was furthered, and North Americans assumed increased leadership in Protestant foreign missions. After all, the next international Ecumenical Conference on Foreign Missions was held with huge crowds in New York City in 1900.36

**Notes**

7. For suggestions related to research in Britain on the Centenary Conference, the writer wishes to thank Professors David Bebbington, David Cook, Brian Stanley, and Andrew Walls. Thanks also to Gerald H. Anderson for his insightful suggestions.
13. Centenary Conference, 1:3.
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15. Ibid., p. 463.
17. The American Missionary Association reported recruiting American blacks to carry the Gospel to tropical Africa because "they are strong of body, bright in intellect, and of peculiarly religious temperament." Similarly, President D. J. East of the Calabar Missionary College, Jamaica, emphasized "the capacity of the African, equally with other races of men, to receive intellectual, moral and religious culture." (Centenary Conference 2:390, 396). The racial assumptions about American blacks offer fascinating insights into late nineteenth-century racial stereotypes. For insights on the Gospel as civilizer and missions and imperialism, see Bryan Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester: Apollos, 1990).
19. One American delegate, Dr. G. E. Post of the Syrian Protestant College, Beruit, did attempt to remove the political taint of imperialism from the Americans when he stated, "The English hold the hands—the physical forces; and God has given to the other branch of the Anglo-Saxon race, untrammeled by your political complications, a control of the brain and the heart" (ibid., p. 322). For more on the American approach, see Andrew Walls, "The American Dimension in the History of the Missionary Movement," in *Earthen Vessels: American Evangelicals and Foreign Missions*, 1880-1980, ed. J. A. Carpenter and W. R. Shenk (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990), pp. 1-25.
20. Worth noting is the fact that most spokesmen at the caucus were Nonconformists on the British side. American A. J. Gordon spoke of Bostonian Wendell Phillips as a courageous example of fighting for the right, an abolitionist willing to take an unpopular stand (Centenary Conference, 1:486).
22. Centenary Conference, 2:73.
23. Ibid., p. 437. It appears that Warneck was concerned about German missions in areas where British control was expanding; also, he was increasingly uneasy about the directions Anglo-American missions were heading, claiming they lacked contextual understanding. See Werner Ustorf, "Anti-Americanism in German Missiology," *Mission Studies* 11 (1989): 23-33.
27. Ibid., 1:463.
28. Ibid., p. 459.
35. E.g., Central America Mission (1890), The Evangelical Alliance Mission (1890), Sudan Interior Mission (1893), and Africa Inland Mission (1895).
36. Presbyterian F. F. Ellinwood and several others prominent at London 1888 directly contributed to leadership of New York 1900.
The Legacy of Lars Peter Larsen

Eric J. Sharpe

Denmark’s contribution to the history of Christianity in India has not been large, measured by the size of the Danish missionary community. It has not, however, been insignificant. No one is likely to forget that two important steps in the establishment of Protestant missions in India could not have been taken when they were taken, had it not been for the existence of two tiny Danish trading posts—Tranquebar in the south at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and Serampore in Bengal at the century’s end. Both settlements were sold to the East India Company in 1845. Both names, however, kept their place on the Indian Christian roll of honor—Serampore as an educational center, Tranquebar as the point from which a determined and controversial attempt was made in the middle years of the nineteenth century by missionaries of the Leipzig Society to claim India for the tradition of Martin Luther.1 But by now the Danish involvement had begun to flow into other channels, and it was not until 1888 that the Danish Missionary Society (founded in 1821) sent its first ordained missionary, N.P. Hansen (1854-1919), to India. A year later there followed the second, Lars Peter Larsen (1862-1940), who served in India for no less than forty-four years, from 1889-1933. The affectionate label “the Great Dane” has at various times been bestowed on Kierkegaard, Grundtvig, the composer Carl Nielsen, and no doubt others. In the annals of the Indian church, however, there has been only one “Great Dane”: L.P. Larsen.

Larsen brought together in his own mature and balanced personality qualities not often found in combination. He was an intellectual and a pietist, a liberal evangelical and a Lutheran holiness Christian. A Danish Lutheran by origin and affection, after a decade with the Danish Missionary Society he left for wider fields of service, first with the YMCA, then with the United Theological College in Bangalore, and finally under Bible Society auspices. Being neither British nor German, he was able to move with some freedom through the political minefield of the war years and the 1920s. Being in a sense undenominational, he had no need to toe anyone’s party line. He could be highly critical of missions and their ways, but that did not make him ever want to masquerade as an Indian; most photographs taken during his years in India (at least those that have been published) show him dressing almost ostentatiously in European suits, with collar and tie and obligatory sola-topi. He was on record to the effect that the Westernness of Christianity in India was deplorable and needed to be corrected; to serve up Christianity with curry sauce, however, was not the way to set about it.2 Race relations among Christians in India was a subject that troubled him greatly, to which he returned on many occasions, but he was never one to opt for band-aid solutions to problems of such multilayered complexity. Another untypical trait in Larsen’s work was that, internationalist as he was, he was not as a rule an international conference-goer.3 His legacy is therefore not be found parceled out at strategic intervals along the conference trail.

From a Blacksmith’s Home to India

Lars Peter Larsen was twenty-seven years old, newly ordained and newly married to Anna Elisabeth (Lise) Seidelin, when he arrived in South India in December 1889. He might never have arrived at all. A few months earlier, a catastrophe had almost taken place, as the young and undoubtedly intense Larsen had crossed theological swords across a dinner table with the rector and secretary of the mission society, Vilhelm Beck (1829-1901), at that time the leader of the Inner Mission of the Danish church and the chairman of its missionary society.4 Beck, deeply hurt at the young man’s arrogance (as he saw it), had demanded an apology. Without it, Beck refused to ratify the young man’s appointment as a missionary. Fortunately for the future of the church in India, Larsen went to see Beck and was warmly received. No apology needed to be given.5 But the possibility of further friction between Larsen and church officialdom remained.

To begin at the beginning: Larsen was born on November 8, 1862, at Baarse, Denmark (some forty miles from Copenhagen), the eldest son of a blacksmith, Jens Larsen, and his wife, Ellen (née Nielsen).6 Blacksmiths did not as a rule grow rich, and L.P. would probably have become just one more country artisan had it not been for the help of a local landowner, P. F. Fabricius, to whose estate the family moved in 1868. Lars Peter was obviously well cared for, a fact Larsen was to mention several times on his visits back to Denmark. He was also able to attend the University of Copenhagen at the age of nineteen in 1882, just as the international student missionary movement was making its presence felt in the Scandinavian countries. A missionary hero was Lars Olsen Skrefsrud (1840-1910), a Norwegian worker among the Santals of northern India and an enthusiastic advocate of the so-called Gossner principle of employing wherever possible practical missionaries who in their education had not lost their passion for souls.7 Skrefsrud done nothing but enthuse Larsen and Nathan Söderblom in the 1880s—as he undoubtedly did—his life could have been deemed well spent.8 For a time, Larsen planned to accompany Skrefsrud back to India there and then. Fortunately, wiser counsels prevailed: Larsen could not have been the missionary he was had he not been educated as he was.

As the nineteenth century wound down, evangelical theology in Denmark, as elsewhere, stood at a parting of the ways, and which direction each individual took was largely determined by

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the kind of education each had received. On the one side, there was the conservative, confessional Pietism of the Inner Mission; on the other, the cultural nationalism of the followers of N. F. S. Grundtvig. A third force was just beginning to emerge, in the shape of a moderate liberalism seeking to reconcile the old and the new, faith and scholarship. This was eventually the position in which Larsen found himself, albeit less by choice than by necessity.

In the 1890s, working in Madras, the Larsens lived the serious and at times solemn life of any young missionary couple of the time. They agonized over their affluent lifestyle and began to ask questions about the relations between Indians and Europeans. Of course they spent much time studying Tamil. If any Indian city could be called a Christian center in the 1890s, it was Madras, not least thanks to the presence of the Madras Christian College, still at that time presided over by the great Dr. William Miller and serving as an example of practical cooperation in the service of the Gospel. As though to keep the Christians on their toes, out at the suburb of Adyar there was the Theosophical Society, with its curious mixture of Hindu, occultist, and rationalist ingredients. And as though in response, there was in Madras the most articulate group of Indian Christians to be found anywhere in the country.

Larsen’s first theological problems, however, came with him to India from Denmark. They concerned the sacrament of baptism. Before leaving his home base, Larsen had become involved in a dispute about whether an infant actually receives anything in baptism. The Grundtvigian position was that baptism confers grace, irrespective of the state of mind of the one upon whom the ritual is performed. As well and good; others of us hold that position, while reserving a place for the ritual of confirmation. Larsen’s difficulty came at the point in the Danish baptismal ritual where a question asked of the child is answered on the child’s behalf by a sponsor (parent or godparent). When Larsen’s second child (his first daughter) was born in January 1893 and he proposed to baptize her, he simply altered the wording of the ritual to fit what he believed to be a matter of spiritual common sense. His difficulties with the Danish Missionary Society had begun.

Over the next few years, Larsen’s relations with his Danish Lutheran colleagues, and with his home base, became strained. In his own life of faith, he was moving more and more in the direction of the holiness movement, the natural roots of which were essentially Wesleyan Methodist, and Lutheran only at several removes. “It is quite clear to me,” he wrote to his wife, “that I think very differently about Christianity and the Christian life than do good Lutherans at home. My views on baptism and eucharist are definitely neither Lutheran nor Danish-Lutheran.”

Matters came to a head in 1898. Larsen was in Denmark on furlough. There, tensions between the Inner Mission and the Grundtvigians were more evident than ever before. Again the old warrior Vilhelm Beck, almost seventy years old in that year, provoked an outburst from Larsen by suggesting that the numbers of baptisms on the mission field ought to be increased. Larsen did not mince his words, accusing Beck of a total lack of understanding of conditions in India; adding insult to injury (especially where an evangelical was concerned), he labeled Beck’s attitude “catholic.” Playing the numbers game was indeed irrelevant to the future of Christianity in India. Larsen’s concern was that at home in Denmark, too few people could see the difference between proclaiming the Gospel and proclaiming Lutheranism. In discussion at the Aalborg meeting of 1898, Larsen is reported to have said, “I would regret the day when the Danish missionaries wanted to win people for Christ so that they would become Evangelical-Lutheran. Although we might try to, we would not succeed.” “It would be a disaster,” he went on, “if all Indian Christians had strong confessional feelings . . . We do not need it in India.”

Enter John R. Mott

The time would come when the idea of German and Scandinavian Lutherans taking part in ecumenical projects would be unremarkable. At the turn of the century, however, the lack of understanding between Lutheran and Calvinist, German and Anglo-Saxon Christians (to use the crude labels then in vogue), made cooperation difficult. Early in 1899, however, Larsen was approached with a view to his taking up a YMCA position in Madras, to work in the new but increasingly important field of student evangelism. It is hardly likely that he would even have been approached had he been thought to be a Lutheran of the hard-line confessional school. But this clearly he was not. Furthermore, in the spring of 1899 he had accompanied and interpreted for John R. Mott in Scandinavia, an arrangement made “partly to ascertain Larsen’s fitness for a YMCA-related post back in India.” Next, Larsen went to America, visiting a number of major universities and the Northfield Conference. Returning to Europe in July, he went straight from Liverpool to the Keswick Convention—and loved it. It was clear from this point on that his spiritual home was to be in or close to the holiness movement, while intellectually he remained very much a liberal. Herman Jensen summed up the paradox: “Theologically he is a complete rationalist, but as a Christian he is power and devotion itself.”

Taking leave of the Danish Missionary Society in 1899, Larsen had stressed that he was not departing with bitterness as a result of irreconcilable theological differences. It is clear, however, that theology had something to do with his decision, alongside the Madras offer.

Larsen found his YMCA work hectic but congenial; along with contact with students, he led study groups, taught occasionally at the Christian College, and monitored the rising political blood-pressure of “young India.” In 1902, J. N. Farquhar, another scholar recruited by Mott, began doing very similar work in Calcutta. As a Dane, Larsen was able to see, perhaps more clearly than the average British missionary, that all was not well between the missionary and the Indian Christian communities. The burden of his message was that “the Indian Christian has come to look upon the missionary as one to whom he cannot come with all the freedom and confidence with which you want to approach a friend.” Larsen was to return to this theme often. An identical note was sounded by V. S. Azariah in his “give us friends!” appeal to the Edinburgh Conference of 1910.

In November 1903, tragedy struck. Larsen’s wife died of appendicitis, leaving him with four small children, the oldest twelve, the youngest only three. He remarried seven years later. John Wesley’s instruction to his preachers never to be employed, and never to be triflingly employed, might well have served Larsen as a motto in these years. He traveled, spoke, and wrote incessantly, his writing covering a bewildering variety of topics. Two purposes dominated, however. To the Indian Christian community, he interpreted the Bible and the life of faith. Among colleagues and for Christians at home in Denmark, he was more the scholarly investigative reporter. His book-length writings listed in 1978 amount to thirty-six in all, though some are not more than pamphlets, and very few fall into the category of scholarly monograph.

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One that does is a series of twelve lectures delivered in the University of Copenhagen in 1906 and published in the following year as Hindu-Aandslo og Kristenlommen (Hindu spirituality and Christianity). For some reason, these lectures were never translated into English. Had they been more widely read, it would have been very evident that Larsen was on a par with the best of the missionary writers of the time, including Farquhar, Hogg, Macnicol, and Andrews.

An episode in the previous year is worth a brief mention. In 1905 Larsen visited Pandita Ramabai's Mukti center at Kedgaon, where a semipentecostal revival had been in progress for some time, and attended an evening prayer meeting at which visions were seen and tongues were spoken. He was made very uneasy by all this. No doubt he admired Pandita Ramabai herself (it would have been hard not to), but in his world of religion he wanted things to be done decently and in order. On this occasion, disorder appeared to be breaking in. For this same reason, Larsen was never much attracted to the mystical element in Eastern or Western religion.

The United Theological College

In 1909, after some years of discussion and planning, a scheme was finalized for setting up in Bangalore a United Theological College (UTC), on the very sensible principle that what single was possible through cooperative effort. Behind the scheme stood the South India United Church, and at its inception in 1910 it had the support of the London Missionary Society, the Wesleyan Methodists, the United Free Church of Scotland, the Arct Mission, and the American Board. Neither the Danish Missionary Society nor the YMCA was greatly interested at this stage. That Larsen was so soon involved, therefore, was due to his personal standing and not to his institutional affiliations. He joined the faculty in 1910 and became principal in March 1911, a post that he filled until 1924.

Also in August 1910, Larsen married Gertrud Andersen, a missionary of the Danish Missionary Society. There were two children from this marriage: a girl, who sadly died at the age of only five, and a boy.

In mission history, 1910 inevitably is associated with Edinburgh. We have already said that Larsen was not a conference-goer. Why he was not even an Edinburgh correspondent, bearing in mind his YMCA position and his relationship to Mott, is harder to explain. He did, however, review the report of Commission Five (Preparation of Missionaries/Training of Teachers) for the journal Harvest Field. Coming as it did on the threshold of his UTC career, this review may perhaps be seen as a statement of intention for the discharge of his future responsibilities. It makes no attempt to gloss over the deficiencies of much (perhaps most) missionary education as it was at this time. Larsen allows himself to emphasize the point made in the report, that some missionaries are "far less proficient in languages than their Societies believe them to be"—a sensitive subject, since no missionary has ever been known to admit to being an indifferent linguist! Larsen for his part wished to stress, further, the importance of comparative religion, ethnology, sociology, pedagogy, and the science of mission (missiology) in training, as well as the provision of adequate uninterrupted time for language work.

The Bangalore initiative, however, was concerned with the training of Indian Christian ministers. The work proved to be difficult. Few Indian Christians at this time were well enough educated in the basics to benefit from regular theological train-

ing. The work of the Christian ministry was poorly paid and not highly regarded socially. As though this were not enough, an articulate minority among Indian Christian laymen had already fallen into the habit of criticizing theology at every turn as, in effect, the antithesis of spirituality and a typical Western substitute for Eastern "insight." In 1946 C. W. Ranson called the church's efforts to train an ordained ministry for India "almost appallingy feeble." Larsen's work was in no sense feeble. Often, however, it must have been discouraging. In the early years there were never more than a handful of students; finances were dismal; Larsen had many other demands on his time. Still, he seems never to have expressed in public the disappointment he must often have felt at the poor response to what the college had to offer. At times he wondered whether it might not have been better if the college had been located in Madras, rather than in Bangalore. In Madras, though, he would have been under the shadow of the mighty Christian College.

Larsen's principle while at Bangalore, where he taught Old Testament and comparative religion in addition to holding the principalship, was that his students should not so much learn theology (i.e., by rote) as study theology. One former student later testified that nowhere was there such a training as Larsen gave: "so thorough in the preparation of his lectures, so profound in understanding, and withal so humble and simple in the presentation of truth." Even the bishop of Madras thought the UTC staff at this time excellent, and their teaching exceptionally good, with Larsen and his colleague Godfrey Phillips being singled out for special mention. Bishop Whitehead was worried, however, that at some time in the future the college might fall into the hands of extreme liberals, some of whom he thought were little better than crypto-Unitarians.

The outbreak of war in August 1914 made things desperately difficult for anyone in India having connections of any kind with Germany. German nationals, missionaries included, were interned or deported. Scandinavians were not, though their movements could be curtailed. Being Lutheran was now a liability, for Larsen felt that his students should not so much learn theology as study theology.
sionary statesman. But he showed no signs of wishing to retire, and his life went on at undiminished pace. Godfrey Phillips wrote in his reminiscences of Larsen that when his colleagues saw how crowded were his days, they wondered how he could ever write at all. Teaching, lecturing, and conducting interviews made incessant demands on him. One work that many regretted that he was never able to write was (to quote Phillips again) "a coherent, full and systematic statement of the relation between Christianity and the other great world religions." Such works are, however (as some of us know to our cost) far more easily planned than executed. In the event, Larsen’s last years in India were spent on a task of a far different kind: revising the Tamil translation of the Bible.

Servant of the Word

Late in 1923 Larsen was first approached by Godfrey Phillips and Bishop Waller of Madras as a possible reviser of the Tamil Bible. Already there were two Tamil versions in use—the Fabricius version of 1796 and the Union version of 1869—and it was felt, understandably, that an up-to-date translation would be a unifying factor for the churches. That Larsen was asked to assume this responsibility was a further sign both of his scholarship and his all-around acceptability to the churches. He would work under the auspices of the British and Foreign Bible Society and the National Missionary Council and would have G. S. Duraiswamy as his coworker, and it was hoped that the revision could be done within the space of three years (in the event, it was not). Larsen would certainly have preferred to have worked on a retranslation, rather than merely a revision; for one thing, he wished to produce a version whose language would be fully comprehensible to Hindus, which apparently the older versions were not. Apparently, too, Larsen and Duraiswamy had different approaches to the task and did not always pull together. The local committee was not always helpful, either, especially where the question of Hindu comprehensibility was concerned. On more than one occasion, Larsen was on the point of abandoning the enterprise altogether. However, he still had his wider contacts. In 1926, for instance, the year in which the revision work started, he had no less than 112 speaking engagements. He also attended Stanley Jones’s “round table conferences,” the basis of which was not doctrine or encounter but shared religious experience, an approach that Larsen must have found congenial. The New Testament revision was completed early in 1927.

Larsen, liberal as he was, had never renounced his Lutheran heritage, and now, with his missionary career almost at an end, there seemed to be some chance of his spending his final years in India as a professor at Gurukul, the new Lutheran theological college in Madras, which opened in July 1927. But there was never really any chance of realizing this arrangement. Earlier, when Larsen had taught some Lutheran students in Bangalore, the more conservative missionaries had thrown up their hands in horror. Not surprisingly, the strongest objections now came from the direction of the Leipzig mission, some of whose people seem to have feared that Lutheranism’s days would be numbered if Larsen were allowed to corrupt their students.

One reads the record of Larsen’s last few years in India with a certain feeling of sadness that so little seems to have been done to make them less stressful. Returning to India from Denmark in January 1928, he and his wife were shunted from one temporary lodging to another. In April 1929 he moved to Madura, where for a year he had the dismal experience of being a schoolmaster to children who wanted neither to be taught nor to learn. His assistant in the work of Bible revision, Duraiswamy declined to live in Madura and, in any case, had lined up behind Gandhi. Not before October 1930 was the work of revising the Tamil Old Testament able to begin in earnest—in Bangalore—with Duraiswamy once more restored to the partnership.

In October–November 1932 the Old Testament revision committee held its last meeting, and on November 8, a day before the work of revision was officially concluded, Larsen celebrated his seventieth birthday. Whether the revision was in the end a successful one, this writer is in no way competent to say. But Bror Tiliander is lukewarm about it, saying only that “it was a step forward and induced further efforts.” Whether it had therefore been worth Larsen’s time and energies, others will have to decide. Sherwood Eddy thought the Larsen version comparable to that of Moffatt in the English-speaking world; it was welcomed and enjoyed by liberals but ignored by practically everyone else. In evangelical Tinnevelly, the Larsen-Duraiswamy New Testament was dismissed on account of its “Catholic” and “modernist” tendencies. Though some may not have even read it, they knew Larsen’s liberal reputation.

Larsen gave his last address to the United Theological College on February 7, 1933, and left India to return to Denmark for the last time six weeks later, on March 20. He had a little more than seven years left to him; his last two months darkened by the German invasion of Denmark on April 9, 1940. He died on June 23, at the age of seventy-seven.

“All the greatest missionary I have ever known”

All his life, Larsen was reticent about the details of his own experience, impenetrably so where spirituality was concerned. No one ever knew how, where, or when he had begun to live the life of faith, how he became a missionary, or how he had reacted personally to public events and private trials. (His diaries have not been accessible to me as I write this.) Never, it seems, could he have written an autobiography.

His missionary career had passed through four phases: DMS missionary, YMCA secretary, UTC principal, and Bible reviser/translator. This list by itself shows the breadth of his interests and abilities. Other missionaries in India were at various times doing all these things, and doing them well; one imagines that only a Larsen could have done all of them. His voluminous writings, whether in English or Danish (on other languages, I am unable to pronounce), were invariably written to inform and enlighten, clearly and concisely and without any outward show. Again, many other missionaries were producing similar work; perhaps none covered such a wide range of topics or returned so naturally to the true missionary’s commendation of the Lord and Savior.

There was, though, one concern to which he returned again and again: the un-Indianess of so much having the name of Indian Christianity. Indian Christians he felt to have been influ-

Larsen was missionary, YMCA secretary, seminary principal, and Bible translator—and filled all four roles well.
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enced more than was healthy by their connection with foreign missionaries; missionaries, he wrote in 1928, "bear a considerable part of the blame for the un-Indian character in the Christians." Indian Christians, he insisted, must not become Europeanized, though perhaps in some ways it was already too late. At the end of his time in India, Larsen was still sounding this note of warning, stating drastically that "as yet nothing exists properly deserving to be called Indian Christianity" and admitting that most missionaries were hopelessly alien to Indian culture and thought. The implication was obvious that the missionary's time was drawing to an end and should not be prolonged.

Larsen's understanding of the Christian message was ethical through and through. In 1905 he wrote that "the perfect person is an absolutely ethical being. And where critical principles obtain, there is no more room for the idea of arbitrariness than in the realm of mechanical laws." Perhaps his secret was that he was always and everywhere fully himself, without pretense (and therefore entirely humble), and above all without ever playing to any real or imagined gallery. H. C. Balasundaram wrote in 1941: "Dr. Larsen did not believe in that very subtle form of condescension which exhibits itself in many ways, as for instance, the person from abroad assuming the garb of an Indian. He lived, as he should, a European: and yet made everyone, were he a Hindu or a Mohammedan or a Christian, feel perfectly at home in his good home—which was a centre of culture. He was incapable of racial feeling."

It may, though, be left to George Sherwood Eddy to pay the last tribute. Larsen, he wrote, was "perhaps the greatest missionary I have ever known. In Larsen's presence I felt like a crude, uneducated high school youth, yet he was so humble that he was an elder brother to us all." Perhaps, Eddy admitted, there was an element of hero worship in his estimate of Larsen. Occasionally, though, one reflects, the missionary movement has produced real heroes, unassuming men and women who, while setting about their Master's business to the utmost of their capacity, have managed to remain free from the touch of fanaticism that so often stains the second-best. One can only regret having been too young to have known God's tireless blacksmith. To give Sherwood Eddy the last word, "Our world is richer for Larsen's having lived in it awhile. I would like to dream of someday being a little more like this winsome man—this great Dane, Larsen."

### Notes

1. Relations between the Leipzig Lutherans and other Protestant missions in India were strained throughout the period 1830–1914, generally over the caste question, but also because of the Lutherans' reluctance to work according to the comity principle. See Sharpe, "Patience with the Weak." Leipzig Lutherans and the Caste Question in Nineteenth-Century South India," in *Indo-British Review* XIX, no. 1 (1993), pp. 117-29.


3. The only exception of which I am aware was a WSCF conference in Basel, Switzerland, in 1935, for which Larsen wrote a paper entitled "Syncretism and Evangelisation." See Gibbs, *Larsen*, p. 28.


6. In the eyes of Herman Jensen, Larsen "was born a blacksmith with a big hammer in his hand." Quoted in Bindslev, *Larsen: Hans liv*, p. 54.

7. Bindslev writes that in his young days, Larsen was "tung og mørk" (*Larsen: Hans liv*, p. 316), which we may perhaps interpret as meaning "serious and introverted," and that all his life he found it hard to initiate a pastoral conversation. He was uninterested in even his own family history. Insights into his inner development are therefore hard to come by...


11. The Madras Native Christian Association, established in 1888, among other things started the journal the *Christian Patriot* in 1890. It was out of this nucleus that the National Missionary Society developed. In 1891 there were 865,528 Christians in the Madras Presidency, and 1,027,071 in 1901.


13. Ibid., p. 44. The Danish baptismal ritual still retains this feature.


15. Ibid., pp. 88–89.


17. The pioneer in this regard was Thomas Ebenezer Slater (1840–1912), who had been working as an evangelist to the educated classes in Madras under London Missionary Society auspices since 1871. See Sharpe, *Not to Destroy but to Fulfill* (Uppsala: Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia, 1965), pp. 95ff.


26. Cf. Larsen, "The Interest of Mystical Christianity to Indian Missionaries," in Gibbs, *Larsen*, pp. 246–72 (originally in the *Harvest Field*, 1905), in which he calls mystical Christianity "a peculiar temptation to the minds of the people of this country" (p. 247). The same reservations were to be seen in the 1920s in respect of his estimate of Sadhu Sundar Singh. See Larsen, "Sadhu Sundar Singh," in *Kirke og Kultur* (1922), pp. 12–33. But at least he could see that Sundar Singh was genuinely Indian, which in his view could not often be said of Christians in India (p. 26).


32. *Young Men of India*, July 1939, p. 164.

33. Sundklér, *Church of South India*, p. 75.

34. Ibid. At this time the meaning of "Unitarian" in this context was "Theist."

36. Gibbs, Larsen, p. 27.
37. Ibid., p. 28.
40. Ibid., p. 142.

**Bibliography**

**Selected Works by L.P. Larsen**

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A fairly full Larsen bibliography appears in James M. Gibbs, ed., *L. P. Larsen: A Theology for Mission* (Madras: CLS for United Theological College, Bangalore, 1978), pp. 33-43. This includes titles in Danish, as well as in English. As well as his books, during his years in India Larsen produced a vast output of articles and reviews for the English-language periodical press, which are not listed here.

**Works About Larsen**


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**The Legacy of Friedrich Schwager**

**Karl Müller, S.V.D.**

On March 19, 1912, Friedrich Schwager, member of the Roman Catholic missionary order Society of the Divine Word (S.V.D.), wrote to his superior general: "If you, Reverend Father, so severely criticize the evil consequences of ‘education,’ you surely do not wish to condemn the best possible formation and utilization of the intellectual faculties bestowed on us by God but are warning against the overestimation of a one-sided intellectualism."

This statement sums up the concern for which Schwager untiringly worked and fought all his life. He was convinced that poorly trained missionaries are "at the mercy of the agitation of the free-thinking, social democratic and immoral tendencies," whereas good education "teaches them to form independent opinions" and thus makes them "intellectually robust." In this connection he recalls the "marvelous progress" of recent times, the "abolition of slavery, of witch hunting officially sanctioned by the popes, torture, the great civil insecurity of the Middle Ages—furthermore, the great positive achievements of charitable work, official social policy, and the natural sciences."

**Early Training**

Friedrich Schwager was born on March 28, 1876, in Altenhagen, in the parish of Hagen, in Westphalia, Germany, where his father was a teacher. After attending the primary school, he continued his studies at a local church school and at the age of thirteen entered the new Mission House in Steyl, Holland, to prepare for the priestly and missionary life. Despite a rather poor state of health, he effortlessly completed the necessary courses and displayed a special interest in missions. His superior described him as a "perfectly well-behaved, reliable pupil." From Steyl he went to St. Gabriel’s Mission Seminary in Mödling, near Vienna, where he completed upper secondary classes and philosophical and theological studies. In addition to some practical mission courses he took mission studies and mission history and was one of the best students in his class. He was ordained on February 25, 1899. St. Gabriel’s, which had a teaching staff of high standing (it included among others the geologists Damian Kreichgauer and

Karl Müller is the former director of the missiological institute of the Society of the Divine Word, Sankt Augustin, Germany.
Stephan Richarz and the ethnologist Wilhelm Schmidt), awakened in Schwager a life-long fascination for science.

The Young Priest

Schwager's first appointment was not the China mission, for which he had a "great inclination," but the secondary school in Steyl. As was then customary, the young teacher had to be competent in all subjects. In the course of time Schwager taught German, French, natural history, geography, arithmetic, mission history, world history, and Italian; from 1904, because of other responsibilities, only mission studies and German; and from the autumn semester of 1906, only mission studies.

From the very beginning Arnold Janssen (1837-1909), the founder of the missionary society to which Schwager belonged, placed great trust in the young priest. He asked him to write up reports about difficult problems. In 1900 he gave him the job of editing the Kleiner Herz-Jesu Bote (later renamed Steyler Missionsbote), the official organ of the "Steyl Missionaries." Schwager left his own mark on the publication. Immediately he introduced the section entitled "From the Church's Life," in which he often addressed controversial ecclesiastical and social issues. This section soon included non-European countries, not only S.V.D. missions but also continents and countries such as Africa, Assam, Nepal, China, Japan, Peru, and others. Consequently what began as a very simple publication for popular consumption developed into a missionary magazine that also appealed to an educated readership.

Through his editorial activities Schwager himself became well versed in "mission studies." The four-volume work Die katholische Heidenmission der Gegenwart im Zusammenhang mit ihrer grossen Vergangenheit (The Catholic pagan missions of the present in connection with their great past), the fruit of his research at this time, became a widely quoted work in the field of missiology. In this connection he mentioned Schwager and Streit as the "most active pioneers of the movement." From the sixth year, only Schwager and Streit were mentioned as coeditors.

Launching a Catholic Missiological Review

By 1908 Schwager was contemplating a Catholic missiological review, somewhat like the Protestant Allgemeine Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft published by Gustav Warneck. Considering his poor state of health and convinced that a university professor rather than a religious priest would be more suited for this task, he turned to Professor M. Meinertz of Münster University, who had made a name for himself in missionary circles through his work Jesus und die Heidenmission. Meinertz in turn suggested the young lecturer Josef Schmidlin, who in the winter semester of 1909-10 taught modern mission history. Schwager had to use some persuasion to get Schmidlin to agree. But in the end Schmidlin said yes and took up the project with his characteristic energy. Schwager moved to Munster and helped Schmidlin as much as he could. On September 14, 1910, Schmidlin wrote to the S.V.D. superior general: "I can frankly say that more than anybody else it was a priest of your society, the very judicious and active Friedrich Schwager, who encouraged me to tackle missiology on a wider scale, and in particular to found a missiological review." The first number of Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft (published quarterly) came off the press March 1, 1911. Schwager was a member of the editing and managing committees, and he was listed on the title page as one of the fifteen professors and representatives of religious orders serving as coeditors. In the first year of publication he introduced a series entitled "Missionary Panorama" beginning with "The Present Situation of the Catholic Pagan Missions" and "Japan and Korea"; he also wrote "Suggestions About Catholic Mission Statistics" and a book review. In the second year he contributed 104 out of a total of 354 pages. In subsequent years Schwager wrote, in addition to extensive "missionary panoramas," a number of programmatic essays under such titles as "The Educational Activity in the Catholic Missions" (1913), "Expectations of the Geographic Sciences Addressed to Missionaries" (1913), "The Importance of a Work Ethic for the Advancement of the Primitive Masses" (1914), and "Catholic Missionary Activity and National Propaganda" (1916).

Schmidlin was delighted that the review was so well received—in 1912 there were 900 subscribers, and in 1913 more than 1,000. Two years after its founding, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Aschendorf Publishing House, he wrote that this could be ascribed "in the first place to the faithful help of our friends and collaborators, among whom must be mentioned Father Schwager and Father Streit in particular." Laurenz Kilger, O.S.B., looking back on the first five years of the review, felt that these texts were "the most important and most promising ever written in the field of missiology." In this connection he mentioned Schwager and Streit as the "most active pioneers of the movement." From the sixth year, only Schwager and Streit were mentioned as coeditors.

New Missionary Movement

Schwager contributed directly to almost every initiative made on behalf of the new missionary movement in Germany ushered in by the 1909 Katholikentag (Catholic congress) in Breslau. He attended the meetings of the Missionary Committee formed subsequent to the Katholikentag. He was a member of the commission of experts for the compilation of the mission bibliography. He acted as secretary of the conference of editors of the Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft. He exercised influence on the conference of missionary superiors. Early in 1911 he spent time in Rome working in archives. He promoted the idea of a school for catechists for the German diaspora. He was elected for important committee work at the first general meeting of the International Institute for Missiological Research. At the missionary conference of the diocesan clergy of the diocese of Münster (1912), he gave the keynote lecture. Pointing out the interaction of church in the homeland and mission he declared: "Today in France those Catholics who were the staunchest friends of the missions are the most faithful supporters of the pauperized French clergy." He advocated a professorship for Wilhelm Schmidt in Münster. He recommended the opening of a mission house for Czech youth. He passionately promoted the missiological formation of the clergy. The founding of the League for the Cultural Endeavors of the Catholic Missions was his initiative. He gave lectures at the Colonial Institute in Hamburg and spoke at the jubilee celebrations of the Catholic Union of Teachers in Essen.

Despite all these external activities he spent much time at his desk. He wrote letters, made suggestions, voiced his opinions, worked out plans, wrote up reports. He contributed regular reports about the missionary movement and missionary litera-
At Asbury Seminary, we view the whole world as a mission field—from New York to New Delhi. That’s why we’ve developed the only graduate school of mission which teaches missiological strategy for North America and Europe, as well as the “Two-Thirds” world. At Asbury, you’ll learn to see beyond borders, over obstacles and past prejudice to touch the total person and entire communities with the greatness of Christ. So if you’re passionate about reaching the world—and your neighbor—prepare for service at Asbury.

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Dr. George Hunter, Dean of Asbury Seminary’s ESJ School and author of the best-selling book, *How to Reach Secular People.*
tured for the review *Theologie und Glaube* in Paderborn. In 1912 he wrote nine reviews for the *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*, the following year eleven, and in 1914 again eleven. On top of all this he still found time to write books.

As mentioned above, the work that established his reputation was *Die katholische Heidenmission der Gegenwart im Zusammenhang mit ihrer grossen Vergangenheit* (Steyl, 1907-9). It dealt with the missionary movement in the home countries (vol. 1), in Africa (vol. 2), in the Orient (vol. 3), and in India and British colonies in Southeast Asia (vol. 4). The review of this work in *Bibliotheca Missionum* emphasizes that the author does not confine himself to a description of the mere facts of past and present but everywhere searches for the threads linking the more recent with the distant past: “Particularly striking is the author’s more profound conception of mission history. Besides, Schwager was the first to attempt to describe the missionary movement in the home countries.” The book was very widely read. Undoubtedly Friedrich Schwager was the ideal compiler of the “missionary panoramas” in the *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft*.

When Arnold Janssen, founder of the Divine Word Missionaries, died, Schwager wrote his biography (1910). It would be surprising if everything had always gone smoothly between two such independent and energetic characters as Janssen and Schwager, but the relationship between the two men was characterized by mutual respect. About a year before Janssen’s death Schwager wrote: “In the course of the past year my relationship to Father General has changed; I understand him better now and really respect him.” Referring to the biography, Robert Streit remarked: “It was filial piety and respect that created this biography and enables us to come close to the personality of the greatest promotor of missions in the home countries and gives us an insight into this Pauline soul aflame with missionary zeal.”

Here too Schwager sets the personality of Janssen and the history of his foundation within the framework of the religious, ideological, political, social, and missionary movements of the time.

### Educating for Missions

Promoting interest in missions in schools was a matter of consuming interest for Schwager. As an aid for teachers of religion, in 1912 he published *Die katholische Heidenmission im Schulunterricht* (Teaching about Catholic missions in schools).

Schwager’s aim was to impart not just knowledge about missions but love and theologically founded zeal.

Schwager’s book was to present mission as an educational principle constituting a leitmotiv coloring all branches of religious instruction, even such subjects as history and geography. He admirably succeeded in bringing out the missionary dimensions of the various fields and illustrating them with concrete examples from the missions. His aim was not just to impart knowledge about mission; he wanted to foster love and theologically founded zeal for the missionary cause. The *Magazin für Pädagogik* wrote: “If anybody is competent to write about this so neglected field of learning, then it is Father Schwager, a name familiar to us from the ‘Katholikentag’ in Aachen. Missionary interest must be fostered among the people, and the only effective way to do this is through the school and church.”

Regarding women, both Janssen and Schwager were ahead of their times. Janssen maintained contact with the most mission-minded women of his time and founded two missionary congregations of women. Schwager wrote the booklet *Frauennot und Frauenhilfe in den Missionsländern* on the problems of women in mission countries as “an appeal to all Catholic women” (1914; Eng. trans., 1915). After the war, he wrote the biography of Emilie Huch, who dedicated her whole life to the poor and afflicted and rendered great service by supporting the foundation of the S.V.D. Holy Cross Mission House in Silesia. Alfonz Vath, S.J., wrote of this woman: “Her zeal for souls embraced the whole world. She deserves a place of honor as a pioneer of the missionary idea in Germany. With the whole-hearted support of her husband, the publisher Franz Huch, this great promoter of the missions spent all her time and energy to help missionaries ‘at the front.’”

More than most of his contemporaries, Schwager recognized the “unworthy situation of women” in particular in the Asian and African countries and worked for the dignity of women and against polygamy, the dissolution of marriage, and the killing of baby girls. He promoted the education of girls, the employment of nuns in the schools, and the spiritual formation of local women teachers. For a man of his time it was only logical to support also the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the Society of the Holy Childhood, the “Africa Association,” the St. Peter Claver Society, and the Missionary Association of Catholic Women.

Just before the war he published *Die brennendste Missionsfrage der Gegenwart: Die Lage der katholischen Missionen in Asien* (1914; Eng. trans., 1915). In writing this, he was able to draw from his vast store of knowledge about the missionary world. What strikes us most of all about this book is his treatment of Protestant missions. It was natural that the new Catholic missiology in many respects either drew from or polemicized against the “older sister,” Protestant missiology. From the very start Schwager had read Protestant authors. In *Brennendste Missionsfrage* he did not criticize or polemize, however. On the contrary, he saw a real challenge for Catholics in the vitality, single-mindedness, imaginativeness, spirit of sacrifice, and successes of Protestant missions: “This situation must no longer continue, and it will not continue as soon as the Catholic people in all countries recognizes the importance and critical situation of our missions.” And, “When we objectively consider the presence of the Protestants and the prospects of the Catholic missions, the anticipation of what threatens us should spur all Catholics to make the greatest possible efforts.” Obviously Schwager did not exactly like the Protestants, but this is genuine admiration, certainly not a polemical determined by prejudice.

### The Postwar Period

Though the war years were less fruitful from a literary point of view, Schwager nevertheless let no grass grow under his feet. He concerned himself with the problem of the world war and nationalism. He condemned nationalistic war propaganda. He organized a missiological course for the secular clergy in Cologne (Sept. 5-7, 1916). Schwager would not have been true to himself if he had steered clear of the embarrassing wrangle...
The new Catholic missiology drew from or polemicized against the older Protestant missiology.

Times I cannot but conclude that he too is one of these agitators.” This was no news to the superior general; Schwager had often complained to him about Schmidlin—always adding, however, “Please keep this to yourself—it might reach Schmidlin’s ears!”

One reason for his reserve toward Schmidlin was that Schwager was getting more and more involved in the discussions of the German Conference of Superiors. This body was working for reconciliation and, for the sake of peace, rejected some of Schmidlin’s suggestions, much to the latter’s consternation. His wrath was particularly directed at Schwager, who since 1918 was in actual practice and, since July 23, 1919, officially the general secretary of the conference. Schwager was aware of the dilemma inherent in his official position but had to make a choice: “When Schmidlin harms the common interest of the orders, I must at least be free to make suggestions in this respect to the Conference of Superiors, and insofar as his behavior makes it necessary pass on the information.”

A matter of great concern to all missionary circles in Germany, in particular to the missionary orders, was the return of German missionaries interned or expelled as a result of the war. These included 318 priests, 296 seminarians and brothers, and 326 nuns. As far as the orders were concerned, this was mainly the responsibility of the general secretary. He spoke at the conferences of superiors, sent telegrams, drew up petitions to the Holy Father and the cardinal prefect of Propaganda Fide, wrote to the superiors general and procurators general in Rome, made approaches to influential cardinals of the victorious powers, wrote to the Peace Conference in Paris, and appealed to the German and Austrian bishops to send as many telegrams as possible to the pope “in order to save the Austrian and German missions.” On May 5, 1919, he wrote to his superior general: “My one and only worry now is saving the missions.”

On the occasion of the second postwar conference of superiors (July 23, 1919) the chairman mentioned the “comprehensive, unifying activity of Father Schwager.” The S.V.D. superior general, however, felt he should try to put a brake on Schwager: “For the time being the Germans in Rome should keep a very low profile.”

In 1923 the question of transferring the general secretariat from Sankt Augustin where Schwager lived to Berlin came up. Though Schwager had always committed himself tirelessly to the interests of the secretariat—among other things by carefully preparing the mission course in Düsseldorf (1920), participating in the first World Congress of the Missionary Union of the Clergy in Rome (June 1-3, 1922), lecturing at national and international congresses (Vienna, Utrecht)—he was unable to go along with the transfer to Berlin. On January 27, 1923, he submitted his resignation. As reason, he mentioned his state of health, especially his nerves, which “simply forced” him “to drop all external activities for a long time, perhaps for ever.”

Move to the United States

From 1923, at which time he was residing at the S.V.D. Mission Seminary at Sankt Augustin near Bonn, we hear little about Schwager. On August 4, he was in Techny, Illinois, to participate in a mission conference of American students. Here he remained. He envisioned a missiological review in the United States. For health reasons he could not produce it himself, but he set his hopes on a young American confrere who was just beginning his training in the Society of the Divine Word. He formally requested a transfer to the North American province. Once again he became active in matters relating to mission and the S.V.D., giving missiological lectures in Techny and suggesting the inauguration of a chair of missiology in Washington.

Unfortunately, the idea of a missiological review was doomed to failure; the local superiors showed no interest. He was bitterly disappointed.

Declining an invitation from Sankt Augustin to return to Germany, he came to the decision to leave the S.V.D. and the Catholic Church and join the German Congregationalists in the United States. He communicated this to the superior general on January 11, 1925, and on January 24 took the actual step. In a letter to his friend Father Grendel, later superior general, he stated: “I cannot express how much it hurts me to cause such pain to you and others. But deep down I am completely at peace with myself, even if tears run down my cheeks as I write these lines.”

Settling down in Redfield, South Dakota, he supported himself by working in the library of Redfield College. On April 18, 1925, he married. He died four years later, May 8, 1929, at the age of fifty-three.

There has been much speculation about the reasons why Schwager acted as he did—his overwrought nerves, his disappointments, his contact with Protestant literature, and so forth. But who can know what is going on in another person’s mind? He himself wrote to Bruno Hagspiel, S.V.D.: “If they ask you again about my apostasy tell them that though I have changed churches I have not changed my attitude to God and the Savior and that now I pray more and better. If I had done otherwise I would have sinned and lost my soul. Don’t you think that a person who follows his conscience and, in order not to play the hypocrite, abandons a secure existence even though he is sick, deserves respect? He has no need to expiate for taking such a step.”

Schwager tirelessly worked to save the Austrian and German missions after World War I.
Notes

2. Ibid.
6. This was a genuinely scholarly review of missions, first published in 1874. The monthly Die Katholischen Missions, founded in 1873, contained solid missionary information but was not a scholarly publication in the strict sense of the term.
7. Meinertz was born in Braunsberg, East Prussia, in 1880. After a time lecturing in Braunsberg, in 1908 he was appointed as successor to Prof. August Bludau in Münster. Even before he moved to Münster, Schwager corresponded with him about the founding of the review. See M. Meinertz, Begegnungen in meinem Leben (Münster, 1956).
8. Jesus und die Heidenmission (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagbuchhandlung, 1908) was a biblical-theological study.
11. AG—Missionswissenschaft.
13. ZM 3 (1913): 70. From the start Robert Streit, who made a lasting name for himself through the Bibliotheca Missionum, was a comrade-in-arms and collaborator of the young movement of Catholic missiology.
17. AG—A. Janssen 64.650.
18. R. Streit, Die katholische deutsche Missionsliteratur (Aachen: Xaverius-Verlag, 1925), 2:151.
19. Quoted from the jacket of the book Frauennot und Frauenhilfe in den Missionsländern.
23. Schmidlin to Superior General Blum, December 23, 1918 (AG—Superiorenkonferenz).
25. AG—Schwager.
26. AG—Superiorenkonferenz.
27. P. Blum to Schwager, October 23, 1919 (AG—Superiorenkonferenz).
28. AG—Superiorenkonferenz.
30. Schwager to B. Hagspiel, October 14, 1925 (AG—Schwager).

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Works about Schwager


Models of Contextual Theology.


As Robert Schreiter points out in the fore­word, after about a quarter century of discussion concerning and development of contextual theologies, it is time to reflect upon where we are. Bevans has provided us with a good start in that direction.

He starts where we all do, with a recognition of the historical existence and contemporary desirability of contextualization. Next he discusses four important issues we all must deal with plus the notion of models. I found his discussions of issues of theological method and criteria for orthodoxy especially helpful, but the one dealing with basic theological orientation disappointing. He dichotomizes the latter into “creation-centered” and “redemption-centered,” missing what might be labeled a “God’s immanence” or “incarnational” approach that would mediate between his two.

Next Bevans surveys an impressive number of contributions from both Catholic and Protestant, conservative and liberal perspectives, placing each in one of five groupings according to the model employed for dealing with the gospel message, Christian tradition, the receiving culture, and sociocultural change. He labels these models Translation, Anthropological, Praxis, Synthetic, and Transcendental. Within the discussion of each model, Bevans provides a sketch of the model plus two specific examples of those who employ it. This was a useful approach, though I was disappointed by the examples he chose for the translation model. Though he would presumably put me in that group, I found I could not identify with either of his examples.

Though such categorization necessarily involves oversimplification, I find Bevans’s definitions largely reasonable, his discussions clear, and his succinctness refreshing. Given the helpfulness of his perspective, I miss a development of the fact (which he recognizes) that in actual practice, many (perhaps most) approaches do not limit themselves to a single model. It would be instructive to see what combinations are made and how such mixtures are worked out.

—Charles H. Kraft

Charles H. Kraft is Professor of Anthropology and Intercultural Communication in the School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary, where he has taught for twenty-four years. He served as a missionary in Nigeria and has written Christianity in Culture, considered by many a major contribution to the discussion of contextualization.

Protestantism in Contemporary China.


It was a pleasure to read this book. In my opinion it is the best single work on Chinese Protestants today and in the recent past. It is both a descriptive profile and an incisive analytic discussion of the nature and roles of Chinese Protestantism. But it also discusses cogently the problems of methodology and sources, and in addition to an excellent chapter on history also includes a fine chapter summarizing the Buddhist and Roman Catholic experiences and comparing them to that of Protestantism. Finally, this work sets its concluding chapter in the context of a set of well-informed, broad cross-cultural historical reflections on Protestantism and its role in the societies of the West and the non-West.

Hunter is lecturer and senior research fellow in East Asian studies at Leeds; he has spent considerable time in China and Hong Kong. Chan Kim-Kwong holds doctorates in both philosophy and theology from Canada, has taught in seminaries and colleges as well as being a pastor, and is chaplain of Chung Chi College, Chinese University of Hong Kong. He makes frequent visits to China. Both Hunter and Chan have worked in this field for many years, and each has several previous related publications. Their collaboration worked beautifully in this instance. One of the benefits of their long personal involvement in direct research and information-gathering in China, on top of a long residence in Hong Kong and intimate familiarity with the China church-watching operations there, is their freedom from being tied to the claims and dubious “analysis” of other groups. They have good sense in using the sometimes problematic documentation and reports of others and have no ax of their own to grind. Overall, they consider the accounts of Jonathan Chao’s research center and Overseas Missionary Fellowship’s Tony Lambert to be more accurate than those of sources close to the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, but in all cases they are judicious. Thus, overall they are objective and dispassionate in their discussions, yet clearly they have also been personally moved by the life stories of the Chinese believers whom they have encountered.

A major conclusion is that “Chinese Protestantism is now a sustainable force” (p. 278), having reproduced itself on an indigenous basis and in such numbers (certainly well over ten million, probably over twenty—the authors’ discussion of statistics is excellent) that it is a permanent cultural phenomenon. This is so because it meets some important needs in society, and moreover, in doing so, “many Christian activities . . . are closely related to traditional cultural patterns” (p. 188). Chapter 4 is an ambitious attempt to specify some of these linkages to traditional culture, especially popular culture, such as in prayer, healing, charismatic phenomena, sin and salvation, the pragmatic aspects of conversion, and so forth. This chapter, while stimulating, has much speculation. But the theme of a close link to folk religion, touched on at several points in the book, is well done, as is that of Chinese believers’ being very heavily focused on the supernatural (thus the strength of Pentecostalism today).

Especially good chapters are 1, setting the political and social context, and 2 and 5, which respectively profile the Prot-
estant sector and give detailed case studies of the varieties of Protestant communities. The authors very sensibly suggest and justify use of the term “autonomous Christian communities” instead of “house churches.” And they convincingly project rather drastic future changes in the structures of Protestantism, believing that irresistible pressures for pluralization and church restructuring are building that will emerge dramatically when a more liberal national political climate returns.

In sum, this is a “must-read” book, to me personally even worth $64.95. But let us hope that a paperbound edition will come out soon.

—Daniel H. Bays

Daniel H. Bays is Professor of Modern Chinese History at the University of Kansas, Lawrence. He has published several articles on aspects of the history of Christianity in nineteenth- and twentieth-century China and directs a project funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts to study the transition from foreign mission to national church in China.

APPLICATIONS INVITED FOR RESEARCH PROJECTS IN MISSION AND WORLD CHRISTIANITY

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Refounding the Church: Dissent for Leadership.


The publication of this book by a Roman Catholic anthropologist and a member of a religious order will not bring joy to the heart of Pope John Paul II and those in power in Rome. The author believes that their effort to “restore” the past, though “culturally predictable,” is doomed to failure. The book is a challenge to the Catholic religious orders, out of their love for the church and faithfulness to Christ’s mission, to play the role of “loyal dissent” against those seeking to move the church in that direction. In past eras of radical change, he writes, the religious orders for the sake of mission played that role of dissent and it made the difference. Today, he says, they need to do the same.

The first part of the book examines the climate of “secrecy, orthodoxy and witch-hunting” that pervades the Roman Catholic Church today. He sees this as the tragic consequence of trying to restore the past instead of living in the future envisioned by Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council.

Part 2 of the book provides the author’s outline as to how the religious orders can be transformed from within so that they can provide the vision, strategies, models, and leadership that will keep the Roman Catholic Church on the path set by Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council. The book may not find favor with those in power in Rome today, but its publication will bring a smile of approval to the faces of other Catholics, many in the United States, who saw in Pope John XXIII and the Vatican Council the kind of future they want for the Roman Catholic Church.

—Tracey K. Jones, Jr.

Tracey K. Jones, Jr., is a retired missionary and mission executive of the United Methodist Church.


Always a difficult enterprise, these days the writing of history appears to be well on the way to becoming a case of “mission impossible.” The once-persuasive notion of “objective” history is laughed out of court. Particularly where historians belonging to past generations are concerned,
today's received wisdom is that most were committed, not to the quest for truth, but to the satisfaction of their patrons. History therefore must be radically rewritten, from the point of view of those who were not adequately represented in previous versions. Missionary historiography is no exception. Indeed, it is an outstanding candidate for what are here called "postcolonial reflections," that is, a reassessment from the point of view of the colonized people of (in this case) India.

The period with which this book deals is, broadly, the nineteenth century in Protestant missions to India, though it begins earlier and ends later. Its central argument is not unfamiliar: that throughout the nineteenth century, "the missionaires" (generally in this book a shapeless collective, like "the police") were working hand in glove with the British government to bring the people of India under political and particularly economic subjugation. Dr. Dharmaraj blazes away at the forest with a mixture of ideological weaponry, most of it supplied by North Atlantic intellectuals; occasionally he hits something. But for a lot of the time he succeeds only in sounding angry.

This book needs to be read, for all that—not least by those who still imagine that the world's response to the Christian mission should only be one of gratitude for favors received. It is not "fair." Often it is inaccurate, and sometimes downright careless in presentation. But it shows at least one segment of the Christian mission "as others see us." And that may be a salutary experience for some. —Eric J. Sharpe

Eric J. Sharpe is Professor of Religious Studies in the University of Sydney.

Bibliographia Missionaria LVI—


Reviewing the current volume of the Bibliographia Missionaria (BM) is a privilege; it is similar to introducing an old personal friend to new acquaintances. Each introduction provides an opportunity to recount significant background and to indicate new elements of growth.

BM has appeared annually since 1935, except for some interruptions caused by World War II. Founded by Johannes Rommerskirchen, O.M.I., it has been continuously supervised by members of the O.M.I. (Oblates of Mary Immaculate) Mis-
referring and ready accessibility to this “mission thesaurus.”

BM offers much to serious students of mission; it is more than a printed data-base. Readers discover that each new volume is a minicourse on current discussion and trends in missionology. Professors will particularly appreciate this compendium; it is a ready-made “year-in-review-in-mission” in one volume. It is moderately priced and attractively presented, and errors are

truly minimal. This reviewer is pleased to introduce you to a wonderful friend.

—James H. Kroeger, M.M.

James H. Kroeger, M.M., obtained his doctorate in missionology from the Gregorian University and over two decades was a missionary in Bangladesh and the Philippines. Presently, he is the Asia-Pacific Area Assistant on the Maryknoll General Council. His new book on missionology, entitled Living Mission (Claretian/Orbis), will be released shortly.


These two volumes fill a void in studies of the beginnings of Protestant missionary work in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. Since most English-language general histories of Protestant missions in these countries have been written by Americans, there are scant references to the work of Canadians and British (1:xiv). Furthermore, the interpretations of these histories have been based primarily on American experiences as rooted in New England Puritanism, with little reference to other perspectives. A. Hamish Ion, associate professor in the History Department and specialist in modern Japanese history at the Royal Military College of Canada, has sought to remedy these shortcomings.

With wide reading of the many primary and secondary sources in this area, and the sound advice of specialist historians, Ion has done a competent, readable, and dependable job in these two volumes. The first one tells the story of the Canadian missions, involving the Methodists, Anglicans, Presbyterians, and the Salvation Army. By bringing all three of these countries into one focus, he has done what others have not attempted, and the resultant comparisons and contrasts are quite instructive. Volume 2, published three years later, does a similar job for British missions and wisely extends the time period covered from 1931 down to 1945, to include the travails through which the Christians of these countries went during the Pacific war.

Each of these volumes can be read separately. For instance, in volume 2 on British missions, Ion repeats from the first volume whatever one needs to know about Canadian missions in order to understand the British story. Volume 1 assumes that his readers have considerable background in the subject from reading other works, while the second generally provides the necessary background information. For instance, “the Urakami crypto-Christians from Kyushu” are mentioned in 1:38 without further explanation, but when the same group comes up in 2:23, some details are given about them. In Volume 1 macrons are used to indicate long Japanese vowels, but unfortunately this practice was not continued in volume 2.

The insights to be gained by using Ion’s perspectives are considerable. He shows how British missions were often identified with the political and cultural extension of the British Empire, but Canadian missions were more affirming of national cultures, while staying clear of trying to reform these nations on the American model (1:3). Most documentation is sound, but there are occasional typos and some amusing slips. Readers will be surprised to find that the Salvation Army’s Gen. William Booth had a daughter named “Ebanzerin” (2:139; this is how “Evangeline” is pronounced in the Japanese text used by Ion).

—James M. Phillips

James M. Phillips, Associate Director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, Connecticut, was a Presbyterian missionary in Korea (1949-52) and in Japan (1959-75).
In 1976, China, argues Jonathan Spence in *The Search for Modern China* (1990), was "reopening the doors" and "redefining revolution." Simultaneously, a new generation of Catholic religious leaders and scholars commenced dialogue worldwide with Chinese Catholics. In *The Catholic Church in Modern China: Perspectives*, editors Edmond Tang of the Council of Churches for Britain and England and Jean-Paul Wiest from Maryknoll have allowed the participants in this dialogue to speak out.

In the first section, "The Catholic Church Today," John Tong opens with an excellent political, religious, and historical overview of Chinese Catholicism from 1949 to 1990. It gives the depth needed to appreciate contributions by Edmond Tang on Chinese Catholicism in the 1990s, Julia Ching on religious freedom, and Jean Charbonnier on the "underground" church. Also, Maria Gorti Lai examines formation and church leadership, and Geoffrey King provides a canonical-diplomatic perspective.

The second section, "Tower of Babel or New Pentecost?" suggests that a suffering faith may link Chinese Catholics with the rest of the world. Through study and travel in China, Thomas Gahan, Edward Malatesta, and Hans Waldenfels have heard the voices of faith, represented here by contributions from Chinese Catholic Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian, Father Joseph Yao Tianmin, and others. This is a most important contribution; rarely have these Chinese voices been heard in such a public forum.

In section 3, "Looking Towards the Future," Jean-Paul Wiest reexamines mission history, arguing that the institutional church must respect the local church and that divisions among missionaries must cease. Lastly, articles by Jerom Heyndrickx, Aloysius B. Chang, Luke Tsui, and Edmond Tang state that the windows of dialogue must remain open for the voices of Chinese Catholicism to be strong.

This book would be an excellent college or graduate text for mission history or for contemporary Chinese social history or political science.

—Robert E. Carbonneau, C.P.

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**Hearts on Fire: The Story of the Maryknoll Sisters.**


When the acclaimed journalist Penny Lernoux died of cancer in October 1989, she left behind a preliminary draft of the first five chapters of this moving story of the Maryknoll Sisters. Through the concerted efforts of *National Catholic Reporter* writer Arthur Jones, Orbis Books Editor-in-Chief Robert Ellsberg, and a number of Maryknoll Sisters, her dream of telling the story of these idealistic American Catholic women has been realized.

And what a story it is! For this reviewer, long a student of mission history, it is a thoughtful, humorous, and, above all, inspiring tale of growth, conversion, transition, and challenge. We move through narrative and personal stories to and within the Asian, Latin American,
and African worlds of these sisters, whose history parallels so clearly the varying mission trends of the twentieth century. Inspiring their whole mission enterprise is the presence and vision of their foundress, Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, who allowed her sisters “to transcend the enclosed parameters of religious life” and who “communicated to her sisters the essence of a dedication to God—love of others” (p. 138). Whether the place and time is China during the period of the 1949 Communist revolution or the more tranquil villages of Tanzania in the 1970s or El Salvador during the struggle for justice in the 1980s, Maryknoll women were there, and the flame of commitment and love that Mother Mary Joseph first ignited continued to burn.

Hearts on Fire is a book for all students of missiology who want to recapture or be tutored in an understanding of mission life. The style is alternately fast paced and thought provoking. The comprehensive nature of the task that Penny Lernoux attempted has not diminished the clarity of the writing. Indeed, the simple, graceful lines of this work lend strength and vibrancy to a compelling story. The Maryknoll Sisters’ journey helped Penny to complete the dual adventure she herself had sought—“to places that aren’t on most maps and to that dimension of life that is the source of inner peace and happiness” (p. xxi).

Today, the Maryknoll Sisters are a more culturally diverse congregation. Certainly, they and their forebears should be ever more united in their charism as they remember their past through this history.

—Virginia Unsworth, S.C.

International Influences and Baptist Mission in West Cameroon.


This is a monograph whose actual coverage is narrower than its title. It in fact deals with the educational work of German-American Baptist missions in West Cameroon under British mandate between the two world wars. British Baptist beginnings (1844), the work of German Baptists during German colonialism, and the beginnings of the American German-Baptist contribution are briefly described as background. Autonomous local Baptist churches that arose during extended periods of missionary absence are mentioned but underestimated because they are underdocumented in the literature.

The forces and influences that directly or indirectly shaped the schools of the Baptists included the intentions and practices of the German and the German-American Baptist missions; other missions, especially the Basel Mission; British colonial policy and practice; the League of Nations supervision of the mandate; and, of course, the efforts and expectations of Cameroonians. These perspectives sometimes coincided and sometimes clashed and were generally tempered by the human relationships of the persons who actually embodied them on the field.

Special attention is given to three missionaries whose collective service, with overlaps and prolonged absences, extended from 1899 to 1975: Carl Bender, Paul Gebauer, and George Dunger. All
three were German-born immigrants to the United States sent to Cameroon from the states. Their views and leadership largely constituted the missionary component of educational policy and practice.

This is a workmanlike study, dealing competently with the primary documentation and the middle-level concepts of the secondary historical sources but skimming on more analytical and critical concepts from the social sciences. A more vigorous editorial pencil might have eliminated numerous stylistic and syntactic infelicities.

—Charles R. Taber

Charles R. Taber, a contributing editor, is Professor of World Mission at Emmanuel School of Religion, Johnson City, Tennessee. He was an educational missionary in the Central African Republic and a translations consultant in West Africa.

Ambassador of Reconciliation: A Muriel Lester Reader.


Growing up in a household of wealth and Baptist nonconformity, Muriel Lester (1883-1968) took a vow of voluntary poverty and worked for twenty years in Bow, London, as a missionary. For five of those years, she served as member of city council, a position that enabled her to establish social services such as dental clinics for mothers and food distribution to poor children. In 1926 she traveled to India, met Gandhi, and became one of his principal advocates in England. From 1933 until 1954 Lester served as secretary of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. She undertook nine world tours, depending on missionary hospitality and knowledge of the local scene.

Richard Attenborough’s 1982 film Gandhi and a biography by Jill Wallis, Mother of World Peace: The Life of Muriel Lester (Middlesex, 1993), have renewed interest in Lester’s career. In the book under review, Richard Deats of the Fellowship of Reconciliation provides an excellent anthology of her writings. In twelve chapters, each with a brief introduction, he excerpts Lester’s autobiographies It Occurred to Me (New York, 1937) and It So Happened (New York, 1947); a book on Gandhi, Entertaining Gandhi (Strand, 1932); one on the women’s movement, Why Forbid Us? (Shanghai, 1935); two devotional books, The Prayer School (Nashville, 1942) and Why Worship? (Nashville, 1937); and books on nonviolence, including Kill or Cure? (Nashville, 1937), A Way of Life (U.K., n.d.), Dare You Face Facts? (New York, 1940), and Training (Nashville, 1940). Except to note that Lester was born on December 9, 1883, not 1884 (p. 5), the book is free from error.

Lester wrote in an unembellished, clear, and energetic style. Remembered principally as “a twentieth century apostle of peace,” Lester was a committed Christian. Her insights on spirituality remain relevant.

Ambassador of Reconciliation gives fresh voice to the witness of an extraordinary Christian. The book closes with a letter by Lester just before her death. Writing with joy and serenity, Lester looks forward to meet a God whose will is peace. She observes that a Christian peacemaker is to seek to stop war, to purify the world, to rescue people from poverty and riches, to heal the sick, to comfort the sad, to wake up those who have not yet found God, to create joy and beauty wherever one goes, and to find God in everything and everyone.

—Paul R. Dekar

Paul R. Dekar, Centenary Professor of World Christianity at McMaster Divinity College (Hamilton, Ontario), served as pastor in Cameroon, 1968-70.
Toward an African Christianity: Inculturation Applied.


How do you get out there and apply the principle of inculturation in Africa today? This is the question Hillman ambitiously addresses in Inculturation Applied. The first three chapters are spent trying to convince his readers of the need for inculturation, that it still remains to be done, that it is a legitimate quest, and what makes the process so difficult. When he finally delivers the goods in the example of a Maasai thanksgiving sacrifice seen as Eucharistic rite, it is well worth the wait—but only wish there could have been more than a couple of pages.

The book is vintage Hillman. With a characteristic vigor that some might call “missionary bashing,” he makes it painfully clear that the church’s missionary outreach in Africa still largely consists in “a dissemination of the Western experiences and expressions of Christian faith” (p. 3) literally translated into African cultural worlds. Hillman cautions us to proceed from within local cultures. The quote from Bernard Shaw that one must get at a man through his religion and not through one’s own (p. 26) is particularly apt. Above all, he warns us to beware of our own ethnocentric biases. The alternative in an enlightened cultural pluralism has already been embraced by the church and illuminated by the likes of Pope Paul VI, Lonergan, and Rahner, so let’s move ahead. Not so easy because of the hold our own cultures have on us.

African traditions are alive and well and continue to furnish solutions to questions and problems to which the church is oblivious. Hillman, a twenty-five-year veteran missionary in Africa, does not bash and run. Rather, he courageously embraces these questions in the belief that African Christianity can grow toward an answer from inside myth, ritual, and symbols. Is not Enkai, “She who begins,” the same as Christians call Elohim? Is not ritual slaughter and sacrifice a most perfect way of symbolizing our relationship with God and one another? I applaud Hillman’s effort and hope that it encourages others to launch out courageously and do inculturation, not just talk about it.

—Jon P. Kirby, S.V.D.

Jon P. Kirby, a missionary-anthropologist and twenty-one-year veteran in Africa, is the founder-director of a cross-cultural research and training center in Ghana, West Africa.

Din-Sevak: Verrier Elwin’s Life of Service in Tribal India.


At first sight, Verrier Elwin might seem a curious subject to include in the ISPCK’s series “Confessing the Faith in India.” Elwin, after all, renounced his priestly vows, left the Church of England, and died with Buddhist rites. And yet, Daniel O’Connor’s careful selection of Elwin’s writings and his biographical essay demonstrate a remarkable continuity and richness of faith that justifies Elwin’s inclusion.

Over half of the works in this collection come from Elwin’s early career as a missionary. There are selections from Elwin’s devotional writings in which he
sought to present the Gospel through the teachings of such Christian mystics as Richard Rolle, St. Francis, and the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing.*

There are, as well, Elwin's religious-political writings on Mahatma Gandhi's character and philosophy of nonviolence. Elwin was attracted to Gandhi because of his commitment to the poor and in the early 1930s regarded himself as Gandhi's Christian disciple; Gandhi spoke of him as a "model missionary."

The rest of the collection is selected from Elwin's prolific anthropological writings. They entitle Elwin to be remembered as one of the most inspired chroniclers of India's tribal people. His ethnographic studies were a powerful instrument for the succor of the tribes, and his ideas greatly influenced Jawaharlal Nehru and helped to shape India's tribal policy.

O'Connor's introduction is well written. He wisely unites the two parts of Elwin's career under the one theme of reparation. Throughout, Elwin's one desire was to do reparation for the poor. He was known as a lover of the poor. He was a "Din-Sevak" (servant of the poor), one who lived among them, understood them, and learned to love them. Elwin, as the anthropologist Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf observed, "did not float like a lotus upon the placid waters of the pool, he was of the pool itself."

—William W. Emilsen


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serve Africa's rural majorities in some 800 distinctive ethnic-culture groups? Without such research, it is easy to speak, in the singular, of an "African theology" or an "African worldview."

From a Christian theological viewpoint—in spite of any ecclesiastical hand-wringing in Rome, as Maroty notes obliquely—all theologians everywhere must also give more attention not only to the socioeconomic liberation of peoples but also to the profoundly radical, indeed revolutionary, meaning of the neologism "inculturation," as this evangelical process was originally understood through the word "incarnation" in the documents of the Second Vatican Council


Eugene Hillman, Professor of Humanities at Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island, was a missionary in Kenya and Tanzania for twenty-five years. His latest book is Toward an African Christianity: Inculturation Applied (Paulist Press, 1993).

1995–1996
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The Overseas Ministries Study Center announces the Doane Missionary Scholarships for 1995-1996. Two $3000 scholarships will be awarded to missionaries who apply for residence for eight months to a year and wish to earn the OMSC Certificate in Mission Studies. The Certificate is awarded to those who participate in fourteen or more of the weekly seminars at OMSC and who write a paper reflecting on their missionary experience in light of the studies undertaken at OMSC.

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The OMSC Certificate program allows ample time for regular deputation and family responsibilities. Families with children are welcome. OMSC's Doane Hall offers fully furnished apartments ranging up to three bedrooms in size. Applications should be submitted as far in advance as possible. As an alternative to application for the 1995-1996 academic year, applicants may apply for the 1996 calendar year, so long as the Certificate program requirement for participation in at least fourteen seminars is met. Scholarship award will be distributed on a monthly basis after recipient is in residence. Application deadline: February 1, 1995. For application and further information, contact:

Gerald H. Anderson, Director
Overseas Ministries Study Center
490 Prospect Street
New Haven, Connecticut 06511
Tel: (203) 624-6672 Fax: (203) 865-2857

By Faith: Christian Students Among the Cloud of Witnesses.


By Faith is a useful study book on the history of the Student Christian Movement in the United States. It should be a helpful addition to the resources developed for the observance of the centennial of the World Student Christian Federation in 1995. The volume is the fruit of a project carried out under the auspices of the Council for Ecumenical Student Christian Ministry and was administered by John B. Lindner, former associate for the New York Office of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Background material for the volume was originally presented in a series of papers prepared by twenty-two veterans of student Christian work who participated in a consultation entitled "History of the SCM in the USA." This material was edited by Linda-Marie Delloff, whose writings frequently appear in the Christian Century.

The first chapter summarizes the approximately two hundred years of history of student Christian activity in this country. In succeeding chapters, specific dimensions of that history are given detailed attention. The second chapter demonstrates that throughout this history a sense of mission has been an essential element in the vitality of the SCM. Subsequent chapters trace the concern for racial justice and understanding as a major theme in the life of the Student Christian Movement, the Christian critique of American higher education, the commitment and relations of the Student Christian Movement to the church and its unity, and the importance of Christian vocation as seen through brief sketches of seven persons who have made remarkable yet diverse contributions to the mission of the church. A final chapter seeks to summarize the lessons from the history being recounted for the revitalization of the Student Christian Movement.

—L. Newton Thurber

L. Newton Thurber has served as fraternal worker in Japan, regional secretary for East Asia and South Asia, and coordinator for Inter-Church and Ecumenical Relations of the Presbyterian Church USA, general secretary of the Student Volunteer Movement, associate general secretary of National Christian Council in Japan, interim director of the Division of Overseas Ministries of NCCUSA, and interim director of the Europe Office of the Church World Service and Witness of NCCUSA.
A. B. Simpson and the Pentecostal Movement: A Study in Continuity, Crisis, and Change.


Sesquicentennial interest in Canadian-born missions promoter A. B. Simpson, hosts of Third World tongues-speakers, and Pentecostalism's rapid worldwide growth combine to make this book relevant.

Has today's generation misread Simpson's tongues stance? Calgary spirituality specialist Nienkirchen answers affirmatively as former professor at Canadian Theological Seminary of Simpson's Christian and Missionary Alliance.

"A 'Seeking' Founder and a 'Seek Not' Denomination" compresses Nienkirchen's thesis (p. 131). Blaming "revisi onist" A. W. Tozer for creating the Alliance slogan "Seek not; forbid not" (1963), Nienkirchen claims it contradicts Simpson's behavior and instruction. Nienkirchen challenges C&MA's alleged antitongues bias as late. Citing a 1989 thesis, he even falsely labels Tozer's sanctification doctrine anticrisis progressivism (pp. 135-40).

The book has values. Naming Simpson a "Pentecostal forerunner" (p. 52), it demonstrates Pentecostalism's debt: missionary vision, personnel, practices, and restorationist theology—the doctrine that God has restored spiritual gifts (pp. 26-72). Documenting carefully, Nienkirchen uncovers neglected history, accurately depicting Simpson as always open to gifts.

He recounts early glossolalists, some of whom were loyal to the Alliance, others defecting. When homeland groups withdrew to embrace the evidence doctrine (i.e., at the baptism in the Holy Spirit, a person always speaks in tongues), Simpson bemoaned dwindling missions support (pp. 93-96, 100, 107-30).

Nienkirchen infers that Simpson's desiring gifts (in the plural) means he sought tongues for many years. Evidence shows otherwise: Simpson spurned the tendency for Christians to seek tongues for itself. Instead of pursuing special manifestations, Christians should center upon Christ himself. Acting otherwise, he thought, brings missed blessings or serious errors. His editorials in the years following the Azusa Street revival kept urging both candor (openness to all gifts) and caution (against false extravagances). He insisted that, more than other gifts, tongues opens one to satanic counterfeits, hence the need to test the spirits.

Was "Seek not" only Tozerian revisionism? No. Simpson's Alliance contemporaries wrote that Paul distinctly discouraged seeking tongues and that such seeking is a sign of weakness.

—Gerald E. McGraw

Gerald E. McGraw is Director, School of Bible and Theology, and Fuller E. Callaway Professor of Biblical Studies, Tococa Falls (Ga.) College.

The Church in Angola: A River of Many Currents.


As the reference to many currents in the title indicates, this is a comprehensive, ecumenical history of the contemporary Christian church in Angola. The author, a well-known former missionary to, and scholar of, Angola, has set out to include all branches of Christendom in this country, including Catholic, Protestant, Pentecostal, Apostolic, and Messianic. The format of the work is necessarily encyclopedic, in that it sets out to cover systematically all the ecclesiastical organizations during the colonial period (1866-1960), the transition to independent state (1961-74), and the final period of independence and civil war (1974-91). In the section on the colonial period, chapters are devoted to education, the healing ministry of the church, the church at worship, and the relationship between church and state. An early chapter entitled "The Soil in Which and Church Was Planted" characterizes the economic, geographic, and political features of the country and identifies the major ethnic groups or regions and the religious movements by which they are represented.

This is more than an encyclopedia of Christianity in Angola, however. Unlike an encyclopedia, Henderson's history is focused by a number of thematic questions. The first is, Why did Christianity do so well in Angola, as in much of sub-Saharan Africa? He credits the earlier fifteenth-century evangelization as having shaped the ground. Moreover, he notes that African spirituality had strong parallels to Judaism and Christianity. His analysis spans all the diverse branches of Christianity in the country.

In an intriguing final chapter, "Testing Our Presuppositions," Henderson sets out to evaluate whether the church in Angola indeed is unitary, is human and divine, is the people of God, and has a mission of proclaiming the Reign of God. He is least generous to the independent churches and lets stand the label "messianic" for the Kimbanguists and Tocoists, defining this term as "the presence of a person who replaces Christ" (p. 414), although he suggests that their current leaders would not make such a claim.

For most readers, this magisterial work will for a long while be the definitive history of Christianity in Angola.

—John M. Janzen


Anna Maria Kool's exhaustive study of the Hungarian Protestant mission movement is a monument to intensive research and is certain to endure without competition. Taking a subject of relatively limited interest, scope, and duration, the author manages to treat it with sufficient breadth and penetration to make it come alive. Her stated aim is to examine, critically and systematically, the activities of Hungarian mission agencies in the first half of the twentieth century and their place in the life of Hungarian Reformed and Lutheran churches. The uniqueness of her
endeavor is its focus on a “Second World” country and the relative inaccessibility of the material she includes to all but Hungarian-speaking scholars. For reviving the lapsed memory of a once-thriving though quite immature Hungarian missionary tradition, Hungarian Protestants will remain in the author’s debt.

Kool first describes the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century background of Hungarian Protestantism, including its links to Zinzendorf and various European awakening movements. Lutherans had ties with the German Leipzig Mission; Reformed Christians received influences from the Netherlands and Scotland. The first Hungarian missionary, George Pilder, went out in 1756 as a Moravian to Egypt with the aim of working in Ethiopia. Of the hundred or more missionaries and mission candidates listed in the appendix, many served under the auspices of non-Hungarian societies. Not until 1903 did Hungarian Reformed Christians organize their own evangelical mission society, initially with the aim of evangelizing Jews in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Muslims in Bosnia. China later came into view, along with Indonesia. Lutherans began their mission association in 1909, directed first toward Jews and Muslims in the Balkans, but later extended to China and East Africa. Following the vicissitudes of war and revolution, Hungarian Protestant mission efforts were disbanded in 1951. In terms of numbers, relatively few Hungarian Protestants served in overseas positions, but their contributions are summarized in exquisite detail. Kool testifies to the sacrifices of missionaries on the field and the dogged persistence of their supporters at home, despite their minority status.

Kool’s monumental work, presented as a dissertation to the University of Utrecht in 1993, was competently supervised by a Dutch-Hungarian team and published with a subsidy from several Dutch foundations. It will help to fill an important gap in Second World missiological research.

—James A. Scherer

James A. Scherer is Emeritus Professor of World Mission and Church History at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

Dissertation Notices

Barnes, Michael.
“John R. Mott: A Conversionist in a Pluralist World.”

Brown, Deborah Ann.
“The Anglican Church in Hong Kong: The Challenge of Tradition.”

Khabela, Mfanyana Gideon.
“A Seamless Garment: Tutu’s Understanding of the Role of the Church in South Africa.”

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“The Emergence of a Latino Radical Evangelical Social Ethic in the Work and Thought of Orlando E. Costas: An Ethico-Theological Discourse from the Underside of History.”

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Ph.D. Louisville, Ky.: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1992.
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