No feature of this journal is quoted or anticipated more eagerly than the "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission," by David B. Barrett, editor of the World Christian Encyclopedia (WCE), published in 1982.

Barrett’s 1995 update in this issue illustrates the power of statistics to illuminate major issues—in this case, the way missionaries are deployed: most go where established Christian bodies are willing to invite them. Barrett’s graph shows how out-of-sync the results of this principle are with the neediest, least-evangelized areas of the world.

A second statistical article appears in this issue. Assistant editor Robert T. Coote scrutinizes the data on the number of North American Protestant missionaries over the last twenty-five years. He contends that reports of major personnel increases in the 1980s require substantial revision.

Statistics have been known to baffle ordinary mortals. Others use statistics with little appreciation of the potential for misapplication. Valid statistics are difficult both to assemble and to interpret. In some editions of the Mission Handbook, which lists North American Protestant mission agencies, readers have found a cautionary note: “Compilation and analysis of mission statistics is a very tenuous business. . . . The total number of North American overseas personnel reported is the sum of all the questionnaires returned plus some estimates. The actual number may be somewhat different.”

Barrett tells inquirers something similar. His annual statistical table reports the total of data gathered from some 250 nations. Every year his office uncovers new information that may change numbers and projections reported in prior years. Two years ago, for instance, population totals for 1970 were adjusted upward from what had been reported previously. The revised numbers reflected new demographic analysis provided by researchers at the United Nations. This year the projection for some religions for the year A.D. 2025 is up, while for others the projection is down as compared with what was reported last year. Projections for Protestants are also up (due to rates of growth in Third World countries), while those for most other Christian ecclesial blocs are down. Sometimes changing numbers reflect the adoption of new definitions. User beware: What you proclaim this year based on

Given the breadth of Barrett’s statistical research, some line items in the annual table raise questions that cannot be addressed in the limited space available. We look forward to fuller explication in World Christian Encyclopedia II, to be published in a year or two by Oxford University Press.

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of Missionary Research
Interreligious Dialogue: A View from Asia

Michael Amaladoss, S. J.

Paradigms and models have their usefulness in theological reflection. But they also tend to iron out potentially useful differences and nuances in theological positions while attempting to classify them according to prefabricated frameworks. I think that the prevailing tendency to classify all reflection in the field of interreligious dialogue as exclusive, inclusive, or pluralist leads to a misunderstanding of Asian reflection. I would like to offer a simple presentation of an emerging consensus with regard to interreligious dialogue among Catholic theologians in Asia. After indicating the experiential, ecclesial, and reflective contexts of such a consensus, I shall explore some questions that arise in any discussion of dialogue.

The Experiential Context

For us Asian Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, and others are part of our life. We share a common culture and way of life. We belong to a common economic and political system. We have a common history. Our religious differences have cultural, political, and even economic implications. In this ongoing dialogue of life we have begun to appreciate the believers of other religions. We respect and read with profit their scriptures and other sacred writings. We learn from their sadhana, methods of prayer, and religious experience. We regard positively their moral conduct. We collaborate with them in the promotion of common human and spiritual values like freedom and justice, love and service. We do not feel superior to them. On the contrary, some mystical, nondualistic traditions in Asia consider our Christian communities as being at a stage of inferior spiritual development, still busy with rituals and symbols. We are often sought after more for our social and educational services than for our spiritual example or leadership.

At least for some of us, interreligious dialogue is also an interior, personal search for our own religious roots, which we want to rediscover and integrate.

The Ecclesial Context

Although this openness to other believers started in Asia, it was supported and strengthened by the Second Vatican Council. A positive view of other believers and religions emerges from a convergence of texts. The Asian bishops, in their first declaration on evangelization from Taipei in 1974, saw in other believers God's self-manifestation. John Paul II, in his symbolic gesture of inviting other religious leaders to Assisi in 1986 to pray with him for peace, acknowledged the legitimacy of other religions. He also frequently calls for the collaboration of all believers and of all people of good will for the promotion and defense of common human and religious values.

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The Reflective Context

While theologians tend to speak of the religions as systems or as ways of salvation, we prefer to speak of people and of God reaching out to them. Religions do not save; God does. Religions are only expressive mediations of divine-human encounter. What is important is the experiential and personal aspects of this encounter, not the rituals in which it is celebrated and the systems that organize, express, and reflect on it.

Because of this change in approach, our way of expression and reflection moves away from abstract, conceptual categories to experiential, symbolic ones. While concepts tend to be clear and distinct, and are used to distinguish and separate (either-or) and to compare and contrast, symbols are rich and polyvalent, integrating and inclusive (both-and), seeking convergence and harmony. An interpretative reflection need not be less rigorous than a deductive one.

Let me now consider some of the questions that are frequently raised with reference to Asian theology in the field of interreligious dialogue.

A Positive View of Other Religions

One of the starting points of an Asian theology of interreligious dialogue is the acceptance of the reality and legitimacy of other religions as social-symbolic mediations of divine-human encounter. This perception of other religions is based not on an evaluation of them as systems but on the experience of people who practice them and of the action of God in those people as shown by their moral and spiritual action. It is not helpful to isolate and reify the religions as systems in themselves, set apart from this experiential complex. As systems, they are limited expressions; they may have sinful elements too, because they are human expressions. But they are also symbolic mediations of divine action and human response in freedom.

This quality of real, if limited, legitimacy also characterizes the elements that constitute the religious system, such as scriptures, rituals, and symbols. Indian theologians, for example, have asked whether other religious scriptures can be considered to be inspired and revealed and whether we can participate in the rituals of other religions. Inspiration and revelation are not qualities in themselves to be attributed to texts independently of a community and of God's action in it. Ritual symbols have meaning only in the context of the life of a community in its relationship to God. If our attitude to divine-human relationship in a religious community is positive, then it will be positive also to its scriptures and rituals, without ceasing to be critical.

To look at other religions in this manner has consequences for the way we look at our own. Though we speak of the church as pilgrim and think of ourselves as sinful, we tend to think of the church institution itself as somehow escaping all historical and cultural conditioning. We give the impression that inspiration and revelation are used as absolute qualities of the Christian Scriptures, though we accept the need for interpretation. With regard to rituals, the ex opere operata principle, instead of affirming the primacy of God's action as compared with the human disposition or response, seems to be reified in the ritual itself in

Published quarterly in January, April, July, and October by Overseas Ministries Study Center
490 Prospect Street, New Haven, Connecticut 06511, U.S.A.
Telephone: (203) 624-6672
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Books for review and correspondence regarding editorial matters should be addressed to the editors. Manuscripts unaccompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope (or international postal coupons) will not be returned.

Subscriptions: $18 for one year, $33 for two years, and $49 for three years, postpaid worldwide. Airmail delivery is $16 per year extra. Foreign subscribers must pay in U.S. funds only. Use check drawn on a U.S. bank, Visa, MasterCard, or International Money Order in U.S. funds. Individual copies are $6.00; bulk rates upon request. Correspondence regarding subscriptions and address changes should be sent to: INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH, P.O. Box 3000, Denville, New Jersey 07834, U.S.A.

Advertising:
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Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in:
- Bibliografia Missionaria
- Christian Periodical Index
- Guide to People in Periodical Literature
- Guide to Social Science and Religion in Periodical Literature
- Missionarion
- Periodica Islamica
- Religious and Theological Abstracts
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Index, abstracts, and full text of this journal are available on databases provided by EBSCO, H.W. Wilson Company, Information Access Company, and University Microfilms. Also consult InfoTrac database at many academic and public libraries. For more information, contact your online service.

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Second-class postage paid at New Haven, Connecticut.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH, P.O. Box 3000, Denville, New Jersey 07834, U.S.A.
ISSN 0272-6122

January 1995

a magical way. Some extend it also to the church. It is difficult for us to accept that whatever we may say about the "mystery of the church," the institutional community to which we belong, is limited and culturally and historically conditioned. I do not in any way deny or minimize the authenticity and absoluteness of the action of God in and through the social-symbolic structures of the church. I only question the attribution of such authenticity and absoluteness to institutional aspects and practices of the church.

The Pluralism of Religions

To accept the legitimacy of other religions is to accept the pluralism of religions. But we do not seem to have found a proper way of speaking about pluralism. Pluralism of religions does not mean that all religions are the same. They are not. If we take some attribute like "salvific," then it may apply to all religions. But there is no reason to reduce the significance of religion to a particular attribute like that. Another way of handling pluralism is to place religions in a linear, developmental mode and see them as more or less true or revealed or perfect. Or one speaks of complementarity. This approach can have two sources. One sees the relationship of pluralism and unity as that of the parts to the whole. The unifying principle, then, is either complementarity or proportion (more or less). Another source is the view of history as a linear process leading to more and more perfection or development. This approach has its origin partly in a positivist view of history and partly in a projection on the whole of human history of the particular historical structure offered by the Bible. Even the classification of religions as exclusive and inclusive does not avoid a quantitative perspective.

I think that to have an adequate understanding of pluralism we must exchange these quantitative categories for personal ones. The roots of pluralism are the freedom of God and of humans and their relationships. God's free self-communication is neither limited nor conditioned by anything exterior to it. The Spirit blows where, when, and how it wills. The response of humans may be conditioned by history, culture, and their own limited possibilities; but it is still free and creative and therefore pluralistic. The resulting pluralism is not chaotic, because God is one, and we believe that God has a plan for humanity. This assures a basic community. But it is a community of persons that has to be explored in human terms of communion and convergence or of freedom and harmony, and not in material terms of quantity and number, complementarity and comparison.

The Role of the Church

The experience of the pluralism of religions raises the question of the identity of the church. What is it for? As long as we thought that it had a monopoly of revelation and salvation, religious pluralism was merely a fact to note but had no significance in the history of salvation. The whole world was destined to become church. When this monolithic view of the church broke down, we sought to understand its significance in terms of partial versus full revelation, of implicit versus explicit faith, of a difficult versus an easy divine-human relationship. But where God's real self-communication is recognized, such categorizations seem exterior to it, if not meaningless.

The Second Vatican Council spoke of the church as a sacrament—that is, symbol and servant of communion with God and of unity among all peoples. This is the reality of the reign of God. Starting with this, the Asian theologians speak of the church as...
the symbol and servant of the reign of God. Sacrament affirms a symbolic and social dimension. It speaks of a real, but a nonexclusive, relationship. The reign of God is larger than the church. This difference between the church and the reign of God makes space for other religions. It gives the church not a dominant but a servant role. The church is not focused on itself but on the reign of God. It does not proclaim itself but Jesus and the reign of God that Jesus himself proclaimed. It welcomes people as disciples of Jesus to continue fulfilling the church’s role of service of the reign of God in the world. But its primary aim is building up the reign of God. It builds itself up only in view of its service to the reign. It thus discovers a wider field of service and mission. The church and the reign of God must not be separated, neither should they be confused. The church has its existence and meaning only in the context of the reign of God. The reign of God, in God’s plan as we know it, is related to the church, though it transcends it.

One important element of this complex awareness is that the church does not monopolize God’s presence and action in the world. Even within the church, while Paul may plant and Apollos may water, it is God who gives life and growth. But God also continues to act in the world, outside the church, in other peoples. Some theologians speak of this as the mission of God. Other talk about the work of the Spirit. Still others suggest the cosmic Christ. This depends on one’s theology of the Trinity. The mission of the church is set in the context of the mission of God, not vice versa. The church is called to proclaim the good news revealed to it. But perhaps it should listen first, so that its proclamation may be relevant to the situation and respectful of God’s own continuing action there.

I think that in the kind of approach we are developing, focused on divine-human relationship, theological discourse that remains at the level of truth and its revelation and of faith as its acceptance and affirmation is not denied but transcended. Similarly, the divine project of salvation is not limited to individuals but extends to the whole world, leading to cosmic reconciliation and unification. The church is aware of a special indispensable role and mission in this cosmic process, without, however, identifying itself with it, simply because the action of God transcends it. That the church is not able always to understand the mysterious ways of God does not in any way weaken its call to witness to what it knows of the mystery. We can always proclaim the great work that God has accomplished in us, without denying what God may be doing among others. Unfortunately, our vision of unity is reductive and possessive.

In this connection I wonder whether the church can consider itself as normative in God’s plan of salvation. Today we would rather speak of the Word of God as the ultimate norm. But if the Word of God, both as revealing and as active, is not limited to its expression in the Bible as text and story, our familiar framework breaks down. We have to explore other frameworks like analogy or compatibility. The Word of God cannot contradict itself. But it need not repeat the same thing. And contradiction should not be assumed too easily, looking at things from our limited point of view. We should rather imitate Mary in pondering in the heart the significance of experiences and expressions that we do not fully understand.

Proclamation and Dialogue

Considered from this broad perspective, the tension between proclamation and dialogue disappears because their orientation and focus are different, though convergent. Proclamation witnesses to God’s mystery as it has been manifested to us. Dialogue reaches out to the mystery of God active in others. Both proclamation and dialogue have their role in building up both the church and the reign of God. The tension between them arises when they are both focused on building up the church.

In the practical sphere, too, an opposition between proclamation and dialogue is artificial. One can define them in the abstract in such a way that one stresses their difference from one another. But they are not primarily concepts; they are relationships of communication between people. When we are in a situation of the dialogue of life with other believers, we do not proclaim at one moment and dialogue at the next. They are aspects or elements of one complex relationship. Their mutual relation within this one relationship may be articulated differently at different times and places or with different persons and groups. But even when I am proclaiming my faith to another person, I cannot do so seriously without taking into account the other’s God-experience and liberty—that is, I must communicate dialogically. This is what the Asian bishops mean when they describe evangelization in Asia as a dialogue between the Gospel, on the one hand, and the religions, cultures, and the poor of Asia, on the other. It is proclamation in a dialogic mode. To look on this holistic vision from the point of view of the proclamation-dialogue dichotomy is foreign to Asian experience and perspective. Similarly, if dialogue is frank sharing of one’s faith convictions, it is also proclamation.

I think that a dichotomous view of proclamation and dialogue arises from an attitude to the believers of other religions as people simply to be won over. In such a perspective, unity is possible only in subordinating dialogue to proclamation. One detects a desire for domination (however nuanced, of course, in the name of God and of Truth). One speaks of “conquering” the world for Christ. This reflects, not the spirit of Christ who chose to humble himself even unto death, but other historical forces.

Indian theologians have spoken about the kenotic dimension of Christianity in the context of religious pluralism.

The Reign of God

We have been using the phrase “reign of God” rather frequently in the foregoing sections. I think that the meaning that Asian theologians give to it is often misunderstood. Some think of the reign of God in a purely ecclesial context. The church is growing in history toward the reign of God in an already/not-yet dialectic. The reign of God is then seen as the eschatological future of the church. The reality of the other religions does not directly enter into this framework.

Others are opposed to a merely interior, spiritual vision of the reign of God and wish to give it a socioeconomic and political content, even if it is still in an eschatological framework of already/not-yet. They emphasize that the reign of God must be built up here and now in history and must be realized in communities of freedom, fellowship, and justice, even if the fullness of
its realization may be in the future. This is seen by some as an effort to historicize and materialize the reign of the God. This is an ongoing dispute between the liberation theologians and others opposed to them.

Asians tend to use the phrase “reign of God” in a double sense. On the one hand, it indicates the wider reality of God’s mystery, not merely eschatologically, but also in history, which serves as a counterpoint to the reality of the church as a visible, institutional community. On the other hand, it refers to the common human community of freedom, fellowship, and justice, toward the building up of which all believers are invited to collaborate. Believers individually find inspiration and motivation for their commitment in their own religion. But they try to develop a common human vision and project through dialogue. Part of this common project is also the harmony among the religions themselves. Some seem to think that an effort at building a common human community is disloyalty to the project of building the church. Is it not possible to promote both the church and the reign of God, neither identifying them nor opposing them one to the other?

Talk about interreligious dialogue tends to remain at the religious level. But religion is for life. It has to do more with behavior than with knowledge. Orthopraxis must concern us more in the process of dialogue than orthodoxy. Common action for justice is not merely a context for, but an expression, of interreligious relationships. Unfortunately our tendency is to instrumentalize everything in the service of religion. Interreligious conflicts can be avoided only when the religions stop focusing on themselves and find their common focus in discovering God in human community.

The Place of Christ

Where is Christ in this whole process? The uniqueness of Christ is often presented as a burning issue in the context of dialogue. I think that in Asia the person and role of Christ is not a problem. The real problem is the attempt of the church to monopolize Christ. I have the impression that what is often presented as the question of the uniqueness of Christ is actually the problem of the uniqueness of Christianity. If we do not identify Christ with Christianity, then Christ need not be an obstacle to dialogue between religions. The ghost of the claim “There is no salvation outside the church” often takes new forms in formulas like the “necessity of the church for salvation.” The church then becomes the visible part of a mysterious, ahistorical entity, identified as the mystical body of Christ, and every person who is saved becomes an anonymous Christian. To call a believing Hindu an anonymous Christian is offensive, unless one is also ready to be considered an anonymous Hindu. If we believe with the Second Vatican Council that the Holy Spirit offers to every one the possibility of participating in the paschal mystery in ways unknown to us; if we are aware that more than 80 percent of humanity are not Christian (including among the non-Christian community all those who are Christians in name only); and if we do not continue to play with concepts like “implicit” and “explicit” that come not from experience but from a priori argumentation, then we can make space for other religions. What seems clear to us today is that God’s universal salvific will does not depend on the historic-symbolic mediation of the visible, institutional church alone. However the tendency to identify the church with Christ is so great that some prefer to attribute to the Spirit any divine action outside the church—though the Spirit will be immediately characterized as the Spirit of Christ, thus taking away with one hand what is given by the other.

We believe in the centrality of the paschal mystery of Christ in God’s saving action. But we need not adopt the sacrificial, juridical, and ontological theories developed in a different cultural and philosophical context. Considering universality as the universalization of a historical particularity also depends on a particular view of history and its relation to mystery. We also believe that this mystery is linked to the church in a special, but not an exclusive, way, provided this specificity is spelled out not triumphalistically but in terms of kenosis and service. To our traditional questions we may add a new one: How is salvation in Christ mediated to people through other religions or even no religion at all? But the practice of interreligious dialogue need not wait for a clear answer to these questions and explorations. Perhaps interreligious dialogue may throw further light on some of these mysteries.

Conclusion

I think that what we are facing in Asia is a new and different type of living faith experience that gives rise to new questions and to a new theology. When questions are asked about this theology, it is not enough to look at the questions in themselves; we have to look at the presuppositions, perspectives, and experiences that lie behind the questions.

In concluding these reflections, I would like to point to two principles of Asian theology that are relevant to the area of interreligious dialogue. The first is the need to go beyond physical and conceptual categories to personal ones like freedom and relationships. This is the basis for pluralism. Without personal categories, unity in pluralism can be thought of only in terms of hierarchy. I am also wary of easy and neat classifications like exclusivism and inclusivism, theocentric and Christocentric, and so forth. I think that the development in Asia of a theology of harmony is worth pursuing.

The second principle that seems to be guiding Asian theological reflection, consciously or unconsciously, is that of advaita, or nonduality. The principle of advaita, explained in various ways by the philosophers, tries to hold together two realities that are experienced as neither one nor two. It resists the temptation to solve the problem by identifying them. Rather than enter into a metaphysical discussion here, I shall illustrate it with a couple of examples. The Second Vatican Council says that the one church of Christ subsists in the Roman Catholic Church. The tendency today seems to be equate “subsists in” with “is.” For a dichotomous way of thinking, if one does not say “is,” then one is saying “is not.” There is no middle ground. “Subsists in,” however, indicates a middle ground that seems difficult to understand or express in a certain philosophical approach.

Similarly, one starts with saying that Jesus proclaims the reign of God. Then one goes on to assert that Jesus in person is the realization of this reign. A further step leads to the affirmation of the church as the progressive realization of the reign of God in history. It seems only one more step to identify all three and make claims on behalf of the church that can properly be made only on behalf of Christ. There are certainly relationships here, but there are also real differences.

The spirit of dialogue is the ability to live with difference, accepting tensions but overcoming them through human relationships converging toward harmony. We have to discover today that one of the goals of evangelization is the promotion of reconciliation and harmony in the world in view of God’s plan for the unification of all things.

Robert T. Coote

The fifteenth edition of the Mission Handbook: A Guide to USA/Canada Christian Ministries Overseas, published in 1993, reported an unanticipated decline in the number of North American Protestant overseas missionaries. The decline, wrote editor John A. Siewert, reversed "a growth trend that goes back to the 1940s." Regular users of the Mission Handbook series may recall that previous personnel totals were reported in the range of 60,000 to 70,000. But the latest edition reports less than 45,000! Could the decline of the last four years, since publication of the fourteenth edition, really be that great?

This article analyzes the decline from the perspective of a quarter of a century of Mission Handbook reports. It assumes, first of all, the obvious: that numbers are not everything and that quantitative analysis must ultimately be weighed in the light of more probing qualitative analysis. Nevertheless, analysis of statistical indices serves as an important, though limited, tool in assessing the state of the missionary enterprise.

Underlying the following analysis is another all-important assumption: In a world where hundreds of millions have yet to hear the name of Christ and additional millions have not heard the Gospel presented effectively in their cultural context, there is no substitute for the career missionary. Making this assumption, one can take only limited satisfaction in reports of uncounted thousands of short-termers engaged in mission, of local churches and schools undertaking cross-cultural "exposure" forays, and of various forms of high-tech media lending support to the proclamation of the Gospel. These and other positive factors cannot balance a real decline in long-term commitments by men and women who are prepared to take a profoundly incarnational approach to communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people of other cultures.

For many years, this journal has featured biographical essays on the legacies of missionary pioneers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. With few exceptions, the subjects of these essays invested a lifetime in overseas ministry. The legacies are valued for, among other things, the insights they give from the lifelong wrestling of our predecessors with the cross-cultural challenge of communicating the love of God in Christ. (It is difficult to imagine a compilation of the biographies, a century from now, of "great short-termers" who advanced the cause of Christ in the late twentieth century.)

Assuming that the category of career missionary is the key category to consider when measuring the state of mission-sending from North America, there are three points to be made. First, impressions of robust numerical growth of the North American missionary community have been created by adding short-term totals to career totals and giving the result as "total personnel." I believe this is dubious at best, and it is made more problematic by unreliable reporting of short-term personnel.

Second, over the last quarter century, the category "career missionary" has come to embrace many who, from the outset, have not necessarily intended to make a lifelong career of missionary service. Thus, even if the career category were to increase substantially, our generation might not be capable of making as significant a contribution to fulfillment of the Great Commission as previous generations, which gave the major share of their adult lives to overseas mission and which thereby brought to their task more extensive and more seasoned cross-cultural skills and insights. Today, although "career missionary" evidently overstates the expected span of service of many in that category, the terminology continues to be used in the North American Protestant missionary community, and we will use it in this article.

Third, and most serious of all, the numerical growth rate of career missionaries over the last twenty-five years has failed to keep pace with the population growth rate in North America, let alone with the growth rates in regions of the globe least exposed to the Gospel. This does not mean, of course, that what has been accomplished is insignificant. But if one assumes that it is desirable to increase proportionately the number of career missionaries in order to make a greater contribution to world evangelization, then, since 1968 the Protestant missionary community in North America has only marked time.

Little Gain Since 1968

Contrary to what readers of previous editions of the Mission Handbook may have understood, there has been little gain in North American overseas personnel totals as compared with the totals reported in 1968. True, the Handbook editions of the 1980s gave an impression of vigorous growth. The twelfth edition reported more than 53,000 total personnel (career plus short-term), up from 37,000 just four years earlier. The thirteenth edition reported more than 67,000 (p. 562) and noted that this represented an 82 percent increase in ten years (p. 29). The fourteenth edition reported a new high of 75,167 (U.S., p. 51, top
How is a decline of 30,000 Protestant overseas personnel in four years to be explained?

This new data-collecting scheme, by virtue of its concreteness, can be expected to yield more precise and consistent reporting. (However, for the researcher interested in trends over time, it necessitates making a decision as to which of the four categories are to be considered comparable to the former category of short-term. We will deal with this below.)

The latest survey (15th ed.) also asked agencies to report short-term personnel by region, just as career has always been reported. This might also be expected to produce more precise totals and reduce reliance on gross estimates of short-term personnel. The net effect, MARC researchers believe, was to produce more accurate and somewhat more modest figures for short-term personnel in 1992.

In addition, as MARC received and studied the data submit-
Although decline of short-term personnel has occurred since 1988, it is far less than original numbers would suggest.

Table 1 in the *Handbook* (15th ed., pp. 56 and 68, U.S. and Canada) creates the impression that those in the two-to-four-years category are best compared with the old category of short-term. But I would argue that in many if not most cases such persons should be considered as being closer to the category of career. If one transfers nearly 1,600 persons (my estimate is 1,564) out of the short-term category into the career category, the decline in career missionaries from 1988 to 1992 becomes less than 3,000. (The table above recapitulates career and short-term totals for the fourteenth and fifteenth editions of the *Mission Handbook*, highlighting in boldface type the result of the latter's adjustment of the 1988 figures.)

The good news is that the current downturn is not as great as we might have supposed. The bad news is that the kind of factors that come into play to adjust downward the 1988 totals (thus diminishing the degree of decline in 1992) also suggests the need to similarly adjust downward the totals produced all through the 1980s, particularly in regard to short-term. In short, the growth of the North American Protestant missionary community in the 1980s was not nearly as great as we had imagined.

When we focus explicitly on the career category, using adjusted totals as presented in this article, we see that this category has increased relatively little since 1968—only about 10 percent in a quarter of a century (Fig. 1, bold line). During those years North American population grew at an annualized rate of about 1 percent. If the career missionary category simply had kept pace with population growth, the number of Protestant career missionaries from North American today would exceed 43,000, nearly 6,000 more than the actual total (Fig. 1, broken line).

"Career" Isn't What It Used to Be

Even the modest growth the career category has experienced decrease of 3,000, the decline in the number of career missionaries from 1988 to 1992 is not 7,000 but 4,000.

But I believe an additional adjustment is warranted involving the two-to-four-years category of missionaries. This adjustment will increase the 1992 career total by almost 1,600 and thus further reduce the 1988-1992 decline.4

So, in previous editions, they simply reported their entire short-term total. For 1992 data, this agency was able for the first time to isolate the number of non-North Americans, and they were not included in the total. Had this been possible in 1988, the short-term total for this one agency would have been reduced by more than 11,000! (Again, in the fifteenth edition, MARC made the appropriate downward adjustment when providing the 1988 comparative figure.) The total downward adjustment for short-term personnel in 1988, traced to these two agencies, is almost 19,000.

Our conclusion must be that although decline has no doubt occurred in short-term personnel since 1988, it is far less than the unadjusted original numbers would suggest.

What about the total for career missionaries, down from nearly 44,000 in 1988 to 36,407 in 1992? First, one needs to know that each edition of the *Mission Handbook* carries adjusted figures for the previous edition. In earlier editions the adjustments have most often been modest and resulted in personnel increases (accounting for agencies that existed at the time of the previous *Handbook* but that were then unknown to MARC). Occasionally MARC researchers have sought clarification of data when an agency’s survey response appeared to be inconsistent with earlier reports, and this could also give rise to an adjustment of a previously published figure.3

In keeping with this pattern of offering adjusted totals, the fifteenth edition provides not only 1992 data but also adjusted numbers for 1988. But this time the adjustments are substantial, and they are downward by nearly 3,000. Taking into account this
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Many missionaries plan in advance to discontinue or interrupt their missionary career.

To their home country” (p. 23). Again, “Now many missionaries plan in advance to discontinue or interrupt their missionary career sometime during their lifetime. . . . Some mission agencies have recognized this trend and are commissioning missionaries for only one term of service at a time” (p. 31). The thirteenth edition (1986) was even more explicit: “Others take up a missionary career for eight or ten years” (p. 578).

An essay in the thirteenth edition, contributed by the present author, cited Edwin L. Frizen, executive secretary of the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association (IFMA), and Arthur F. Glasser to highlight the negative implications:

“The tendency toward return to the U.S. during children’s high school and/or college years is perhaps unfortunate, as these tend to be some of the most productive years of the missionary’s life” (Frizen). “The present pattern . . . in which all too many missionaries leave the field because of the educational needs of their teenagers, and do not return is hardly in the best interests of a vigorous church-planting program” (Glasser). (P. 63)

Ted Ward, speaking at the 1985 EFMA (Evangelical Foreign Missions Association, now renamed Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies) Mission Executives Retreat, reckoned that the most typical length of service was between two and ten years rather than ten and more.

And so, although the 1992 total has not declined nearly as much as unadjusted numbers would indicate, the altered definition of career missionary means that even if the numbers were greater, the cause of missions might be more poorly served today than twenty-five years ago. The Pioneer of the missionary vocation invested thirty-some years in the development of his incarnational ministry. What can we expect to accomplish in ten or less?

Short-Term: A Bubble That Burst

Given the expectations generated over the last two decades by the short-term phenomenon, a closer look may be worthwhile.

In 1970 the Mission Handbook (9th ed.) briefly acknowledged the budding reality of short-termers as a category. The editors indicated that future Handbook surveys would explicitly seek short-term data. Accordingly, the tenth edition (1973) gave major attention to the subject. It reported slightly more than 3,000 short-termers (p. 81) and speculated that the actual number could exceed 5,000. (The range 3,000-5,000 then represented 9 to 14 percent of the total personnel.)

For the purpose of short-term definition, the 1973 survey instrument suggested a range of service of six months to three years, while a special essay on short-term service (pp. 16-23) cited a 1972 study of eight-five predominantly evangelical agencies that established two or three months to two years as the most common term of service. Subsequent editions of the Handbook reported terms as short as one week (1976 and 1980) and one month (1984); then in 1988 MARC settled upon two months as the lower limit. As already noted, our proposal to transfer nearly 1,600 persons reported in the short-term category in 1992 to the career category is based on two months as the lower limit and two years as the upper limit for defining short-term. In other words, by making this transfer from short-term to career, we are affirming the parameters suggested in the 1973 essay—two months to two years.

Incorporated in that same essay was a graph illustrating the rapid growth of the short-term category. It projected the possibility that by 1975 the number of short-termers could equal the number of career missionaries (p. 17). It did not happen. But by 1975, not by 1980, not by 1984, and not by 1988 when the number of short-termers reported was 31,519 (U.S. and Canada combined). But as already noted, the latest Mission Handbook has adjusted this number downward by nearly 19,000 (to 12,671). For 1992, the Handbook reports 8,306—and when this is further reduced as a result of our proposal to reclassify 1,564 persons as career, the 1992 figure for short-term drops below 7,000. This is about 15 percent of the total personnel reported in 1992. Obviously, North American short-termers, when defined as persons serving two months to two years, who are financed by a sponsoring mission agency, are not about to overtake career personnel.

But short-termers are a disappointment not only because they seem to number far less than we had imagined. Equally important is the fact that they have not had the effect of building up the career category by “reenlisting” in high numbers for career service after completing a short term overseas. To put it another way, given the number of early resignations within the career group, the number of conversions from short-term to career service has not been sufficient to make a substantial difference in career personnel totals. (It may also be said that without the conversion of short-termers to career status, the present level of career personnel would not be as high as it is.)

The good news is that the short-term category did not really collapse in the last four years. The disappointing corollary is that neither were earlier totals as high as we thought. No doubt there has been a measure of decline, but by far the larger factor is that the 1992 total is much closer to reality than the totals that were being reported in the 1980s.

Career Personnel Trends

Most readers are aware of the precipitous decline among U.S. mainline Protestant mission societies since 1968. The year 1968 marked the end of a twenty-year plateau for mainline career missionaries, who then numbered about 10,000. According to the most recent Handbook, the total has dropped to about 2,700. (This number should be adjusted upward by about 500 to take account of persons serving two to four years.)

The following analysis of career personnel trends is based
not on grand totals but rather on data for 133 U.S. and 51 Canadian agencies as reported in the *Handbook* series, using statistics from the eighth edition (1968) as the baseline. Together these 184 agencies, which include all agencies that reported at least thirty overseas career personnel in 1992, account for 95 percent of the career missionaries covered in the fifteenth edition. In addition, the author has grouped the agencies according to the following traditions: mainline (ecumenical), evangelical (member agencies of IFMA and EFMA, plus a number of unaffiliated agencies), fundamentalist (including some that are identified simply as “independent,” “Baptist,” or both), and charismatic/Pentecostal.

Given the sharp decline of mainline societies, the question arises, What would be the overall picture if the mainline group were placed to one side and their losses were not a factor? Nonecumenical agencies, almost without exception, represent the conservative Christian traditions in North America. We find that the number of mission agencies supported by these agencies has grown from 20,000 in 1968 to almost 33,000 in 1992, achieving in the process an annualized growth rate of 2 percent. When mainline (ecumenical) agencies are included in the picture, the rate of growth is only 1 percent.

But which segments—evangelical, fundamentalist, or charismatic/Pentecostal—account for this increase? The bad news is that not all share the honor. IFMA agencies, taken as a whole, are flat throughout the period, starting at about 5,400 in 1968 and recording about 5,200 in 1992. EFMA begins at just under 7,000 and rises to 9,572 in 1992. This is a 1.3 percent annualized growth rate, running ahead of population growth, though not by much. The charismatic/Pentecostal group is relatively marginal in the total picture: less than 300 in 1968, rising to 3,838 in 1988, but then dropping to just over 2,000 in 1992.

That leaves the twenty agencies that are identified as fundamentalist, independent, or Baptist. With a few exceptions, these agencies operate without associational ties. The majority have selected the term “fundamentalist” as their descriptor in the *Mission Handbook*. Of those identified solely as Baptist or independent, some, such as the Association of Baptists for World Evangelization, generally would be perceived as standing within a fundamentalist framework. Some, disavowing labels, see themselves as unique. The Southern Baptists, for instance, claim certain affinities with both mainline and evangelical traditions; yet by virtue of their well known independence and conservative stance, they are also perceived as close to the fundamentalist community.

In any case, the number of career missionaries in these twenty agencies has increased from 4,291 in 1968 to 10,353 in 1992, more than balancing the decline in mainline agencies (see Fig. 2). The annual rate of growth is 3.75 percent—almost four times the rate of population growth. If the entire category of career missionaries, starting from a base of 34,150 in 1968, had grown at this rate, the 1992 total would be in excess of 80,000, not under 40,000 as reported in the latest *Mission Handbook*.

The good news is that at least one North American missionary community has been growing significantly faster than the general population—the fundamentalists. The bad news is that with few exceptions other conservative agencies have done little better than mark time or have actually lost ground.

Several observations can be made.

1. **Growth rates are down.** Even the fundamentalist agencies experienced a 1988-1992 leveling of the rate of growth. This, coupled with the observation that the long-term growth rate of most of the other conservative groups is less than or barely equal to the population growth rate as a whole, warns that the situation bears watching.

2. **The presuppositions for a strong mission may be eroding.** What might account, at least in part, for the growth of the fundamentalist mission? Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, in his *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, speaks of the difficulty of adopting a mind-set indepen-

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**The increase of missionaries in fundamentalist ranks about balances the losses of mainline agencies.**

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January 1995
across all sectors. The mainline statistical record suggests a pattern: Two decades of plateau, followed by two decades of massive decline. IFMA agencies have already repeated the first portion of that pattern, and EFMA agencies are not far behind. (Three-quarters of the sixty-six EFMA agencies in this analysis have not grown or have declined over the decade of the 1980s.)

Conclusion

The good news is that the decline reflected in the latest edition of the Mission Handbook is not as alarming as it initially appeared. The bad news is that the growth of the North American Protestant missionary community was not as strong during the 1980s as we had thought. Unfortunately, the good news rests on the foundation of the bad news.

The good news is that over the last two decades many thousands of North Americans have seen, via short-term service, opportunities for overseas ministry. The bad news is that their numbers—depending on one’s definition of short-term—have been overstated. More significantly, whatever their impact, it has only had the effect of producing at best a compensation for decreases in the career category.

The good news is that drastic decline in the career category, such as has been witnessed within mainline agencies since 1968, has not yet appeared in the conservative community. Yet those agencies identified as evangelical are barely keeping pace with the population growth rate (Fig. 2). As for the two large associations of evangelical agencies, we find that IFMA has experienced a numerical plateau and EFMA shows only modest growth relative to the population growth rate (Fig. 3). It is to be hoped that these evidences do not represent a prelude to major decline.

In any case, we will be well advised to ponder carefully the rise and decline of the various agencies represented in the Mission Handbook. As these records and reports are spread out before us, are we looking in some contemporary sense at the “handwriting on the wall”?

Notes


2. The survey instrument indicated that agencies should report only persons supported directly by the mission. In the four previous Handbook survey questionnaires, this qualification was not stated in regard to short-term personnel. One has to go back to the tenth edition (1972 data) to find a similar directive, as applied to short-term, in the survey questionnaire.

3. In the course of earlier research connected with the Mission Handbook series I had occasion to question data reported by several mission agencies. For instance, one mainline relief agency reported 650 career missionaries. When I contacted the agency’s headquarters, I learned that they actually employed only a handful of Americans, all as administrative officers and none based overseas; the 650 "career personnel" were overseas nationals. On another occasion I asked a large evangelical agency how it accounted for a huge increase in career personnel from one Handbook edition to the next; my contact had no idea as to the source of the number reported.

4. This number is derived from Table 2-b, p. 63 of the fifteenth edition, as compared with individual agency listings, but the explanation is too lengthy to give here. I am aware that the MARC editors, in preparing the fifteenth edition of the Handbook, carefully avoided using the terms “career” and “short-term.” However, I continue to employ the terms in order to connect meaningfully with the history of the subject. My analysis, somewhat arbitrarily to be sure, considers persons serving two months to two years to be in the short-term category, while persons serving two to four years, as well as those serving more than four years, are considered to be in the career category.

5. The rationale for this suggestion involves agencies that favor sending out their personnel under renewable two-year or four-year contracts. The Presbyterian Church (USA), the Disciples of Christ, and the United Church of Christ each report substantial numbers in the two-to-four-year column rather than the more-than-four-years column. But this does not necessarily indicate a short-term intention on the part of the missionaries. Something similar may apply to conservative agencies, with or without the use of contracts. In the IFMA agency I serve as a board member, perhaps half of our missionaries go overseas without committing in advance to more than four years, but they do not thereby see themselves as short-termers.

6. “The Increasing Role of Short-Term Service in Today’s Mission,” pp. 16–23. The study referred to was conducted by Thomas W. Chandler at Fuller School of World Mission. Three months to two years is found on page 17; two months to two years is indicated on p. 19.

7. The eleventh edition of the Handbook (1976) reported that about 25 percent of short-termers returned as career missionaries, based on individual agency reports (see p. 35).

8. The fifteenth edition of the Mission Handbook lists 833 agencies (710 U.S. and 123 Canadian). Of these, 424 are “sending” agencies; the balance provide services of various sorts but do not send career personnel overseas are not included in the study (even if they were sending personnel in 1968).

9. The categories used in the study of 184 agencies—in this article I prefer the term “mainline”), evangelical, fundamentalist,
Ironies of Indigenization: Some Cultural Repercussions of Mission in South India

Susan Billington Harper

Theologies and mission strategies that stress the fundamental importance of indigenization bear an unmistakable resemblance to secular ideologies of ethnic or national self-determination. Indigenization as a central principle of mission constrains the church to operate respectfully within boundaries established by underlying ethnic groups or nationalities. It is citizenship in genetic and geographic entities rather than in a "higher kingdom" that defines many proper rules of conduct, according to this point of view.

Christian missionaries were influenced by, and contributed to, the historical shift in ideologies of sovereignty that accompanied rapid decolonization in this century. Concepts of self-determination were fundamental to Anglican advocates of missionary "euthanasia" and younger church indigenization from Henry Venn onward. But violence in the modern world related to the politicization of ethnic and religious or communal identities—from Bosnia to Ayodhya—raises critical questions about the principle and practice of indigenization itself. Careful scrutiny of the meaning and operation of indigenization in concrete and varied historical situations is clearly warranted.

"Indigenousness" is the concept most commonly used today by ethnic groups laying claim to entitlements. "To be legitimate," writes David Horowitz in his analysis of ethnic group conflict, "is to be identified with the territory." But any claim to group legitimacy deriving from attachment to the soil usually involves the reverse "psychological denial" that another group might also own equal shares in the land.1 This exclusivist aspect to collective "indigenous" moral claims to legitimacy has led to numerous wars and partitions in this century, not to mention more subtle forms of alienation and discrimination. The use of indigenousness as grounds for inclusion or exclusion has its parallels in church life, for example in the anti-Western reaction to missionary support and Western literature and cultural symbols during his career as a missionary and bishop became one of the central preoccupations of my work on Azariah's life.2 His highly ambivalent and sometimes surprising approach to the process of church indigenization suggested to me the need for a deeper exploration of Christianity's relation to culture in the particular historical setting of South India in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Revival and Rejection of Culture

Christian missions have clearly helped to inspire vernacular cultural revivals in South Asia as well as Africa by, in Lamin Sanneh's words, "uncapping the springs of indigenization."3 Of eight statues honoring the makers of Tamil culture on the Madras Marina, no less than three are Christian missionaries.4 Joseph Constantius Beschi, a Jesuit, and Anglicans Robert Caldwell and George Pope are remembered for their pioneering...
grammars of spoken and classical Tamil, as well as for their creative contributions to Tamil literature and history. R. S. Menon is hailed as one of the founders of literary prose in Tamil, and Robert Caldwell’s *Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages* (1856) helped to inspire the renaissance of Tamil language and literature in the nineteenth century. Christianity’s contributions to Tamil culture did not stop with grammars of spoken and classical Tamil, as well as for their contributions to Tamil literature and history. R. S. Menon is hailed as one of the founders of literary prose in Tamil, and Robert Caldwell’s *Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages* (1856) helped to inspire the renaissance of Tamil language and literature in the nineteenth century. 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Vedanayagam to abandon the stigmatized hereditary occupations of his caste—with their associated low social and ritual rankings—and to enter the employ of the CMS as a catechist. After thirty years’ service as a vernacular agent for Western missionaries, he was recruited by John Thomas for a new training scheme designed to promote Indians to positions of greater authority in the church. Stringent requirements for the priesthood, including an English-medium theology course, Greek, and Hebrew, had hitherto been an effective barrier to most Indians interested in the ordained ministry. Thomas’s reformed curriculum was designed to meet the needs of local congregations by requiring experience in village ministry (at least fifteen years), loyalty to the church, and personal reputation, rather than academic accomplishments in foreign languages, as criteria for ordination. The training scheme included “intensive study of the Bible in Tamil, an outline of church history, Christian doctrine based on the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, preaching (of which they already had considerable experience), and pastoral care and village problems.”

This course prepared Thomas Vedanayagam for ordination as a deacon with twenty-one others in 1869, and as a priest in 1871. He then served the years remaining before his death in 1889 as priest of the village congregation of Vellalanvilai, where he adopted largely Western models of religious practice (from liturgy to music) and built Holy Trinity Church, a semi-Gothic structure erected upon foundation stones taken from a shrine to the goddess Essakiamman that had been destroyed after the conversion of local inhabitants.

Vernacular ordination training was a key component in the so-called structural indigenization of the Tirunelveli church, which gave Indian Christians greater control over their churches. Yet neither translation of church liturgy and hymns nor Indianization of church leadership fundamentally altered the Western, even quintessentially English, cultural character of the church. Anglican liturgy and Western hymns translated into Tamil were used regularly for worship, and Western institutional structures were reproduced among the palmyra trees. Except perhaps in the area of hymnody where the Tamil lyrics of Vedanayagam Sastriar became increasingly popular, neither Indian leadership nor Indian congregations seemed particularly interested in replacing Western with more indigenous forms of ritual and expression. This is well illustrated by the extremely limited impact of Sattampillai’s Hindu Church of Lord Jesus, which was established to free Indian Christians from white missionary influences. The Hindu Christian movement reached the height of its membership in 1860 (about six thousand) and thereafter declined until today there is only a tiny community of Hindu Christians in existence. The Gothic-style steeples visible in villages throughout Tirunelveli today attest to the enduringly Western character of much of nineteenth- and even twentieth-century church life, its aesthetic expressions, liturgy, and ritual.

Indian Christians who adopted Western symbols have often been described by critics as “denationalized.” Attitudes of dependence typical of colonial situations, combined with domineering missionary paternalism, have been identified as the chief culprits in this process of denying ethnic self-determination and self-realization. Missionaries such as John Thomas could indeed exert a domineering influence in village affairs. During his thirty four years in Meganapuram, he built a Gothic church with a 192-foot spire, a large mission compound, and a school. After a particularly severe storm, he basically redesigned the whole village: streets were straightened, houses were rebuilt in rows, trees were planted, and wells were improved.

But records suggest that Nadar converts were as eager to adopt Western cultural symbols and practices as John Thomas was to share them. Thomas Vedanayagam’s congregation—and, by 1899, over a thousand others in CMS areas of Tirunelveli alone—made very considerable voluntary sacrifices to raise the money, quarry the rocks, and build Western-style village churches and smaller chapels. In Vellalanvilai, converts carried rocks on their heads for five kilometers from the quarry to the church building site. John Thomas could not have made them do this. He did not force Thomas Vedanayagam’s son, S. V. Thomas, to become an avid reader and stylistic imitator of Thomas Babington Macaulay. (It was said that S. V. Thomas’s writings were “often mistaken by the press for those of an English gentleman, and were quoted as such.”) Nor did John Thomas or any other missionary force S. V. Thomas to write articles critical of Indian nationalism, which he did. Those who credit Western missionar-

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**Churches in Tirunelveli still have a Western character in architecture, aesthetics, and liturgy.**

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women go naked above the waist, and generally turned their backs on many ritual rules and regulations that for centuries had kept them in thrall. The mass movements to Christianity must be understood as a part of—indeed, as a catalyzing agent in—this broader effort to reject caste traditions and to adopt new, more respectable forms of social identity.

Having traditionally been forbidden from entering Hindu temples, it is perhaps not surprising that Nadar Christians did not want their churches to resemble Hindu temples. Unlike the Sanskritizing Nadars, these Nadars turned their backs on exclusivist higher Hinduism. Nor, however, did they want their churches to resemble their former local shrines—those thatched mud huts or simple altars eulogized by Westerners as "indigenous" but representing to the converts little but their former poverty and ritually polluting untouchability. A pukka stone Gothic church was infinitely preferable to these indigenous alternatives, particularly if its steeple was higher than the nearest Hindu temple gopurams. Far from being a weak concession to domineering missionaries, Westernization represented a symbolic challenge by long-suppressed lower classes to an oppressive indigenous social order. In this context, indigenization along the lines expected by Western orientalizing indigenizers would have been viewed as just another form of indigenous oppression.

Western Indigenizers and Indigenous Westernizers

It was not until the twentieth century that Indian Christians were faced regularly with the challenge of resisting cultural indigenization proposed by Westerners. The rise of nationalism deeply affected many of India's more highly educated Christians by the end of the nineteenth century, although it left the vast majority of Christian converts untouched and unmoved. Indeed, the cleavages that developed between the pro-indigenizing Western and Indian Christian leadership—often located in urban areas—and the pro-Westernizing Indian Christian villagers were similar to the cleavages that developed in wider Indian society and were described with cutting irony in Kipling's fascinating but little-known short story "The Enlightenments of Pagett, M.P." The shock experienced by the liberal British M.P. Pagett, who discovers that only a small elite of Western- (often missionary-) educated Indians is interested in the new Indian National Congress is similar to the frustration experienced by progressive Western missionaries and many highly educated Indian Christians who discovered that most Indian Christians were not at all interested in church indigenization.

This ambivalence toward indigenization among many Indian Christians is well illustrated by the career of Thomas Vedanayagam's third and youngest son, V. S. Azariah, who became one of India's earliest indigenous missionaries and is remembered today mainly as the first Indian bishop of the Anglican Church. Azariah was, and continues to be in mission history, a prominent symbol of church indigenization by virtue of his appointment as an Indian bishop and because of his Indianizing policies in Dornakal. Neglected in the popular picture are two realities that emerge from the written and oral historical records: first, that Indianization was often advocated more strongly by Azariah's Western mentors than by Azariah himself; second, that Indianizing strategies were often actively resisted by local Indian village congregations. A few examples from the beginning and ending of Azariah's career will suffice to illustrate the point.

Western Bishops for Andhra

To begin, there was strong resistance among Indian Christians to Azariah's initial appointment as bishop. Azariah's consecration in 1912 would never have occurred without the steadfast defense and advocacy of the British bishop of Madras, Henry Whitehead (brother of the famous philosopher Alfred North Whitehead), and the British metropolitan, Reginald Copleston, against stubborn indigenous opposition. This is not the place to explore the complexities of this controversy and its implications for church-state relations in the British Raj. Suffice it to say that petitions sent to protest Azariah's consecration were signed by a wide range of Tamil and Telugu Christians, criticizing him for lack of experience and education, for low social position, for nonconformist associations with the YMCA, and for Tamil origins. These protests were interpreted by his mentor, Henry Whitehead, as expressions of the "four sick passions that are the curse of the Church in South India: race prejudice, caste feeling, party spirit and personal jealousy." Azariah's consecration clearly became an occasion for the open articulation of interregional and intercaste disputes, but their effect was limited by the closed nature of the episcopal selection process, which did not require clerical or congregational consent, and by the constant patronage of a small group of liberal-minded Western church leaders.

As appointment procedures were opened to greater democratic participation after the 1930 disestablishment of the Anglican church in India, it became harder rather than easier to appoint Indians to high posts in the church. After Azariah's death in 1945, a similarly vehement campaign was launched by Indian Christians against the appointment of an Indian succes-

Mass movements to Christianity must be understood as a part of a broader effort to adopt more respectable forms of social identity.

sor. Numerous petitions to the metropolitan complained that the aspirations of "Andhra Christians" had been ignored under the "Native Tamil Bishop." One letter accused Azariah of distancing the Dornakal church from "the Mother Church of England, just as a child was forcibly removed from the hands of her mother: making us to lament the loss." Some congregations were so opposed to native bishops that they threatened to desert to Catholicism, and most petitions ended with a call for the election of a European or English bishop.

In the end, five Europeans, three Tamils, and three Telugus were nominated for the Dornakal post. An Irish CMS missionary, A. B. Elliot, was elected by a vast majority of the diocesan synod but accepted the post only with reluctance. "It is undoubtedly desirable that there should again be an Indian Bishop of Dornakal," Elliot wrote to the metropolitan after the vote, accepting the post only on the condition that he could help to prepare the way for another Indian bishop by "preparing an assistant bishop or bishops and then making way for another election."

Although Azariah would undoubtedly have been disappointed to witness this denouement to Henry Whitehead and
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Reginald Copleston's experiment in Indian leadership, he would not have been surprised. Azariah had analyzed the reasons for Indian Christian resistance to indigenization of church leadership in a report to the Episcopal Synod of 1942. He argued that the chances of an Indian being elected bishop decreased after 1930, when the new Church of India, Burma, and Ceylon placed most episcopal elections into the hands of their dioceses. "According to the present Constitution whereby Bishops are elected by the Dioceses themselves," Azariah concluded, "there does not appear to be much chance for any of the Dioceses with large Indian Church populations to elect Indians as Diocesan Bishops." The dioceses of Tirunelveli, Travancore, and Chota Nagpur had all elected foreign bishops since disestablishment. "Rural Christian[s] probably think they need a European Bishop to watch over their interests. Communal and personal jealousies also often come into play," Azariah explained.26 As a layman's association in Dornakal expressed it, "We would prefer to be ruled by a European than an Indian as the former has generally a broad outlook and no vested interests in this country." The preference for European over native church leaders was widespread and did not end with the coming of national independence. Bishop Neill wrote in 1952 that "in the (Anglican) Church of India, the inclination still to elect European and not Indian bishops is so strong as to cause some dismay to those who believe firmly in the principle of indigenous leadership."27

In Andhra, resistance to orientalizing indigenization sprang mainly from caste conflict between the two major untouchable groups—the Malas and the Madigas—neither of whom wanted their rivals to gain privileged access to ecclesiastical authority and resources. Resistance was also attributable to interregional conflict during a period in which Telugu increasingly resented the political, linguistic, and cultural dominance of their Tamil neighbors. The so-called Andhra Movement challenged their perceived subordination and led to the establishment of a separate Telugu language university within Azariah's diocese in 1926. Azariah's educational policies, which stressed village reconstruction over higher education and included the closing of a missionary college that functioned importantly as a conduit for the spread and did not end with the coming of national independence. Bishop Neill wrote in 1952 that "in the (Anglican) Church of India, the inclination still to elect European and not Indian bishops is so strong as to cause some dismay to those who believe firmly in the principle of indigenous leadership."28

Orientalizing Sahibs and Memshahibs

Many other illustrations of this unexpectedly complex reaction to indigenization in Dornakal could be examined, such as why local Christians preferred white Victorian representations of Christ over brown indigenized versions in the otherwise indigenous Dornakal Cathedral, or why they rejected some Hindu customs but voluntarily adopted others such as a prohibition on beef eating. But I would like to conclude by taking a brief look at the dilemma of Western missionaries in India and at the way in which their zeal for indigenization—for the development of some kind of Indian ethnic self-determination and self-expression in ecclesiastical matters—ultimately threatened to undermine itself by becoming another form of foreign domination.

Although Azariah's education at Madras Christian College and his early career as a YMCA secretary had exposed him to Indian nationalism, it was primarily his understanding of the Gospel that inspired him to establish the first major indigenous Indian missionary society and to go himself as a missionary to the Telugus. There is almost no textual evidence, even of an indirect kind, to support the theory that the founders of the Indian Missionary Society (IMS) were motivated by anything other than the biblical commission to preach the Gospel to nonbelievers. The study of Scripture and of inspirational works by Andrew Murray and A. H. Arden, combined with prayer in the context of spiritual revival, led the founders of the IMS to conclude that missionary service was a duty incumbent on all Christians. The society was the fruit of an enthusiastic and serious spiritual maturity, not ethnic or national self-expression.

Azariah emerged from the rural culture of Tirunelveli with a relatively secure sense of his own identity as an Indian Christian. He was fundamentally uninterested in becoming more "indigenous." But letters to his wife indicate that pressure to indigenize was exerted, first by his beloved YMCA colleague Sherwood Eddy, and then by his Anglican mentor Henry Whitehead and Whitehead's wife, Isabel, a rather formidable active memsahib of the old school. In 1906 Azariah wrote that he was promoting another "indigenous" missionary society, the National Missionary Society, "simply because of Mr. Eddy and not because I feel that it is the Lord's will for me."29

A few years later, when Azariah was preparing for episcopacy, he felt obliged to reject the Whiteheads' efforts to Indianize him. Isabel Whitehead, who assumed the task (to her exceedingly important) of finding suitably oriental-styled vestments for the new Indian bishop, at first insisted upon the classic symbol of oriental dignity in the West: a turban. From Azariah's perspective, a turban seemed about as foreign as it would to most Westerners, so he launched a determined campaign of noncooperation against Isabel's orientalizing plans, writing to his wife, "Mrs. Whitehead is taking me to task for not buying a turban!"30 Mrs. Whitehead's symbol clearly made Azariah distinctly uncomfortable. One year later, he was persuaded to purchase two turbans (one brown and one white silk) for his first trip to England with the Whiteheads but conceded to his wife from the outgoing ship that he did not have the courage to wear them. Instead, he donated the white one to an English gentleman from the First Class attending a fancy dress ball as an Indian prince.31 To Azariah, turbans were more appropriate as dress-ups for Englishmen acting out their perceptions of a largely imaginary Orient than as working attire for the episcopacy. Azariah faced the awkward reality that, in being groomed for the first Indian bishopric, he was being sculpted into a symbol of Indianization for and by Westerners.

For the most part, Azariah successfully resisted Isabel Whitehead's attempts to dress him up as the Indian bishop of her own orientalist imagination. The turban was abandoned, and eventually a simple cassock was substituted for the costly English coat and breeches donned by the other bishops (and likened to that of a Highlander going to a funeral).32 The Whiteheads succeeded, however, in persuading Azariah to shave off his fashionable mustache before his 1912 entry into the conservative, albeit amply whiskered, company of India's British bishops. (Three of these bishops sported mustaches with beards, and expansive muttonchop sideburns had successfully colonized most of the metropolitan's face.)33

Pressure to conform to an English interpretation of what it meant to be Indian persisted and caused Azariah continuing discomfort. The cassock Azariah chose was widely adopted by Anglican bishops, who eventually took efforts to present themselves in a more Indian manner than Azariah himself. Stephen Neill wrote in later years, "It has always amused me that,
whereas I the foreigner always went to Church barefoot, Azariah, the Indian, always wore leather shoes.” Azariah took a good-humored approach to Westerners who advocated Indian practices he considered inappropriate, joking in response that they should introduce the “real Indian ecclesiastical vestment . . . nothing at all!” But he was never entirely free from Western pressure to Indianize. During the Whiteheads’ regular visits to Dornakal, Mrs. Whitehead used to berate the bishop and his family for eating English breakfasts rather than Indian iddli. When Azariah named a new Christian village in his diocese Whitehead Farm, the Whiteheads insisted that he rename it Vedanayagapuram. 

The irony of indigenization in twentieth-century South India is that it was so often initiated by well-meaning Westerners without strong guidance and support from the majority of Indian Christians. This caused it to have a certain artificial quality. “To be indigenous,” an Anglican divine has written, “means simply to be free to respond to Christ and to the world without any of the self-consciousness which is imposed by the attitudes of others.” But it was perhaps as difficult for many liberal Westerners as it was for Indian nationalists to accept that, in some situations, Indian Christians desired closer identification with the West than with their own local or national traditions. Liberation is always an indigenous desire, and Christianity, in its Anglican missions-mediated forms, apparently provided the most clear and straightforward path out of the demeaning cultural matrix from which these converts wished to exit.

The Universal Gospel

Azariah frequently objected to descriptions of the Christian community in India as a static communal group, stressing instead its dynamic and inclusive qualities for “all races, all tongues and all castes.” The religion of Christ is one of the most dynamic factors in the world. It always bursts its boundaries, however strong and rigid those boundaries may be. . . . It refuses to be confined to any one race, class, or caste. It seeks to embrace all.” This recognition of the Gospel’s dynamism led him to oppose, with Gandhi, the system of separate electorates erected by the British government. But his belief in the universal missionary ambitions of Christianity also led him into a bitter dispute with Gandhi over the legitimacy of conversion in South Asia. It was his belief that in Christianity Indians could participate in a universal brotherhood fundamentally different from India’s oppressive hierarchical caste system that led him to work so tirelessly for church unity in South Asia. Denominationalism threatened to create a community as divided as the former caste society, particularly as denominational lines in India began to correspond remarkably with caste lines. The enormous frustration Azariah and his colleagues felt as “denomination” was translated into “caste” was a prime motivation in the formation of the Church of South India in 1947. It was children of former untouchables who helped to reconcile many highly educated Western leaders of Episcopal and non-Episcopal churches to each other for the first time in history. Church unity did not eradicate the influence of caste in postindependence South Indian church life, particularly on disputes over episcopal succession. Nor, however, did the simultaneous achievement of Indian national independence lead to the severing of ties between Indian and Western Christians. The Church of South India appointed Lesslie Newbigin as bishop of Madurai and Ramnad in 1947 and as bishop in Madras in 1965. Being both a dispassionate “outsider” by virtue of his foreign nationality and lack of caste affiliation, and a committed “insider” by virtue of his missionary work in South India and his fluency in Tamil, Bishop Newbigin suited perfectly the needs of his Indian dioceses at that time. His appointments symbolized the important degree to which Indian Christianity desired to transcend local ethnic and national boundaries and to retain access to a more universal Christian community.

Thus, we see in mission history the rediscovery of a crucial aspect of the Christian revelation. It is sometimes argued that it was the prophet Amos who discovered, or at least applied, the potent idea of “one God of all the nations.” It can also be argued that the rise of Christianity in the ancient world was an explosion of this potent universalizing theology from within the overcompressed confines of Judaic nationalism into the broad spaces of the diverse Hellenistic multilingual conglomerate of the Roman Empire. In this way, it was Jesus Christ who extended (Christians would say fulfilled) the prophetic hope of a God of all the nations and united, for the first time, one godly people from all nations. It was the divine sovereignty of Jesus the King, rather than a democratic sovereignty of collective ethnicity or nationality, that provided the focus of loyalty for this new universal brotherhood and, I would suggest hopefully, continues to do so today. In this sense, Christianity is a religion that fits more comfortably into the multietnic empires of the first or the nineteenth centuries than into the democratically self-determining but competing and increasingly fractionated ethnicities, nationalisms, and class identities of our blood-drenched twentieth century. The irony of nineteenth- and twentieth-century church indigenization in South India is that it so often undermined its goal of being midwife to the birth of an authentic Indian Christianity because of its focus upon legitimizing perceptions of Indian national and ethnic identity and, ultimately therefore, because of its subservience to the modernizing Zeitgeist. As history shows so clearly, the church that is wedded to the spirit of the age will be widow to the next generation. The beauty of missionary history is that, in penetrating appearances, realities are discovered that greatly enrich our understanding of the distinctive contributions of this much more culturally complex church to world Christianity.

Notes

5. The membership of the Lutheran church in South India grew to about thirty-seven thousand during the first century of its existence. See exact figures taken from Julius Richter in S. C. Neill, A History of


7. This is the number of converts received by the CMS and SPG missions given in Robert Caldwell, Lectures on the Tinnevelly Missions (London: Bell and Daldy, 1857), p. 14.


9. The scheme has been described as revolutionary by Stephen Neill (A History of Christianity in India, p. 400).

10. Ibid., p. 400. Although Hebrew and Greek ceased to be required of candidates, there is evidence that Thomas Vedanayagam acquired some knowledge of those languages anyway. See Henry Whitehead, "Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah," International Review of Missions 34, no. 134 (April 1945): 184.

11. For useful distinctions between different types, or levels, of indigenization, see Immanuel S. David, "The Development of the Concept of Indigenisation Among Protestant Christians in India from the Time of Henry Venn" (M.Th. thesis, United Theological College, Bangalore, 1975).


13. "Western" cultural expressions were (and are) as eclectic as Indian ones, and the use of Gothic styles in Tirunelveli was the result of nineteenth-century England's Gothic revival, not of any simple consensus among Westerners about the superiority or supreme "Westernness" of Gothic modes. John Thomas built his English Gothic-style church with the help of plans from the Oxford Society for Promoting the Study of Gothic Architecture (A. H. Grey-Edwards, Memoir of the Rev. John Thomas: C.M.S. Missionary at Megnanapuram Tinnevelly, South India, 1836–1870 [London: Paternoster Press, 1904], p. 67).


15. "Introduction," in Essays by Samuel V. Thomas, M.A. (Medalist in Sanskrit, University of Madras), p. i. This bound volume of essays, in the personal possession of Dr. D. Packiamuthu of Palaymkottai, includes no information on date or place of publication.

16. This is clearly demonstrated in Robert Hardgrave, The Nadars of Tamilnad: The Political Culture of a Community in Change (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1969), upon which the following discussion is based.


18. This sense of competition with Hindus is expressed in Tirunelveli today mainly through jokes and tongue-in-cheek comparisons. For John Thomas on this subject, see Grey-Edwards, Memoir of the Rev. John Thomas, p. 70.


22. Petitions may be found in 178:369–72, 386–88, Davidson Papers, Lambeth Palace, London; and in 5:1/4, Dornakal, Metropolitan Archives of the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma, and Ceylon (MACIPBC), Bishop's College, Calcutta.

23. Whitehead to Copleston, November 8, 1911, 5:1/2, Dornakal, MACIPBC.

24. Petitions may be found in 5:2/7, Dornakal, MACIPBC.

25. A. B. Elliot to the Metropolitan, April 27, 1945, 5:2/7, Dornakal, MACIPBC.


27. Manifesto of the Layman's Association of the CMS Churches of the Dornakal Diocese 5:2/6, Dornakal, MACIPBC.


29. V. S. Azariah (VSA) to Anbu, August 17, 1906, Azariah Collection, Madras (ACM).


31. VSA to Anbu, April 11 and 19, 1910, ACM.

32. As one historian has written of the younger churches' persistent use of Western clothing styles, "Native priests were dressed up like European clergymen, and even native bishops, when there came to be such, adorned themselves in the riding attire of eighteenth-century English prelates, which has sometimes been mistaken for that of a Highlander going to a funeral" (Alec R. Vidler, The Church in the Age of Revolution: 1789 to the Present Day [London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1962], p. 252).

33. VSA to Mrs. Whitehead, October 3, 1912, Sundkler Collection, Uppsala. The Whiteheads' reasons for making him shave off his mustache remain a matter for speculation. John Carman has suggested to me in conversation that the mustache may not have been acceptable because of its association with the martial castes.


35. That is, nothing above the waist or below the knee (ibid.).


My Pilgrimage in Mission

Gerald E. Currens

It was about halfway through our first year as missionaries with the Lutheran Church in Liberia. In preparation for working in the Loma-speaking area in the interior of this West African nation, I had been assigned to language study. A small village of a hundred or so thatch-roofed houses and several hundred people was home during that year for my wife, Virginia, and me. That morning the town chief, a distinguished man of mature years, had been called away on business and had delegated a young fellow to be chief for the few days he would be away. My teacher and I were seated in the shade of the overhanging eave of our house working when we saw the chief striding rather imperiously toward us. He was robed in a flowing gown and swinging the cow-tail switch that was the symbol of his newly bestowed authority. Accompanied by several of his fawning friends and a cluster of curious children, he paused to greet us. Then he moved on to survey his diminutive domain. An elder of the village seated near us looked amused and then captured the scene neatly. "The small pond's crocodile is a bullfrog," he observed and said no more.

Missionary in a Small Pond

As I reflect back on those early years of missionary service, I sometimes wonder if that comment could have applied as well to us. We were a group of young, naive, ambitious, and probably at times arrogant-appearing new missionaries, eager to make our mark in what was a small church in a small country. By virtue of our being missionaries, we were thrust into positions of authority for which we were ill prepared. After completing language study, I— who had never served as a minister of a congregation—was appointed district pastor of an area comprising over twenty village churches and evangelistic outposts. Not too long after that, I—who had never taken a course in education or taught in a classroom—was assigned as principal of the church district's large elementary boarding school.

It was 1951 when we went to Liberia. In that corner of the world at least, it was still the era of the mission organization and the missionary. It would remain so for at least another decade. Although a Lutheran church had been organized a few years earlier, the mission and the missionaries ran things. The things we ran, of course, were of our own making, institutions and organizations familiar to us and, we thought, essential to the work.

I was and still am ambivalent about the appropriateness for another culture and society of schools, hospitals, church structures, and programs set up to function on a Western model. Within the Liberian national context, however, this was expected. Such institutions were desired and highly regarded by the Liberian ruling elites. To the village people of traditional culture, they were utterly foreign. We were not the only mission or church confronted by this dilemma, then or now. In a world in which mission is international and cross-cultural, church organizations and related educational, health, and economic development programs need to operate according to commonly accepted standards and procedures. But locally, there need to be mediating mechanisms—people, groups, organizations—that facilitate movement between the familiar and traditional ways and the unfamiliar institutions and operations adopted from a different culture.

My career as principal was very brief. I immediately requested an experienced, able teacher to assume the responsibilities of leading the school as de facto principal. He was soon appointed principal, the first Liberian to head a Lutheran church school. This man was a mature, respected member of the community and a highly competent teacher, although he had himself only completed eighth grade. For me, the issue here was, What are the criteria for leadership, and more critically, who determines them? It was not the last time in my experience that this question needed to be addressed.

I did, however, become the district pastor. I had received theological education and was an ordained minister of the Lutheran Church. At that time, there was no ordained Loma-speaking minister to serve the area. The real ministry and evangelistic outreach was carried out by laymen and laywomen in these village churches. I toured the district periodically to baptize new believers and administer Holy Communion, an itinerant and sporadic dispenser of the sacraments. A church polity regarding the ministry that may have made sense in Europe and America was ill suited to effective mission in rural Africa.

I was impatient with these constraints on ministry and the discipling and nurturing of a growing Christian community. The Lutheran Church later made changes in its polity when, after a surge of church growth in the Loma area, many of these lay leaders were ordained as "deacons" (the title of "pastor" was still reserved for those with theological education). They could now not only preach and teach but also baptize and preside at Holy Communion in their local churches.

This was my first lesson in the difference the ordering of ministry can make in how well the church carries out its vocation to mission. This was an issue that recurred at other times and other places. I believe it is an issue that still weighs heavily upon many churches around the world that have inherited unexamined traditions of ministry brought by those who introduced them to the Gospel.

When, in retrospect, I am embarrassed by my participation in the missionary dominance of those early years, I remind myself that we were children of our time. We always are. The deeper understandings and broader experience I think I have gained in the forty years since may—forty years from now—be as easily deplored.

I was a child of my time, but the times were changing, and so was I. Anticipating the needs of the future, the church and mission had launched a major, long-range effort at leadership development. Beginning with the first Lutheran missionary in 1860, the aim had been to build up the church on the foundation of the schools offering Western education in English, the official language of Liberia. This was regarded as a "civilizing" as well as an evangelistic effort, an attitude shared by the Liberian ruling class, descendants of freed slaves who had returned to Africa.

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There were some students who moved on to positions of leadership in the nation and others who became faithful mission workers. But the expectations on the part of those early missionaries for an educated leadership were not high, and the opportunities were meager.

Once the interior opened up and adult believers from the several ethnic groups grew in number, a village-based church worshipping in the vernacular became the norm. Leadership development could now mean both expanding the opportunities for formal education in the schools and emphasizing nonformal training in the vernacular for potential leaders in the village setting.

To move forward in the one direction, the mission established and later turned over to the church a high-quality secondary school, a Bible school, and schools of nursing associated with the hospitals. Students were sponsored for studies in many fields, at the university level in Liberia and for graduate study abroad. Within ten to fifteen years there were young, capable, well-educated leaders in all areas of the church’s work.

In the 1960s, the move to Liberian leadership, the disappearance of the mission organization, and the transfer of authority to the Liberian church was hard on many missionaries. They left service in large numbers.

During this period of transition, a senior missionary provided for some of us a model of how to welcome and undergird the changes that were taking place. He was my father. I was a missionary kid, born in Liberia. We had returned to the United States when I was in second grade. My memories of those early years were mostly family anecdotes that had a reality all their own, the old black-and-white photos we sometimes looked at, and an attitude—the deep love and respect my parents had for the people they had lived and worked among. While I was in college, my parents went back to Liberia. My own journey there was on a twisted path of rebellion and rejection: first, of vocation to the ministry, and second, of any kind of missionary service. I changed, but not easily.

During those transition years, my father moved from top positions in mission and church to become a subordinate, quietly supportive helper to the bishop of the church. He knew how to pick up the slack, fill in the gaps, and follow. I never achieved the same graciousness and genuine humility of service, but it was not because I lacked an example.

With the new emphasis on leadership development, I chose to be involved in nonformal, grassroots educational efforts in the vernacular. That first year of Loma language study was, for me, invigorating and successful. It opened up another world of thought, perception, and experience. I was eager to know more about the worldview and lifeways of the people to whom I had been sent with the Gospel.

During those early years I was fortunate in having a mentor. Dr. Wesley Sadler was a linguist who had analyzed and developed the orthography for the Loma language, initiated an adult literacy program, and translated some Scripture. He had also written the comprehensive set of lessons for language learning that I and others used so successfully. He guided my early interest in learning about African cultures. When he moved on to set up the Africa Writing Centre in Kitwe, Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia), I succeeded him as director of the Loma literacy and language program. The translation of Scripture was my primary assignment.

In the Loma area in the late 1950s and 1960s, we had a virtual laboratory for experimenting with the response of Christians to increasing exposure to Scripture. For a generation, since the beginning of mission work in the area, the only persons who could preach and teach from the Bible (using the King James Version, of course) were the few persons who had gone to elementary school, had a rudimentary command of English, and stayed in their home area as church workers. Until I completed language study, no missionary pastor in the area had worked in the vernacular. This meant that, as those with little formal education taught and preached or interpreted for missionaries, the hearers received at best idiosyncratic translations of the Scripture. Then, with the beginning of a literacy effort, mature men and women who had never been to school could for the first time read and write in their own language.

Nevertheless, when I began translation work, only the Gospels of Mark and John were available. I worked with an extremely gifted Liberian translator whose command of his own language and knowledge of his culture far exceeded his years. As we translated, we tested and revised the various New Testament books, putting the drafts out in mimeographed form before publication of the entire New Testament by the United Bible Societies some years later.

**Scripture in Dialogue with the Community**

I remember the change in some of the elders of the congregation in the village where we lived and where the literacy center was located. During the evening services, one old fellow, a Christian of long standing, always led us in a lengthy, almost formulaic prayer. The petitions were predictable and numbing. Then as the congregation began studying the Epistles, the rich variety of experience and insights, the struggles and victories of the early church became their own. Gradually but dramatically, the old man’s vocabulary of faith grew and blossomed. The prayers became lively and pertinent. In these New Testament writings he had heard voices that spoke to his experience and from whom he found a new voice to express his faith. I could see a similar change taking place in the lay leaders of the other village churches with whom I met monthly. I do not believe that one must possess a wide biblical vocabulary to live out one’s faith, but as one enters more fully into the world of ideas, beliefs, and experiences that have been shared by the church through the ages, the vocabulary becomes one’s own. If I had not already been an advocate for translation of Scripture in the vernacular, I certainly would have become one after this experience. I saw the Word of God in the language of heart and home change and renew lives.

I also saw the excitement of Christians as they discovered that these newly available Scriptures could be searched for guidance in the issues they faced in their daily lives. In one town a feast was being planned as part of the ritual sacrifice to the ancestors. Such periodic rituals ensured the blessings of the ancestors—and the deity—which the church leaders rejected. The debate was lively, worthy of a class in exegesis. Of course, church law had prohibited participation in such ceremonies—"Christians don't take part in sacrifices." It was a rule first heard from the missionaries and, at least occasionally, discreetly broken. Noteworthy now was the open discussion of the question, the frank differences of opinion, and the probing of Scripture for help in resolving the question.

At the close of the 1950s and into the 1960s the map of Africa was dramatically altered. In rapid succession the vast swaths of color indicating European colonies became a mosaic of newly
independent nations. Leaders in the struggle for independence became heads of state. Massive economic development and aid programs promised a bright future. New business ventures multiplied. Optimism was in the air.

Liberia, though never a colony, experienced its own rapid economic and social change as roads were built into the interior; schools and clinics were opened in rural areas; the city of Monrovia, fast becoming a modern West African capital, attracted more and more people; deposits of high-grade iron ore were discovered and exploited; and natural rubber was still a profitable export. Men and women left their farms and villages to join the many others in the new towns and workers' camps at mines and plantations.

The rural-based church was slow to realize what was happening. The Loma literacy program had followed people into the urban and industrial areas with a network of distributors of bilingual materials that we were now producing in both the vernacular and English. I, with some others, became acutely aware of the need for the church to face up to the changes that were all around. I urged the Liberian church leadership to ask the mission agency to send a sociologist or anthropologist to work with us for a time. This person could, we thought, help the church understand and deal with the rapid social change that was profoundly affecting so many of its members. When no such person was forthcoming and with the end in sight for the translation of the New Testament, I requested a study leave to do graduate work in anthropology. Largely because of generous financial assistance from the university, this leave became an extended doctoral program including field research back in Liberia.

This immersion in the field of anthropology was rewarding in many ways. Two learnings, in particular, led me to a deeper understanding of my vocation to mission.

One came from seeing things from the perspective afforded by cultural anthropology. I discovered how much I and my whole involvement in mission were formed by my own culture.

I saw the Word of God in the language of the heart change and renew lives.

With my active interest in learning about the worldview and lifeways of the people among whom I worked, I had considered myself rather enlightened. I would have been more enlightened had I understood how much the assumptions and worldview of my culture shaped my ministry. I wanted to learn to know their culture when I needed most to question my own.

As a result of this experience and from observing and talking with missionaries around the world, I am convinced that the best preparation for missionary service is an orientation that includes study of the New Testament, in an area distant from our former place of work, where I was unconnected to church structures and not known as a missionary, that I became a guest. I was totally dependent upon the hospitality and goodwill of the community that let Virginia and me live among them. The experience was salutary. I was not then serving as a missionary, but my relationship with my neighbors and hosts was in many ways more servantlike than ever before. The bullfrog had learned that it was not a crocodile.

Bullfrog in a Bigger Pond

And the pond got bigger. I had two years as a practicing anthropologist and missionary pastor in Liberia and then was called to a succession of staff positions in the United States. Each step expanded my world and my understanding of mission.

As staff person responsible for relationships with churches and agencies in Africa, I got to know other parts of the continent. Later, as executive director, I dealt with churches and agencies worldwide. The Board of Foreign Missions that had sent us to Liberia in 1951 had—in the parlance of the day—six mission fields. With the 1988 merger of three Lutheran churches here in the United States, I was given oversight of relationships with partners in mission in sixty countries. The world for mission in which I was now involved had grown much bigger.

As my responsibilities grew, so did my experience with persons from other confessions and other faiths. In my role as staff liaison for Africa, working relationships and friendships embraced persons from many other denominations, some African independent churches, national and regional councils of churches. Attending the 1983 Vancouver Assembly of the World Council of Churches and years of active participation in the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. confirmed my long-standing commitment to interchurch cooperation and ecumenical efforts.

Bigger is not necessarily better. But becoming associated over the years with such a variety of Christians in so many different places has made very real for me the universality and particularity of the church.

The move from being a missionary and anthropologist to mission staff was not as difficult as I had anticipated. I discovered that I could be administrator and still be a pastor, evangelist, social scientist, and student. I was fascinated by how institutions and organizations work, and I was committed to working within the church as an organization instituted for mission.

When I did on occasion look over my shoulder and reflect on the past, I was grateful for the variety of opportunities and wealth of experiences that I had been given. But I do not have a gift for nostalgia. The last few years of my active service were directed even more toward the future. In my work in long-range planning with mission agency board, staff, missionaries, and church leaders, I used to challenge them: "Envision what mission will be like a generation from now, thirty or forty years. Plan now! That day will be here sooner than you think." I know.

January 1995
**Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 1995**

**David B. Barrett**

The table opposite is the eleventh in an annual series describing statistics and trends in world mission. This year we illustrate the value of analyzing these data by selecting several figures from this year’s table and focusing on the question, Where should foreign missionaries work? or, How should the global foreign missionary force be deployed?

The graph and accompanying table below explore this question by examining the proportions of missionaries to be sent to World A, B, and C countries if various categories of people are the primary point of entry or target. Six very different organizing principles emerge, as advocated by different mission agencies.

**Principle 1**: Foreign missionaries should operate through existing churches. The 1.9 billion Christians thus become their immediate or primary entry point, whether in World A, B, or C countries. This is termed the partnership principle.

**Principle 2**: The world’s 4.6 billion who have already heard the Gospel (evangelized persons) should be the primary entry point and target in World A, B, and C countries. Foreign missionaries then utilize this huge pool as their launching pad.

**Principle 3**: Every person on the globe is equally deserving of the attention of the global missionary force. World A, B, and C countries should thus receive foreign missionaries in exact proportion to their populations.

**Principle 4**: Thinking in more strategic terms, some agencies target those who belong to non-Christian religions or no religion at all—the 3.8 billion non-Christians of World A, B, and C countries.

**Principle 5**: Narrowing the focus even more, a small number of agencies consider those who have never heard the Gospel (the 1.1 billion World A individuals) as the immediate, direct targets of foreign missionaries. Such individuals are present in all World A, B, and C countries but on this principle should receive the proportional share shown in Principle 5 below.

**Principle 6**: Finally, many agencies see no need to employ any overall principle. They support the actual deployment of foreign missionaries as it is today, largely based on invitations from the younger churches in the field. This has produced actual deployment that appears to ignore the kind of strategic planning necessary for reaching all peoples with the Gospel.

Agencies and churches might well ponder the profound inequities in the graph below and work to change them.

David B. Barrett, a contributing editor, works with mission agencies as a research consultant. Sources and definitions as given in International Bulletin of Missionary Research 18, no. 1 (January 1994): 24.

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### Table 1. FOREIGN MISSIONARY DEPLOYMENT IN WORLDS A, B, AND C, ENUMERATED UNDER SIX ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persons in:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World A countries</td>
<td>91,252,000</td>
<td>895,780,000</td>
<td>1,846,927,000</td>
<td>1,755,675,000</td>
<td>951,167,000</td>
<td>951,167,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World B countries</td>
<td>390,064,000</td>
<td>2,162,871,000</td>
<td>2,336,900,000</td>
<td>1,948,636,000</td>
<td>176,719,000</td>
<td>176,719,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World C countries</td>
<td>1,457,213,000</td>
<td>1,557,031,000</td>
<td>1,572,759,000</td>
<td>1,155,466,000</td>
<td>15,728,000</td>
<td>15,728,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLOBAL TOTAL</td>
<td>1,939,419,000</td>
<td>4,615,662,000</td>
<td>5,759,276,000</td>
<td>3,819,857,000</td>
<td>1,143,614,000</td>
<td>1,143,614,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Percentages in: | | | | | | |
| World A countries | 9% | 19% | 32% | 46% | 83% | 1% |
| World B countries | 20% | 47% | 41% | 51% | 16% | 8% |
| World C countries | 75% | 54% | 27% | 3% | 1% | 91% |
| GLOBAL TOTAL | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

| Missionaries (sampling above %) in: | | | | | | |
| World A countries | 16,000 | 64,000 | 106,000 | 145,000 | 276,000 | 4,000 |
| World B countries | 67,000 | 156,000 | 135,000 | 164,000 | 53,000 | 27,000 |
| World C countries | 249,000 | 112,000 | 91,000 | 23,000 | 3,000 | 301,000 |
| GLOBAL TOTAL | 332,000 | 332,000 | 332,000 | 332,000 | 332,000 | 332,000 |

Footnote: Data refer to mid-1995. Global totals from Status of Global Mission, opposite, lines 21, 27, 47, 71. Full data and interpretation are given in forthcoming World Christian Encyclopedia II.

WORLD POPULATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>mid-1995</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2025</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Total population</td>
<td>1,619,886,800</td>
<td>3,697,849,000</td>
<td>5,795,276,000</td>
<td>6,228,254,000</td>
<td>8,472,446,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Urban dwellers (urbanites)</td>
<td>232,694,900</td>
<td>1,352,449,000</td>
<td>2,603,193,000</td>
<td>2,964,649,000</td>
<td>5,185,137,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Rural dwellers</td>
<td>1,387,191,900</td>
<td>2,345,400,000</td>
<td>3,156,083,000</td>
<td>3,263,605,000</td>
<td>3,287,300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Adult population (over 15 yrs)</td>
<td>1,025,938,000</td>
<td>2,311,556,000</td>
<td>3,922,067,000</td>
<td>4,291,267,000</td>
<td>6,362,807,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Literates</td>
<td>286,705,000</td>
<td>1,479,980,000</td>
<td>2,510,123,000</td>
<td>3,038,217,000</td>
<td>5,202,867,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Noliterates</td>
<td>793,233,000</td>
<td>831,176,000</td>
<td>1,411,944,000</td>
<td>1,253,050,000</td>
<td>1,159,940,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WORLDWIDE EXPANSION OF CITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>mid-1995</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2025</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37. Europe</td>
<td>558,056,300</td>
<td>1,246,173,000</td>
<td>1,939,419,000</td>
<td>2,119,342,000</td>
<td>3,051,179,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Eurasia (formerly USSR)</td>
<td>200,102,200</td>
<td>564,320,000</td>
<td>1,057,599,000</td>
<td>1,153,871,000</td>
<td>1,709,679,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Latin America</td>
<td>213,597,300</td>
<td>556,275,000</td>
<td>937,185,000</td>
<td>984,962,000</td>
<td>1,284,707,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Northern America</td>
<td>67,973,400</td>
<td>477,115,000</td>
<td>777,372,000</td>
<td>836,421,000</td>
<td>1,089,011,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Africa</td>
<td>127,159,000</td>
<td>237,308,000</td>
<td>341,096,000</td>
<td>359,387,000</td>
<td>452,714,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. Australia</td>
<td>225,660</td>
<td>169,309,000</td>
<td>242,590,000</td>
<td>232,088,000</td>
<td>236,570,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Asia</td>
<td>5,910,000</td>
<td>78,303,000</td>
<td>128,587,000</td>
<td>143,667,000</td>
<td>216,502,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MEMBERSHIP BY RELIGION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>1995</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17. New-Religionists</td>
<td>108,339,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Sikhs</td>
<td>30,573,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Jews</td>
<td>12,269,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Non-Christians (= Worlds A and B)</td>
<td>1,061,830,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>mid-1995</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2025</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Total Christians as % of world (= World C)</td>
<td>521,563,200</td>
<td>1,159,341,000</td>
<td>1,791,227,000</td>
<td>1,959,825,000</td>
<td>2,850,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Practicing Christians</td>
<td>469,259,800</td>
<td>905,526,000</td>
<td>1,291,602,000</td>
<td>1,377,573,000</td>
<td>2,280,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Pentecostals/Charismatics</td>
<td>3,700,000</td>
<td>5,825,000</td>
<td>6,403,000</td>
<td>5,604,000</td>
<td>1,842,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Great Commission Christians (active)</td>
<td>50 million</td>
<td>300 million</td>
<td>705 million</td>
<td>990 million</td>
<td>1,500 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Average Christian martyrships per year</td>
<td>35,600</td>
<td>230,000</td>
<td>197,000</td>
<td>165,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MEMBERSHIP BY ECCLESIASTICAL BLOC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bloc</th>
<th>1995</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28. Anglicans</td>
<td>3,057,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Catholics (non-Roman)</td>
<td>276,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Marginal Protestants</td>
<td>972,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Nonwhite indigenous Christians</td>
<td>7,743,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Orthodox</td>
<td>115,897,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Protestants</td>
<td>103,056,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Roman Catholics</td>
<td>2,664,410,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MEMBERSHIP BY CONTINENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continent</th>
<th>1995</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35. Africa</td>
<td>8,756,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. East Asia</td>
<td>1,765,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Europe</td>
<td>273,788,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Eurasia (formerly USSR)</td>
<td>97,022,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Latin America</td>
<td>60,025,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Northern America</td>
<td>59,569,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Oceania</td>
<td>4,235,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. South Asia</td>
<td>16,347,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1995</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43. Service agencies</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Foreign-mission sending agencies</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. Standalone global missions</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHRISTIAN WORKERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1995</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>46. Nationals (all denominations)</td>
<td>1,050,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. Aliens (foreign missionaries)</td>
<td>62,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHRISTIAN FINANCE (in US $, per year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1995</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48. Personal income of church members</td>
<td>270 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Personal income of Pentecostals/Charismatics</td>
<td>250,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Giving to Christian causes</td>
<td>8 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. Churches’ income</td>
<td>57 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52. Parish and institutional income</td>
<td>1 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53. Ecclesiastical crime</td>
<td>300 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54. Income of local foreign missions</td>
<td>200,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55. Computers in Christian use (total numbers)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1995</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56. New commercial book titles per year</td>
<td>2,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. Christian periodicals</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. New books/articles on evangelization per year</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SCRIPITURE DISTRIBUTION (all sources)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1995</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59. Bibles per year</td>
<td>5,452,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. New Testaments per year</td>
<td>7,300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61. Scriptures, including gospels, selections, per year</td>
<td>20 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHRISTIAN BROADCASTING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1995</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>62. Christian radio/TV stations</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63. Total monthly listeners/viewers</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64. over Christian stations</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65. over secular stations</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHRISTIAN URBAN MISSION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1995</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>66. Non-Christian megachurches</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67. New non-Christian urban dwellers per day</td>
<td>5,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68. Urban Christians</td>
<td>159,600,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHRISTIAN EVANGELISM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1995</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>69. Evangelism-hours per year</td>
<td>10 billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70. Disciple-opportunities per capita per year</td>
<td>10 billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WORLD EVANGELIZATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1995</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>71. Unevangelized population (= World A)</td>
<td>788,159,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>72. Unevangelized as % of world</td>
<td>48.7</td>
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<td>73. World evangelization plans since A.D. 30</td>
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January 1995
The Legacy of John Ritchie

G. Stewart McIntosh

Oh, little did my mither ken,
The day she cradled me,
The lands I was tae travel in
And the death I was tae dee.

(Scot’s ballad)

John Ritchie, like so many other Scots, was to spend the greater part of his life far away from his homeland. It was part of the bitter harvest of the nineteenth-century industrial revolution and the “clearances” of the Highlands of Scotland; it was also part of Scotland’s extraordinary contribution to the mission of God.

Ritchie was born in Kilmarnock, Scotland, on November 11, 1878, the son of a cabinetmaker. He had to leave school at the age of eleven and worked in a large Glasgow printers. One cold winter’s night in 1893, returning from the tavern, he was invited to attend a temperance meeting by a young friend. The question asked of all at the meeting, “What doth it profit a man that he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” stuck in his mind. Later the answer and the commitment to the Lord came through his hearing of the Gospel and the shaping of his missionary career by a self-taught pastor and convert of Moody’s Glasgow campaigns, D. J. Findlay, founder of Glasgow’s St. George’s Cross Tabernacle.

The influence of Findlay on this young convert was such that it would also shape the nature of the nascent Protestant Church in Peru for decades to come—Christian Endeavour movement, consistory above the pastor, women’s league, temperance, and the second coming were all part of Ritchie’s transplantation of Findlay’s teaching to Peru.

By 1901 Ritchie was organizing and conducting gospel meetings in the printing works where he was employed and had begun, like Livingstone and Mary Slessor before him, to educate himself. The following year he was accepted into the Harley House Bible Institute in the notorious slums of the East End of London, under the auspices of H. Grattan Guinness. The program there was basically Bible study in the morning and preaching and ministering to the poor and sick in the afternoons. It was there that he read in the Chamber’s Journal an article about Bolivia, which confirmed his call to serve his Master in South America.

On May 24, 1905, Ritchie had his interview with the South American and Indian Council of the Regions Beyond Missionary Union, which “unanimously accepted Mr. Ritchie for service in Peru. . . . Who will send this brother as the representative to dark Peru?” Part of the answer to that lugubrious question was taken up by the Bridge of Weir Orphan Homes in Scotland and the orphans, who had some of their scant pocket money deducted to help Ritchie on his way! They were to be one of his sources of income from his arrival in Peru in August 1906 until 1929, when he was to resign from the Evangelical Union of South America (EUSA). He married a daughter of a wealthy Peruvian merchant, a Methodist herself, and had four children. However he was to have only one true love—the church that he brought to birth with others. One of his daughters sadly commented, “My father had only one daughter—The Peruvian Evangelical Church!”

Ritchie’s legacy and contribution to the Protestant church in Peru was formidable. In an era when fundamentalism and premillennial hopes began to set at naught a message of nonconformist radicalism, Ritchie was a man out of season. Indeed on reading and studying him now, one gains the impression that he would have been very much at home with the holistic mission of today.

Ritchie and Politics

Soon after his arrival in Peru in 1906, Ritchie became immersed in politics and the struggle for religious liberty and constitutional changes in Peru. Ritchie’s political influence centered on the use of the media. With his own printing press, from 1911 onward he was able to bombard sections of the community with his thoughts about religious liberty, nor was he slow in writing in the national press.

One observes in Ritchie the difference in the contribution to the understanding of the Latin American scene and Latin American missiology from his perspective of praxis, compared with that of his friend John A. Mackay. The American Bible Society (ABS), which employed Ritchie from 1932, noted that “Mr. Ritchie feels that it is dangerous for [John A.] Mackay’s writing to connect Haya de la Torre with the evangelical meetings to project Haya’s ideas.”

Ritchie, like Mackay, was a prolific writer and spokesperson for much of the material before, during, and after the Panama Mission Conference of 1916. He wrote the “Report on Survey and Occupation,” in which he foresaw the evangelization of Peru accomplished by only forty to fifty male missionaries. He expressed the thought that if the right type of men were forthcoming and a satisfactory cooperation of all the missionary societies obtained, coupled with a capable native ministry, soon even this number of foreign missionaries might diminish. This was not to come to fruition, but his thought that foreign missionaries should devote themselves to discipling rather than mere soul-winning resulted in the formation of the Lima Bible Institute in 1935, where Ritchie was administrator and teacher.

Ritchie and the Amerindian World

In the Andean Republics of Peru, Bolivia, and Ecuador there are over 10 million Quechua speakers, descendants of tribal groups united by the Inca Empire. In his geographic introduction to the conference in 1916, Ritchie mentioned that about 50 percent of the population was Indian, only 15 percent whites, and the remainder mestizo of several degrees, Negros, and Chinese. Not unsurprisingly there was a general feeling at that time that translation work was useless, even inadvisable, for Quechua speakers. A missionary leader wrote, “There is a feeling among

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them of aversion to their native language [and] the printed page is useless among the Indians. [Therefore it is] useless to make translations of the Bible or tracts into their native tongue.”\[16\]

Ritchie took a more critical position and expressed himself in favor of at least primary teaching in native Quechua as a means to the preservation of the glorious traditions of the race. He drew a comparison with the Gaelic speakers of Scotland who were nonetheless “an integral part of the British empire.” Ritchie became a champion for the translation work of Quechua in his latter days in the ABS, and he was shrewd enough to realize the innate fear of the whites and mestizos of a take-over by the

Ritchie favored the use of the Quechua language in teaching as a means to preserve the traditions of their race.

Quechua. “The government of Peru fears that the Indian, educated as an Indian, would take control of the government, which his numerical strength would enable him to do, hence the government wishes to have the Indian assimilated into the Spanish-speaking mass.”\[17\] Ritchie always sided with the rural, Quechua-speaking church.

National Evangelical Council of Churches

As early as 1916 Ritchie advocated formation of a national Protestant church council. A provisional constitution had been drafted in 1932 by the Alliance of Christian Missions in Peru, an alliance that Ritchie had been instrumental in founding some eighteen years previously. But it was not until 1940 that the National Evangelical Council of Churches, the first in Latin America, became a reality.

In 1934 Ritchie had written to the ABS:

The steady growth and expansion of the evangelical movement, with the increase in number of different missions and missionar­ies, as well as the rise of national and independent Christian movements, several of which have no official representation in the Capital [Lima], indicate the possibility of organizing such a body not only for the representation suggested above, but also as a medium of mutual understanding, a clearing house of common interests, a means to facilitate cooperation between those bodies, which though sometimes widely separated in their origins are similar in their aim and spirit and find themselves in proximity in this country.

As, however, we look forward to the time when the Christian movement of Peru will be self-governing, and when the foreign missionary effort will have largely passed away, it has seemed wiser, instead of reorganising the Committee of Mission Coopera­tion, to lay the foundation of a National Christian Council which should be the vehicle of a catholic spirit in the Protestant Churches of Peru.\[18\]

Six years later, after a week of meetings, a constitution was hammered out and finally approved. However, the delegates “were so exhausted by the effort that they declared the conference closed and hurried off to their respective homes without formulating a plan of action or leaving any instructions for the newly elected executive. . . . When Ritchie was informed, he threw up his hands in despair and exclaimed: ‘The mountain was in travail and lo, it brought forth a mouse!’” (p. 63). Ritchie perhaps had the right to be exasperated; he had only, after all, been waiting since 1916, a mere twenty-four years! He had to learn yet again the need for patience in Latin America.

Ritchie and Social Concern

Ritchie was “forty years ahead of his time” in the field of family planning and social concern.\[19\] As far back as 1912 he had been involved in the formation of libraries, recreational centers, temperance leagues, schools, and reform legislation for the working week and prisons in Peru. “Two classes of abuse might demand our intervention . . . those directed against the evangelical movement and any occurrence of national crimes that destroy the liberty of defenseless tribes or races” (pp. 65, 66).

From his own working-class background, he could not fail to sympathize with the lot of the typical working-class mother. Most wives in Latin America were obliged to bear children at the rate of one every year as long as they were physically able to do so. He had translated and published a book on birth control, which offered a modicum of protection for those overburdened mothers. In 1924, however, Ritchie, was denounced by single lady missionaries to the London board of the mission for including “immoral” literature on his evangelical bookstore shelves. By 1928, the mission board had redefined the basic aim of the mission in a way that Ritchie, with his holistic vision, could not accept. The minute read: “Our sole objective as a society is that of winning men and women to a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and gathering of these into Christian Churches on a New Testament basis with no qualification of denominational character” (p. 64).

In April 1929 the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America offered Ritchie a post in its New York office, which he accepted. Ritchie had resigned from EUSA the previous year, due to the narrowing of the mission’s purpose. From New York he returned to Peru in 1931, with appointment by the American Bible Society as the society’s secretary for the Upper Andes. He settled into his new post in Lima on January 1, 1932, and remained there for the rest of his life.

Ritchie and National Training

Ritchie had always worked on the principle that it was the national who would be on the ground when the foreign missionary had gone. Although he had his share of concern for buildings and in trying to cope with new, untried missionaries, especially women, it was resistance from the home churches, missions, and others throughout the years toward investment in men from Peru that irked Ritchie. “As the missionary himself will never have time for pastoral duties . . . he will give his time to educating these national leaders in the affairs and ministry of the Church rather than attend to these himself. It will be more important to him that the national brethren learn to conduct the affairs of the Church rather than these be conducted perfectly” (p. 67).

Indigenous Church Principles

Although more prolific in writing articles and editorials in Spanish through his magazines, Ritchie also left a substantial written legacy in English, the largest part of which deals with indigenous church principles. The core of the indigenous church movement’s thinking was stated in the cliché of forming “self-supporting,
self-governing, and self-propagating churches.” Ritchie commented acidly: “Had he been an experienced missionary, Mr. Sidney Clark [one of the movement’s advocates] would have recognised that this plan, so neat and adequate on paper, could be carried out only in very favoured circumstances, if ever. . . . Moreover such continuous visits by a foreign-led group would be calculated to arouse hostility and beget organized opposition” (p. 68).

Ritchie felt it to be more important for nationals to learn to conduct the affairs of the church than for these to be conducted perfectly.

Ritchie, however, at least agreed with the goal of indigenous leadership: “So long as missionaries think of themselves as successors to be succeeded by other missionaries, they fail to prepare the Church for a self-sufficient life. The successful missionary needs no successor” (p. 67).

Although writing some fifty years ago, Ritchie put his finger on the main reason of tension in church/mission and ecclesiastical relationships in the world today:

Noteworthy

Announcing

The Ninth International Conference of the International Association for Mission Studies will be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, April 10-19, 1996. The theme of the conference for 150 or more participants from around the world will be “God or Mammon: Economies in Conflict.” Inquiries for further information about the conference and membership in IAMS can be sent to: Secretariat, IAMS, Normannenweg 17-21, D-20537 Hamburg, Germany.

A new piece of software for mission research, designed to meet needs identified by the IAMS, is now available from Global Mapping International, 7899 Lexington Drive, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80920. Called the 20:21 Library, it contains bibliographic, full-text, and database information, plus a new thesaurus specifically designed for missiological work. Major bibliographic collections, such as the WCC Library, Missionalia and the index of International Review of Mission will be included as the “library of mission and evangelism resources” grows.

Personalia

For the first time in its 129-year history, the London-based Salvation Army has elected an American as its top international leader. General Paul A. Rader, 60, and his wife served as missionaries in Korea for 22 years. Rader has headed Salvation Army operations in the Western United States for the past four years. A graduate of Asbury College and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Rader has a doctorate in missiology from Fuller Theological Seminary.

One of the curious phenomena of missionary work is the extent to which missionaries are often dominated by their fears. Their procedures are largely determined by these fears. They fear lest their native converts read something of which they disapprove, including publications of other Christian bodies. They fear the influence of organization, even though they work in disinterested cooperation. They fear the initiative of every national which they did not prompt or cannot control. They fear the word that is in disfavour back home, or which is not their favourite “Shibboleth.” They fear communism or Modernism, real or imagined, sometimes with a fear that robs them of the capacity for discernment and deliberate judgment. They speak and act as if every enemy had a better message than theirs. . . . Such fear is paralyzing. . . . He should have a genuine and intelligent faith which will not fear. . . . a faith that will enable him to go straight on doing the will of God without being distracted at the windmills or chasing ghosts to the alarm of the Christian Church. (P. 67).

Ritchie reacted strongly against unstructured Christianity. The view expressed by Clark that “we have too much machinery” is held tenaciously by some missionaries, especially by zealous evangelists that go out under what are called “faith missions.” . . . they feel that the ecclesiastical machine strangles the spirit of Life in them. They attribute this condition to organization. . . . The abuse of any good thing does not warrant its rejection. The permanence of the work of John Wesley as compared to that of George Whitefield is that the former organised everything and the latter nothing! . . . Founding churches where there are none is, therefore, the only permanent way to extend the Gospel over the whole earth. (P. 69)

Scott William Sunquist will become the W. Don McClure Associate Professor of World Mission and Evangelism at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in September 1995. He received his Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1990 and is currently a lecturer in Church history, Asian Church History and Ecumenics at Trinity Theological College in Singapore.

The International Bulletin sends congratulations and best wishes to two colleagues who have made distinguished contributions to mission studies: Hans-Werner Ginschen in Heidelberg, Germany, who was the first president of the IAMS, will be 80 years old on March 10, 1995, and Olav G. Myklebust in Oslo, Norway, who was the founding general secretary of the IAMS, will celebrate his 90th birthday on July 24, 1995.

Columban priest Donald M. Wodarz, an American missiologist teaching at the Columban Mission Institute near Sydney, Australia, died of a heart attack on October 1, 1994. He was 58. After missionary service in the Philippines in 1963-70, he taught at the Major Seminary in Milton, Massachusetts, until he went to Rome for further study. When the American Society of Missiology was inaugurated at St. Louis in 1973, Father Wodarz was elected vice president. He received a doctorate in missiology in 1980 from the Gregorian University in Rome, summa cum laude, and he was awarded a gold medal for his dissertation on “Church Growth: The Missiology of Donald Anderson McGavran.” In Australia he was active in the South Pacific Association of Mission Studies and was chairperson of the editorial board for the South Pacific Journal of Mission Studies.
NEW BOOKS from WILLIAM CAREY LIBRARY

SCRIPTURE AND STRATEGY:  
The Use of the Bible in Post-Modern Church and Mission  
by David Hesselgrave  
1994, paperback, 205 pages.  
David Hesselgrave uses the work of ten influential men to describe what is going on in missions. Each chapter deals with a different aspect of the use of the Bible in the church and in mission, from the study of the Bible to teaching biblical principles to church leaders on the mission field. This is the first title in the new Evangelical Missiological Society series.  
“David Hesselgrave helps us understand the discussions on hermeneutics, contextualization, discipling and training, and shows the underlying unity that lies in starting with a high view of Scripture. His work provides an agenda for missiology in the 21st century” Paul G. Hiebert, professor, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School  
“David Hesselgrave is a doer’s thinker. Based on his background of field ministry in Japan and extensive observation of the world’s mission scene, he has produced a series of foundational texts to guide practitioners. Scripture and Strategy constitutes a strong call to build the future of missions on the only effective foundation: the Word of God.” Michael Pocock, professor, Dallas Theological Seminary  
Special Postpaid Discount $7.75

WCL375-8

THE GOSPEL UNHINDERED  
Modern Missions and the Book of Acts  
Doug Priest Jr., Editor  
1994, paperback, 225 pages  
The unhindered spread of the gospel is Luke’s passion in the Acts of the Apostles. That same gospel continues to penetrate the world to this day and claims more followers than any other faith. Fifteen missionaries address questions we all ask in the proclamation of the gospel. Is the current approach to Bible translation into new languages too slow? What happens to a church undergoing persecution? Have missionaries overlooked spiritual warfare in work with animists? Is there any hope for a greater understanding between Muslims and Christians?  
WCL256-5

Special Postpaid Discount $7.95

VILLAGE MEDICAL MANUAL  
A Layman’s Guide to Health Care in Developing Countries  
Volume I - Principles and Procedures  
Volume II - Diagnosis and Treatment  
Mary Vanderkooi, M.D., D.T.M.&H.  
1994, 8 1/2 x 11 paperbacks, 736 pages combined.  
This important 2-set manual has already been widely used and is in its 4th edition. Years of practical experience and field testing by Dr. Vanderkooi and others has made the VILLAGE MEDICAL MANUAL one of the most important references available for missionary personnel working in remote areas where medical services are not available. This set is primarily intended for use by missionaries, linguists, and community development workers living in isolated locations who, by necessity, must sometimes function as physicians. The intention is to provide these people with a reference book, using a vocabulary which they can understand, to treat the problems they can treat and to intelligently refer those that need referral.  
WCL251/2

Special Postpaid Discount $7.00

WCL250/1

MEDIA IN CHURCH AND MISSION  
Communicating the Gospel  
Viggo Sogaard  
1993, paperback, 304 pages.  
Viggo Sogaard, a native of Denmark, is Associate Professor of Communications at Fuller School of World Mission, and Media Consultant for the United Bible Societies, offers a highly readable and practical synthesis of what has been learned through the new wave of thinking about communications. His Thesis is a simple one—we cannot communication effectively and create understanding unless we take the audience seriously. If this is not done, well-intended Christian communication will be avoided, misunderstood, or ignored. The 16 chapters are broken down in three sections: Foundational Principles for Use of Media in Church and Mission, Selected Media Descriptions, and Practical Guidelines for Media in Church and Mission. Dr. Bruce Larson, Dean of the International School of Christian Communications says of the book “Much of the secret of communicating the gospel effectively is knowing and understanding your audience. [The author] has written a book from a lifetime of study that will help anyone rethink what they say and how they say it.”  
WCL242-5

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To the theorists who insisted that when a church was “self-supporting” it was “indigenous,” Ritchie warned: “Indigenous should express the conception of a Christian Church which sustains its own life, rather than pays its own expenses or exists without any external aid, and whose mode and being of expression arises from its own nature and environment rather than arising out of ecclesiastical, theological and political conflicts of the Church in some other land” (p. 70). How pertinent are these words for mission in Latin America today!

**Ritchie at the End**

When Ritchie was nearing the end of his life, he remarked wryly:

> It is usually the younger missionary who knows it all. He has yet to learn his own limitations and the value of the insights which come with experience. . . . The missionary who goes forth to win souls requires a knowledge of many more things than his Bible. . . . When our Lord came to this sin-cursed world of ignorant and perverse mankind, He laid aside his glory, emptied Himself of all that marked Him as belonging to another world, divested Himself of whatever might have given Him superiority in the eyes of men. . . . The foreign missionary above all Christians requires to have this mind. . . . He should seek to know, understand, or at least sympathize with the view of the national, for as long as he thinks as he did “back-home” there will be a chasm between him and the people, and he is liable to give unnecessary offence to those he went to win.

If men are to work together building an indigenous church it is important that they cultivate a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect, lest they sow in it seeds of distrust, suspicion and division, and fail to set an example of loyalty. (P. 73)

Despite a long and painful illness, Ritchie worked, thought, and prayed on to the end. He died at 9:30 p.m. on April 2, 1952, in Lima. Perhaps the greatest legacy of John Ritchie is to be found, not now in his writing, but in the 1,600 congregations of the Iglesia Evangélica Peruana that have come to birth through him and his disciples.²⁰

### Notes

7. The EUSA was formed in 1911 from various small missions, including the RBMU.
9. The main area of struggle from 1911 to 1913 was to change article 4 of the Peruvian Constitution, which prohibited the exercise of any religion in Peru other than that of Roman Catholicism.
10. Ritchie was editor and publisher in Peru of the Christian magazines *El Cristiano* (1911–15), *El Heraldo* (1916–21), and then *Renacimiento* (1921–52). He put to good use the provision in the Peruvian postal system for free distribution of magazines.
11. John A. Mackay, missionary to Peru for the Free Church of Scotland, 1916–1924, later went to Princeton Theological Seminary.
12. Victor Raul Haya de la Torre was the founder and political leader of Peru’s APRA party and a close friend of Mackay. Though Haya de la Torre was not a confessed Protestant himself, many of the early evangelicals sided with him.
13. It is worth noting that there were more nationals working as full-time missionary co-laborers than there were expatriates in 1916, which belies the notion that foreign missionaries were the primary source of church planting in Peru.

### Selected Bibliography

**Material Written in English by Ritchie**


**Material Written About Ritchie**

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. Our innovative faculty instruct from experience, not just theory. Students are trained to creatively engage all cultures with the gospel, including their own. 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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Book Reviews


J. F. Moran, head of the Department of Japanese Studies at the University of Stirling, Scotland, has written the first-ever study in English of Alessandro Valignano, father visitor of the Society of Jesus in the East. Valignano planned and supervised the Jesuit Mission in Japan, with a brief interval, from 1573 until his death in 1606; he was also responsible for the policy of Jesuit mission in China so brilliantly developed by Matteo Ricci. It is the Japanese half of this extraordinary man’s career with which the author deals in this well-constructed and readable study.

Valignano, an Italian aristocrat, converted from a far-from-holy life to a state of faith that led him to enter the Society of Jesus in 1566. Only seven years later, the minimum legal time permitted by the constitution of the society, he became part of the elite of the society, a professed priest of the fourth vow. Even more extraordinary, he was, a few months later, appointed Visitor to the East. This meant that he had full authority over all the Jesuits from Goa to Japan; given the three years needed to write to Rome and receive a reply, clearly he was entrusted with enormous authority.

As Moran so succinctly sums up his achievement, “It was the Father Visitor, more than anyone else, who taught the missionaries that becoming a follower of Christ does not mean becoming a European or ceasing to be Japanese.” This was his great insight, and this study shows how he attempted consistently, though not always successfully, to carry it out. How Valignano, supported by a group of other Italian Jesuits, reached this spiritual and intellectual freedom from the Eurocentrism that dogged Catholic missions at the time and from which Catholic and Protestant missions have only begun to escape in the second half of the twentieth century, Moran does not attempt to explain; after all, he is a historian of Japan. It is good, however, that he has produced this well-crafted and thoroughly researched book, which makes knowledge of that initiative available to the world of English-language mission studies, which has hitherto hardly been aware of it.

—Andrew C. Ross

Las Casas: In Search of the Poor of Jesus Christ.


This work was a monumental task for Gustavo Gutiérrez, a principal figure in contemporary Latin American theology. He spent much of the 1972-92 period involved in theological reflection on the writings and the work of Bartolomé de Las Casas. The result is a salient examination of a major missionary writer, one of the first of the modern period.

In large part Gutiérrez was able to carry out his effort because of historical advances made by scholars such as Lewis Hanke, Helen Rand Parish, and Isacio Pérez Fernández. Nonetheless Gutiérrez had to painfully trace the evolution of Las Casas’s thought. Las Casas emerges as an original missiologist, not a derivative thinker. His accomplishments include both framing questions about mission work and its relations to justice issues and establishing a theological basis for an encounter with people of distinct cultures. In calling attention to unjust social and economic structures, Las Casas acted as a pivotal figure. Missionaries had tended to take these structures for granted, devoting themselves to individualistic moral dilemmas.

As a theological starting point, Las Casas devoted great energy to describing the social and political realities of the New World. He followed this with scriptural reflection on the situation. From both steps he derived a pastoral policy. He thus anticipated a Latin American theology of description, reflection, and praxis.

The magnitude of the book and the issues that Las Casas and Gutiérrez take up make difficult reading. But as Justo González once remarked about Las Casas and other early Dominican missionaries: “These ‘voices of compassion’ spoke as they did because they heard a different Voice.” Gutiérrez shows how others may hear as Las Casas heard.

—Edward L. Cleary, O.P.


Without sounding negativist, the authors show how a parochial understanding of the scope of the Great Commission has led, in the past, to impoverished and unimaginative presentations of the Gospel. To correct this situation, the authors explore the Great Commission, by way of painstaking exegesis, in each of the four Gospels.

Even though presented differently, each of the Gospels, the authors assert, is about the Great Commission on every page. Thus to preach the Gospel and to obey the Great Commission biblically will involve diligent redactional study and painstaking exegesis.

The authors insist that such a disciplined approach is crucial for full obedience to the Great Commission and the proper preaching of the Gospel. According to the study, the Gospel cannot be said to have been preached unless its presentation goes beyond mere proclamation to include careful teaching that is both theological and ethical, as well as a practical demonstration of the life and message of Jesus Christ.
the kingdom in the community of faith as bearers of the evangel.

This is a very timely book. Carefully written, it requires concentrated study to get the full wealth of insight it has to offer. It is not a book for those who are in a hurry to “spread” the Gospel or “Gospelize” the nations. It is an unusual study: An attempt at a systematic study of the Great Commission from the four Gospels to understand its full meaning and so preach its full message. In these days such a serious-minded work comes as a vital force and challenge.

—Cyril C. Okorocha


One of the most significant results of the Second Parliament of the World’s Religions held in Chicago August 28–September 4, 1993, was the “Declaration Toward a Global Ethic” originally drafted by Hans Küng, then revised, and finally endorsed by the whole parliament. The revised version of the declaration forms the core of this book, and it represents a milestone in interreligious dialogue and cooperation. The book, however, contains much more than the declaration. Küng’s account of his work and the somewhat cumbersome process followed in revising and finalizing it, together with Kuschel’s succinct ideal for intra- and interfaith discussions.

The declaration is not a political, philosophical, or religious proclamation, nor is it a statement on human rights. It is simply a concise affirmation of a common core of religious beliefs that apply to the current global crisis. It is presented, however, as an initial, not a final, statement on a global ethic.

There are, of course, underlying assumptions: the belief in the intrinsic unity of the human family; that a different (i.e., better) global order must arise out of a different (and better) global ethic; that a different global order will not come simply from “laws, prescriptions, and conventions alone” (p. 20); and that “an ethic already exists within religious teachings which can counter the global distress” (p.

Fifteen Outstanding Books of 1994 for Mission Studies

The editors of the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH have selected the following books for special recognition of their contribution to mission studies in 1994. We have limited our selection to books in English, since it would be impossible to consider fairly the books in many other languages that are not readily available to us. We commend the authors, editors, and publishers represented here for their contribution to the advancement of scholarship in studies of Christian mission and world Christianity.


Shank, David A., and abridged by Jocelyn Murray. Prophet Harris, The “Black Elijah” of West Africa. Leiden: Brill. $120.


THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS

Research Advancement Grants for Projects in Mission Studies and World Christianity

The Religion Program of The Pew Charitable Trusts invites proposals for large-scale projects that will enhance team research and publication in studies of Christian Mission and non-Western Christianity. Grants for two- to three-year collaborative projects with costs ranging from $50,000—$100,000 (U.S.) per year will be made on a competitive basis for work that will significantly advance understanding of cross-cultural mission or the development of Christianity in the non-Western world. Projects should be directed by one or more established scholars, have access to appropriate research facilities, involve scholars from non-Western cultures and contribute to the intellectual and cross-cultural vitality of the world Christian movement. Projects that are international and interdisciplinary and that elicit significant contributions from the Two-Thirds World are particularly welcome. Two or three grants will be awarded at the end of 1995, subject to the quality of proposals received and the availability of funds.

Send letters of inquiry (three pages maximum) outlining the main purpose, components and cost of the intended project by May 15, 1995 to:

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taking" (p. 64). Unresolved land disputes between Native Americans and the descendants of European settlers suggest that settlement was more complex and divisive than Roberts describes it.

Another difficulty is reconciling Roberts's insistence that "the Christian ethic is the world's only hope of averting environmental disaster" (p. 18, emphasis added) with his statement that "Christianity is not the only religion to recognize human stewardship of the created world . . . . Islam, Buddhism and, of course, the Jewish faith make similar affirmations" (p. 25).

These reservations aside, Patching God's Garment is a significant contribution to the essential task of revisioning the relationship of Christians to the environment.

—Brooks A. Anderson

Brooks A. Anderson holds an M.S. degree in rural sociology from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. He has served as a volunteer agricultural worker on farms in southern and central India and at the Presbyterian Church's High Desert Research Farm in Abiquiu, New Mexico.

Mission in African Christianity: Critical Essays in Missiology.


This volume is the fourth in the African Christianity Series, which is sponsored by the Eastern Africa Ecumenical Theological Symposium. Meeting annually since 1989, the symposium selects a theological theme and addresses it from the African worldview and African philosophical presuppositions.

Eight pieces are presented in this work. The authors are Africans, based in Kenya and Tanzania—three women (Getui, Kinoti, Nasimiyu-Wasike) and five men (Kiggora, Magesa, Mugambi, Mwikamba, Waruta).

A nine-page introduction presents an overview of mission as well as a synopsis of each chapter. This well-written piece categorizes the individual contributions into two sections: "inculturational and innovational mission" and "liberative and prophetic mission." The volume concludes with several pages of bibliography and a useful index.

In part 1 Mwikamba and Getui deal with environmental concerns as aspects of the church's mission. Kiggora centers his reflection on the African search for wholeness or totality of existence. Mugambi explores how the church in Africa can effectively minister to rapidly changing African societies. Kinoti's presentation studies the impact of the New Age movement on Kenyan youth.

Part 2 includes the three best essays of the volume. Waruta examines missionary education and its effects on Africans. Magesa urges the church to assume its prophetic and liberative role and help prevent the marginalization of Africa in the "new world order." Nasimiyu-Wasike is concerned with the church's prophetic mission in the context of the consciousness of African women.

Several items surprised and disappointed this reviewer. Texts could have used the careful hand of an alert editor. Mostly Western (few African) sources are quoted as documentation. The essays are only tangentially focused on mission; it is a misnomer to subtitle these pieces "critical essays in missiology."

Credit must be given to the Eastern Africa Ecumenical Theological Symposium for its efforts in providing relevant inculturated theological literature from the African perspective. Hopefully, fu-
Creative missiologists include: Claude-Marie Barbour, Stephen Bevans, SVD, Eleanor Dodge, LoB, Archimedes Fornasari, MCCJ, Anthony Gittins, CSSp, John Kaserow, MM, Jamie Phelps, OP, Ana Maria Pineda, RSM, Robert Schreiter, CPPS. Contact:

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Mission in Quellentexten:


Our understanding of the German role in Protestant missions is greatly enhanced by this collection of documents. The editor, a young Tübingen-educated church historian, has shown extraordinary diligence in gathering materials from published and unpublished sources in various Western languages—including sermons, speeches, letters, diaries, memoirs, mission society reports, church ordinances, books, pamphlets, and magazine articles—to present a comprehensive picture of German mission theory and action from the Reformation to the early twentieth century.

The material is arranged by century, and thematic topics are dealt with in the period groupings. Each topic contains one or more documents (naturally, space requires that most of these be excerpts) followed by a note identifying the source and secondary materials. Each section concludes with a more general bibliography, and a comprehensive bibliography on the history of missions (including Catholic and Russian Orthodox works) is included at the end of the volume. For the scholar of missions, the bibliographic notes alone make the book worthwhile.

In this reviewer’s opinion the most valuable sections are the treatment of early mission awareness in Germany, missionary efforts among Jews, the differences among the mission societies (although the curious Jerusalem bishopric of Samuel Gobat is omitted), and the views of mission theologians. Raupp obviously could not include every important figure, organization, and endeavor, but the crucial debate between the German and British-American mission thinkers about the “Volkskirche” and the “kingdom of God” does deserve more attention. Also, some may object to the 1910 cutoff date, but he argues this was the point where German missions entered the larger ecumenical stream as full participants. The author is worthy of commendation for providing a good introduction to the often-overlooked German contribution to the world mission endeavor.

—Richard V. Pierard

Richard V. Pierard is Professor of History at Indiana State University and coauthor of Two Kingdoms: The Church and Culture Through the Ages (Moody Press, 1993). He served at the Free Theological Academy and as a Fulbright professor in Germany and is engaged in studies of German imperialism and Protestant missions.


This book on the needed transformation of mission is based on the author’s conviction that “for all Christians Eucharist is critical,” provoking everywhere “a crisis of sorts” (p. 15). This conviction is backed up by the ecumenical Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry document, which states that “the Eucharist transforms Christians into the image of Christ.” The Eucharist has been doing this in different ages using the same material (bread and wine) and the same rite. It is the way in which Jesus made “the distant God accessible in ordinary circumstances” (p. 32), transforming society “from within” (p. 34) (author’s emphases).

The “mission” question is whether this making God accessible is globally possible by “playing and praying” with bread and wine (p. 96), given the fact that bread and wine are not indigenous to many cultures. What about a culture where...
people, such as the Trobriands in Melanesia, eat turning their backs to each other so as not to be seen eating, and where socialization is done in a different way? These are questions only an anthropological theologian like Gittins is able and qualified to ask.

He does this referring to Eucharistic developments in medieval Europe and to his own experiences among the Mende in Africa and with Genesis House, a program for the homeless in Chicago. Gittins does not give any unequivocal answer to the questions raised. The answers would be many, and they would be "polycentric." One thing, however, is made very clear in this engaging book: humanity's hunger for God has to be stilled, and no Eucharistic famine caused by ecclesiastical intrinsignence should be tolerated.

—J. G. Donders, M.Afr.


This is a work of disputation. In the tradition of John of Damascus, G. C. Pfander, and Samuel Zwemer, it defends Christian affirmations about the Holy Trinity and the saving work of Christ against Islamic demands for submission to God as known through Muhammad. Geisler, dean of Southern Evangelical Seminary, makes use of Aquinas and Augustine on causation and being to attack Islamic notions of the unity and inscrutability of God—notions that he believes resemble those of Plotinus. The coauthor seems to bring a convert's sternness toward his former religion; his pseudonym Abdul Saleeb may be translated "Servant of the Cross."

Best served by this work will be the Christian who needs theological reasons to persevere in presenting to Muslims the grounds of his or her hope. Not so well served will be the Christian seeking an initial appreciation of Islam. The biography of the prophet Muhammad is skeptical, description of the Islamic community scant, and sympathetic account of Muslim prayer nil.

Despite distracting minor errors—the poet Omar Khayyam was not Arab but Persian (p. 145)—the summaries of mainstream Sunni theology and of Christian Trinitarian faith are cogent. Yet I doubt whether any Muslim enquirer who has not already rejected his heritage will find help here. Islamic teaching is interrogated with Christian questions—about God, creation, sin, and salvation—and found wanting. Even part 1, aiming to set forth fairly what a composite Islamic orthodoxy affirms about God, humanity, the Qur'an, and salvation, cannot resist anticipating the task of part 2 by pointing out, in a superior tone, contradictions and limitations. Unfortunately, compelling syllogisms rank among the least of the agents by which Christian faith arises.

—Richard J. Jones

J. G. Donders, M.Afr., is Chair of Mission and Cross-cultural Studies at the Washington Theological Union, Washington, D.C. During 1969–84 he was a professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at the State University of Nairobi, Kenya.

This collection of seventeen previously unpublished essays, sermons, and addresses by Lesslie Newbigin, one of the premier missiologists of the twentieth century, puts forth his developing view of the agenda for Christian mission from 1960 to 1992. Considered "the quintessence of Newbigin's thought" by editor Eleanor Jackson, these papers record the dynamics of Newbigin's ideas about mission as he confronted new issues in the church and society.

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A Church for All Peoples: Missionary Issues in a World Church.


Symposia occasionally produce nourishing reading. This one fails to satisfy the missiological appetite, notwithstanding the insights and the fresh perspectives brought by authors not primarily associated with missiology.

The four chapters, each followed by a "response" that is too often a restatement, strongly endorse the U.S. Bishops’ 1988 pastoral letter, "To the Ends of the Earth," and the 1990 papal encyclical Redemptoris Missio. The authors’ credentials are impeccable—theologians Dulles and DiNoia, and Bishops Stafford and George—and the endpieces by the editor and by Joan Gormley are competent. But the mixture remains unsatisfactory in several respects.

Dulles, lucid if jaundiced, addresses the "proliferation of new opinions about the kingdom of God" (p. 13), overlooking the subtleties of Richard McBrien and some liberation theologians. Stafford’s encomium to Pope John Paul II, an apologetic argument for Roman Catholic evangelization, includes an extraordinary list of imperatives glossed as "pastoral implications." In response, DiNoia endorses the value of cultural integrity without clarifying how extra ecclesiam nullus salus might be understood in the context of pre-Christian or non-Christian peoples.

In the chapter entitled "The Church and Cultures," Bishop George bravely tries to engage the ecclesiological issues from the perspective of anthropological principles, though Bishop Stafford’s response unfortunately runs off at a tangent. DiNoia concludes the body of the text with a return to his theme of the specificity of cultures and the integrity of differences.

Two omissions mar this book: there is virtually no acknowledgment that the church has anything to learn from anyone, much less that there are social and ecclesial sins in need of repentance; and there is a retrograde tendency to identify mission geographically, as in "the missions." This latter was one of the shortcomings of the pastoral letter that this volume celebrates. Not surprisingly, it reiterates some issues that readers less than in total accord with the U.S. Bishops or with Pope John Paul II will find unhelpful.


English by birth, and currently resident in the United States, Anthony Gittins has taught theological anthropology at Chicago’s Catholic Theological Union for the past ten years. Previously he taught at the Missionary Institute in London, and for several years in Sierra Leone, West Africa.
Rethinking Protestantism in Latin America.


The twelve contributors to this important study, representing a variety of social science disciplines, address the way in which Latin American evangelicals are responding to the social crisis and how these responses affect the societies around them. They address their questions primarily to laymen and laywomen and not to the leadership, whose perceptions may be skewed. The answers strongly suggest that we need to rethink the stereotypes regarding Latin American Protestantism.

This book strongly bolsters the growing awareness among students of religion that the Protestant faith—in particular, Pentecostalism—is making available to the poor of Latin America a source of empowerment and a context of growth in spiritual values and social strength. Women, and their men, find a degree of liberation that has not been achieved by Western feminism, in the context of their homes, which prepares them to face the rigors of public life. Women have a better opportunity to achieve effective leadership in Pentecostal churches than in mainline denominations. The evidence suggests that Pentecostal churches draw their members from a lower strata of society than even the Catholic base communities.

While they are more politically conservative, Pentecostals are not as hampered by religious structures as are progressive Catholics. Thus Pentecostals can maintain their religious identity even while becoming radical. Pentecostal politicians in Brazil tend to vote more consistently in favor of labor issues than their Catholic and Protestant peers. In sum, Pentecostal conservatism may be as much a survival strategy in a hostile environment as it is ideological and theological. Also for survival reasons, religious affiliation remains fluid among grassroots Latin Americans. Poor urban dwellers in Bolivia and Mayan women in Guatemala selectively adopt different beliefs and practices—Christian and nativistic—in surprising ways.


Guillermo Cook is the author of The Expectation of the Poor: Latin American Base Ecclesial Communities in Protestant Perspective and is the editor of New Face of the Church in Latin America: Between Tradition and Change, both by Orbis Books. He is coordinator of BRIDGES (Base Research on Indigenous Development, Gender, and Evangelical Spirituality), San José, Costa Rica.

The contents appearing in this publication are indexed by Periodica Islamica

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Israel and Yeshua: A Festschrift.


The Caspari Center for Biblical and Jewish Studies in Jerusalem is named for Carl Paul Caspari, a brilliant scholar of the nineteenth century of German-Jewish ancestry. Caspari, professor of Old Testament at the University of Oslo, became the first chairman of the Norwegian Church Ministry to Israel, which founded the Caspari Center in 1982. Israel and Yeshua celebrates the tenth anniversary of the center.

This collection of short essays ought to be read by everyone who works in the field of Jewish mission or who has an interest in the connection between Jesus and the Jewish people and the Jewish response to him.

Torleif Elgvin, the editor and one of the international scholars responsible for the current publishing of the Dead Sea Scrolls, directed the Caspari Center from 1986 to 1993. Half of the essays are authored by Gentiles, including one Palestinian Christian. All have either ministered or studied in Israel. The eight Jewish contributors are all citizens of the State of Israel; six of them are Christians.

Ole Christian M. Kvarme, founding director of the Caspari Center, provides an excellent introductory essay, “Evangelism and Affirmation.” It is an abridgment of a paper he presented in 1989 at the crucial Willowbank Consultation on the Christian Gospel and the Jewish People. Introducing the theme “Israel and Yeshua,” he maintains that evangelism and Jewish identity are not in contradiction.

In this volume the Caspari Center celebrates its first ten years by focusing on expressions of Jewish-Christian experience and exploring issues of significance to Christian evangelization of the Jewish people. The scope of the essays includes studies from past and present ministries among the Jews. With the able help of friends and colleagues, Elgvin has produced a valuable contribution to the field of Jewish mission.

—Tuvya Zaretsky

Tuvya Zaretsky is Director of the Jews for Jesus, Southern California District.

Cross-Cultural Conflict: Building Relationships for Effective Ministry.


This much-needed and very readable book is a must for missionaries, tentmakers, and students living overseas or cross-culturally. It will also benefit pastors, guest speakers, and business people in our increasingly multicultural country and world.

Elmer, from the faculty of Wheaton College, brings rich personal experience and a Ph.D. in cross-cultural communication to his writing. Illustrations are clear, understandable, and practical. He provides a good bibliography for those interested in further study.
The reader gains an understanding of shame-based cultures, the issue of “losing face,” socio-centric cultures versus egocentric types, the capacity to tolerate ambiguities in many non-Western cultures, and the relational (vs. work-oriented) context of many societies.

Western cultures resolve conflict by win-lose strategies, avoidance, giving in, compromise, or so-called carefronting. Most other cultures operate through mediators, group consensus, humility, storytelling (proverbs), inaction, silence, bribes, diversion, and indefinite third parties. Westerners’ interpretations of integrity must keep in mind that in other cultures “when one’s remarks are made without deliberate attempt to cheat, defraud, or physically harm, they are essentially outside of the honesty/dishonesty spectrum” (p. 124).

The author illustrates many of his points from Scripture stories and maintains biblical principles without avoiding sticky issues. He calls power and winning the twin diseases and suggests that we learn to interpret, probe, support, and understand instead. He advises us to remember that other cultures do not separate a person from his or her ideas; learn to read between the lines and be sensitive to innuendo; maintain a gracious, calm, courteous, patient, and listening attitude; and develop close ties with at least one national friend who can help interpret and build bridges.

Elmer states, “The God who authored diversity loves it, embraces those who display it, and honors those who celebrate it” (p. 182). How slow we are to learn.

—Esther Schubert

Esther Schubert, M.D., is an adult MK (China, Japan, the Philippines, and Taiwan) and has been a short-term missionary (Haiti and Taiwan). She is a psychiatric consultant for mission agencies, has published a book on depression and burnout in missionaries, does crisis intervention, and has published several articles and chapters on the prefield evaluation of missionary candidates. She and her husband live in New Castle, Indiana.

Kingdom Partnerships for Synergy in Mission.


In Kingdom Partnerships for Synergy in Mission, Taylor has provided an edited collection of the papers presented at the 1992 Missions Commission conference of the World Evangelical Fellowship in Manila, convened to examine organizational partnership. The conference was attended by ninety five representatives from thirty five nations (p. 1), though only three women were present (p. vii). The collection of essays is divided into four sections. In the first, some of the significant structural foundations of partnership are explored. In the second, critical issues currently affecting partnership (paternalism, cultural differences, expectations, accountability, etc.) are presented. In the third section the internationalization of mission agencies is explored, and the fourth presents selected models of partnership for consideration.

Overall, I felt that throughout Kingdom Partnerships the obvious is stated and restated, hashed and rehashed, without either the substance or the details necessary to move the discussion forward. Perhaps this is simply a reflection of the actual status of partnerships today in evangelical missions, but I read the book anticipating real meat and constantly found myself disappointed. Yes, cultural differences pose significant problems and church/mission relationships have been sources of struggle, and the legacy of colonialism is still all too intimately intertwined in organizational realities. There is no doubt that these need to be discussed and worked through, but perhaps inviting presenters to focus on a single issue (e.g., trust, accountability) would have prevented the repetitive nature of the work. Even the case studies left me frus-
trated, as (except for Keyes) they were presented without the details necessary for substantive scrutiny.

Perhaps the fact that I was not present at the conference makes it impossible to sense the spirit so ably described by Taylor. However, the book is intended to capture those who were not there to participate in the discussion; in the end, I found myself uncatapulted.

—A. Scott Moreau

A. Scott Moreau is an Assistant Professor of Missions/Intercultural Studies at Wheaton Graduate School. He served as a missionary educator in Africa (Swaziland and Kenya) for ten years.

Met Moslems in Gesprek over het Evangelie.


True to its title, “In Conversation with Muslims Regarding the Gospel,” this book is written to foster in-depth dialogue between Muslims and Christians. Verkuyl is uniquely equipped for this task. As pastor and professor for many years in Indonesia and later as professor of missiology at the Free University in Amsterdam, he was directly involved at many levels in dialogue with Muslims.

Two main burdens impelled Verkuyl to write this book. The first is the concern to clear away the many prejudices and misunderstandings that surround the Muslim-Christian encounter. The second in his passionate concern that the desire for cordial relations not suppress the “truth question.” No one is served, he warns, by “rash antithetical judgements or by rash sympathetic judgements” (p. 143). He devotes successive chapters to differences surrounding sacred scriptures, revelation, God, human beings, Christ, the Trinity, final judgment, and the church/ummah.

The central concern in dialogue, according to Verkuyl, is to seek an answer to the “truth question.” This quest involves a patient and respectful grappling with the core of the biblical message and of the message of Islam (p. 142). The key difference is that between a relationship of partnership and friendship of human beings with a gracious God, as embodied in Jesus Christ, and a relationship of obedience to an exalted and absolutely sovereign law-giver.

Although Verkuyl explores basic differences between the two religions and ways of life, for him difference does not mean distance. He encourages deep personal friendships. Differences need to be discussed lovingly, honestly, and patiently in ever deepening contact (p. 105). Yet, for Verkuyl dialogue involves more than a polite exchange of ideas. Precisely because it involves the question of truth, dialogue is not a substitute for witness. True dialogue entails witness. For Christians this means witness to the central truth of Jesus Christ.

While he argues tirelessly for the intrinsic role of witness in dialogue, Verkuyl fights equally strongly for the rights of Muslims in Western nations. He pleads for state funds for the building of mosques (something already available in the Netherlands) and even for aid for the training of imams. The vigorous Christian witness, for which Verkuyl calls, creates room for mutual witness (p. 138).

This unique book deserves to be translated into English.

—George Vander Veld

George Vander Veld is Professor of Systematic Theology at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto and President of the North American Academy of Ecumenists.
Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Transformation.


This is an invaluable collection of multidisciplinary essays and diverse case studies on the social and individual processes of Christian conversion. Hefner is associate professor of anthropology at Boston University; early versions of some of the chapters were presented at the conference Conversion to World Religions, held at Boston University in 1988. He has deftly edited the rewritten papers and added a useful theoretical introductory chapter on the rationality of conversion that questions Robin Horton’s series of essays in Africa in the 1970s.

Howard Kee’s perceptive chapter “From Jesus Movement to Institutional Church” summarizes his previous observations in his Understanding the New Testament and leads into the case studies.

Apart from Kee and Terence Ranger, Oxford historian of Africa and African Christianity, most of the contributors are anthropologists teaching in North American universities. Surprisingly, only one is non-Western. A chapter from a mission theologian would also have provided a stimulating missing dimension.

The case studies, using the insights of the disciplines of history, psychology, anthropology, politics, economics, and ethics, cover southern Africa (Ranger), Java (Hefner), Mexico (Merrill), Amazonia (Pollock), Papua New Guinea (Barker), Australia (Yengoyan), Thailand (Keyes), and China (Jordan). An afterword by Peter Wood attempts to draw together the various themes, and each chapter has excellent bibliographic references.

The chapter that sparkled for me was by Ranger. He challenges Ikenga-Meruh’s thesis concerning the essential contrast between Christianity and African religion that the former was macrocosmic in its focus and the latter microcosmic. Ranger shows that both of them were macrocosmic and microcosmic.

This fine, coherent symposium, though lacking a theological critique in the case studies, should be read alongside Lewis Rambo’s Understanding Religious Conversion (Yale, 1993).

—Graham Kings

Bridging the Gap: Evangelism, Development, and Shalom.


Books that seek to break down the dichotomy between evangelism and social concern are always welcome. The division between word and deed has profoundly weakened the church’s witness to the reign of God in Christ. Bruce Bradshaw, director of holistic development research for MARC, brings to this book his experience as a teacher and development practitioner in East Africa. Bradshaw believes that underlying the tension between evangelism and development is the spiritual/physical split in the modern worldview. He seeks to bridge

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Graham Kings, a contributing editor, is the Henry Martyn Lecturer in Missiology in the Cambridge Theological Federation, England, and Director of the Henry Martyn Hall. From 1985 to 1991 he was vice-principal of St. Andrew’s Institute, Kabare, Kenya.

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this separation with a holistic worldview from Scripture that provides a larger context in which to resolve the conflict between evangelism and development. More specifically, Bradshaw advances the idea of shalom—God’s redeeming and healing work of the whole creation—as a resolution to the separation. He works out this insight concretely in the areas of management, education, environmental issues, economics, healing, and the powers. However, this tremendously fruitful insight—redemption restores the whole creation—is partially obscured by several factors. Bradshaw’s formulations often continue to be dependent on the very dualism from which he is seeking to break free. Furthermore, there is inadequate analysis and articulation at crucial points in his argument. For example, there is little discussion of a biblical understanding of shalom, even though this is the central category that bridges the gap between evangelism and development.

For this reviewer the best part of the book is the numerous illustrations taken from his own experience in Africa of the problems encountered when one is concerned for holistic mission. As we continue to struggle with these issues, it is hoped that Bradshaw’s call to hold fast to the biblical insight that redemption is restorative in nature and comprehensive in scope will be the context for such reflective action.

Michael Goheen

Towards a Trinitarian Theology of Religions: A Study of Paul Tillich’s Thought.


Pan-Chiu Lai, lecturer at Middlesex University and minister of the Rhenish Church, London, makes a valuable contribution to Tillich studies and to the theory of interreligious dialogue. Criticizing Christocentric theologies of religion as exclusivistic and theocentric philosophies of religion as relativistic, Lai proposes that Tillich’s theology, viewed developmentally and in its Trinitarian fullness, offers the foundation for a more adequate alternative. Emphasizing the inadequacies of Tillich’s Christocentric Logos Christology, method of correlation, and theology of the cross as developed in the first two volumes of Systematic Theology, he holds that the pneumatocentric approach of volume 3, if consistently followed, suggests a Trinitarian theology of religions that allows genuine interreligious dialogue to take place, involving substantive contributions by all participants, the recognition of particular claims of each participant, and serious mutual criticism between participants. The Trinity, characterized by Lai as the “hidden foundation of Tillich’s theological system as a whole” (p. 148), would be explicated in such a way that “Christ is the centre of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity in an epistemological sense, whereas the Spirit is in an ontological sense the starting point or centre of the Trinitarian principle” (p. 153).

This book leads the reader into further reflection. Two questions might be mentioned here. First, even if one recognizes the chronological development in Tillich’s thought, might Logos and Spirit Christologies be more organically related than Lai’s epistemological-ontological distinction indicates? For Tillich, the knower participates in the known; the epistemo-
logical situation is an ontological reality. Second, by following Lai's proposal, might not a reading of Tillich's theology that is even more intimately grounded in the classical Trinitarian tradition emerge? Specifically, Tillich's organic model of the Trinity seems both to reflect the classic Trinitarian understanding of the mutual interpenetration and common activity of the three divine personae and to meet Lai's concern to protect against subordination of the Spirit. This is a book that probes deeply and raises intriguing questions.

—Ronald B. MacLennan

Ronald B. MacLennan is Assistant Professor of Religion and Chair of the Religion-Philosophy Department at Bethany College, Lindsberg, Kansas. His doctoral dissertation at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago was "The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Theology of Paul Tillich."


This compendium of 1,005 selected works on Chinese religion published between 1945 and 1990 is far more than a list of titles and authors. Professor Yu, author of Guide to Chinese Religion (G. K. Hall, 1985), has sifted through mountains of literature, both in China and the West, and has presented in this volume a critical analysis of each selected work, overall a stupendous task. Although brief, these critiques provide an invaluable aid to writers and researchers.

The book is divided into three parts: a narrative overview by Yu of research on religion in postwar China; works on Chinese religion by postwar Chinese scholars; and works on religion in postwar China by Western scholars.

Parts 2 and 3 consist of 1,005 brief, analytic reviews of books and articles organized by categories, including works on theory of religion, religious policy, Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism, Islam and ethnic religions, Christianity, superstitions, sects, myths and legends, crypto-religion, ritual, syncretic religion, religion and state, religion and science/arts/literature, religious texts, folk religion, and religious rebellions.

This is an essential reference work for all students of religion in contemporary China.

—Donald MacInnis


Dissertation Notices

Guider, Margaret E.
“The Church of Liberation and the Problem of Prostitution: A Brazilian Case Study.”

Haidostian, Paul Ara.
“Armenian Evangelical Youth and Political Identity: The Socio-Political Aloofness of the Armenian Evangelical Church in the Near East in View of Hovhannes Aharonian’s Agenda for an Involved Ecclesiology and Erik H. Erikson’s Understanding of the Continuity between Individual and Community.”

Parks, Stuart Kent.
Ph.D. Fort Worth, Texas: Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1993.

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“Boarding the Self: Individual and Family Consequences of Mission Boarding School Experience.”

Tink, Fletcher Leroy
“From Order to Harmony: Toward a New Hermeneutic for Urban Mission.”

Yim, Sung Bihn.
“The Relevance of H.R. Niebuhr’s ‘Ethics of Response’ for the Korean Church: A Critical Inquiry into Niebuhr’s Methodology.”
Evangelizing the Culture of Modernity.


French Canadian Jesuit Hervé Carrier, professor of sociology of culture and religion at the Gregorian University and secretary of the Pontifical Council for Culture in Rome, has written an important book on a theme that has captured the attention of many missiologists in recent years. Carrier argues that we must be about the business of evangelizing cultures, not just individuals, and that modernity is itself a culture that is spreading its influence across the globe. To evangelize the culture of modernity, he says, "calls for a profound revision of traditional methods of evangelization" (p. 1). Carrier’s definition of evangelism is comprehensive and holistic, noting that "evangelization remains unfinished if it does not achieve justice and transform cultures" (p. 3).

Following an excellent introduction that lays the groundwork for the book, chapters 1 and 2 discuss the Roman Catholic Church’s perception of modernity and describe in detail the culture of modernity. Carrier’s analysis of modernity is not as comprehensive or as profound as that of some other authors, but it nevertheless gives the reader a very useful overview and understanding of this modern culture, which he convincingly argues is in need of evangelizing.

We come next to the heart of the book, a chapter on inculturation, which he calls a modern approach to evangelization. This is perhaps one of the best succinct treatments of this concept and method that I have encountered. He ends the chapter with a brief, but less satisfactory, illustration of inculturation in Africa. If modernity is the contemporary culture to be evangelized, then inculturation is clearly the method to follow.

The remaining chapters of the book are not as strong. He revisits George Orwell’s 1984, argues that there is an emerging convergence between science and religion, discusses the importance of "cultural rights" as an expression of human rights, and concludes with articulating the challenge of evangelizing modern agnostic culture.

Carrier writes as a Roman Catholic and scarcely acknowledges the contributions other Christians are making to this important discussion, although occasionally he tips his hat to ecumenical cooperation. Given this slight drawback, it is nevertheless refreshing to see missiologists address the bold challenge of evangelizing modernity. Carrier has done it well, and I believe this book will become a helpful mile marker in our pilgrimage to make Christ known in intelligible ways to persons influenced by the culture of modernity.

—Darrell L. Whiteman

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Statement required by the act of August 12, 1970, section 3665. Title 39, United States Code, relating to ownership, management, and circulation of INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH.

Published 4 times per year at 490 Prospect Street, New Haven, Connecticut 06511.

Publisher: Gerald H. Anderson, Overseas Ministries Study Center, 490 Prospect Street, New Haven, Connecticut 06511. Editor: Gerald H. Anderson, Overseas Ministries Study Center, 490 Prospect Street, New Haven, Connecticut 06511. Managing Editor: James M. Phillips, Overseas Ministries Study Center, 490 Prospect Street, New Haven, Connecticut 06511.

The owner is Overseas Ministries Study Center, 490 Prospect Street, New Haven, Connecticut 06511.

The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding one percent or more of total amounts of bonds, mortgages or other securities are: None.

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<td>7,142</td>
</tr>
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<td>5,061</td>
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<td>420</td>
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<td>Total distribution</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Total</td>
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(signed) Gerald H. Anderson
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