"Lausanne"—What Does It Mean for Mission?

For many readers of this journal, the single word “Lausanne” conveys a world of meaning. But this can hardly be expected to be the case for all.

Lausanne is the city in Switzerland where, in July 1974, some 2,700 delegates, at the call of American evangelist Billy Graham, gathered for what was labeled an “International Congress on World Evangelization.” Out of this meeting came the Lausanne Covenant, drafted by Dr. John R. W. Stott. It is a document that took on a life of its own, often compared with and analyzed alongside the 1975 Roman Catholic document Evangelii Nuntiandi and the themes discussed at the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Nairobi in 1975.

Because the Overseas Ministries Study Center did not begin publishing the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN until 1977, no full-scale account of the original event is found in our early issues. However, Rodger C. Bassham’s “Mission Theology: 1948-1975” (April 1980) included a well-nuanced summary of the Lausanne Congress. Bassham also pointed out the events and forces dating from the 1960s in the North American evangelical community that led up to Lausanne.

Reports and evaluations of some of the most important consultations and meetings that followed the Lausanne Congress have been reported in these pages: “An Evangelical Commitment to Simple Lifestyle” (4:177-79); “The Thailand Statement 1980” (5:29-30); Robert Coote’s evaluation of Lausanne II, held in Manila in July 1989 (14:10-17); and Valdir R. Steurnagel’s critique “Social Concern and Evangelization: The Journey of the Lausanne Movement” (15:53-56).

And now, in the feature article of this issue, we offer John Stott’s overview of the events and contributions of Lausanne over twenty years. We also have here Stott’s personal assessment of the dangers and weaknesses confronting evangelical missions, despite the Lausanne movement’s valiant efforts and the ideals expressed in its major documents.

What does Lausanne mean for mission? Unity and holism in Christian witness, resolute affirmation of biblical authority, and the proclamation of Jesus Christ as the unique and only Savior. How far the spirit of Lausanne carries into the third millennium hinges on the new generation’s response to the cautions Stott offers.
Twenty Years After Lausanne: Some Personal Reflections

John Stott

As I share some reflections on the Lausanne Congress (1974) and on the Lausanne movement which sprang from it, I need to clarify that I have no authority to speak in any official capacity. As I attempt to play first the historian and then the prophet, I present what is purely my personal assessment.

The Look Back

“Lausanne burst upon us,” Billy Graham (its honorary chairman) has written, “with unexpected significance and power.” Among its surprises has been the long-standing influence of the Lausanne Covenant, which was drafted during the congress and was almost unanimously endorsed by its participants. It has provided challenge and direction to many and has constituted a basis on which evangelical Christians could unite in mission.

The surprise element becomes even clearer when we consider the variegated original responses to the text, some of which were decidedly unflattering. One participant referred to it as “claptrap,” another as an “enormous cold pudding,” while a third expressed the opinion that “this statement was obviously produced by a small missionary-minded group of low mental capacity.” Yet a fourth, who was probably a teacher, since he or she corrected it in red ink as if it were a school report, called it “a very average statement, well below the capability of those here”!

In 1976, two years after the congress, and authorized by it, the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization convened in Mexico City. One of its decisions was to bring into being both a theology and a strategy work group, with Peter Wagner as chairman of the latter and with me as chairman of the former. The theology work group sponsored (in some cases jointly with the strategy work group and/or the World Evangelical Fellowship’s theological commission) four comparatively small consultations between 1977 and 1982, whose reports were published as Lausanne Occasional Papers.

Four Consultations—Milestones of Progress

The first was the Pasadena Consultation on the Homogenous Unit Principle (1977). Its significance can be simply stated. For several years the theoretical grounding of the church growth movement, founded by Donald McGavran and his colleagues, had been debated within the evangelical constituency. It is not unfair to say that both sides had lobbed hand grenades at one another, in the form of books and articles, across a kind of demilitarized zone, from their own entrenched positions. But the protagonists had never met face to face. Now, however, in a notable expression of “the Lausanne spirit” (a mood of mutual respect and openness), representatives of both sides encountered one another in person. Five faculty members of the Fuller School of World Mission (Arthur Glasser, Charles Kraft, Donald McGavran, Peter Wagner, and Ralph Winter) debated for two days with five of their most articulate critics (Harvie Conn, Victor Hayward, René Padilla, Robert Ramseyer, and John Yoder). I was asked to serve as moderator.

We were all familiar with Dr. McGavran’s statement in his Understanding Church Growth that people “like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers.” As a principle of evangelism, it was widely accepted. But as a principle of church life, it was severely criticized, since it seemed to promote a kind of ecclesiastical apartheid that erected barriers in the one and only community in which Jesus Christ had abolished them. So it appeared to be a welcome step forward when the church growth advocates conceded that a homogeneous church was a defective church and should work toward heterogeneity, since the eschatological vision is of a heterogeneous assembly before God’s throne (Rev. 7:9–17), of which the Lord’s Supper is intended to be a prototype, pledge, and foretaste.

Second, the Willowbank Consultation on Gospel and Culture was held in Bermuda in 1978. Paragraph 10 of the Lausanne Covenant, entitled “Evangelism and Culture,” had acknowledged that because every culture is a human construct (“nature” is what God gives us, “culture” is what we do with it), culture reflects our human ambiguity. Because we bear God’s image, some human culture is “rich in beauty and goodness.” But because we are fallen creatures, all culture is “tainted with sin, and some of it is demonic.”

The Lausanne Covenant thus recognized, what missiologists have always affirmed, that human beings are culture creatures and that everything we think, say, and do is conditioned by our cultural inheritance. The Willowbank Consultation proceeded to develop this theme and to consider the role of culture in six areas, namely in the writers and the readers of the Bible (i.e., in the Bible’s inspiration and interpretation), in evangelism and conversion (i.e., in the preaching and receiving of the Gospel), in the formation of churches, and in the ethical lifestyle of Christians.

Participants perceived with fresh clarity that all Christian mission involves an interaction between three cultures. Messengers of the Gospel have to ask themselves the following question: How can I, who was raised in one culture, take the Gospel from the New Testament, which was written in a second culture, and communicate it to people who belong to a third culture, without either falsifying the Gospel or rendering it unintelligible? The consultation left us with the conviction that a lot more thinking needs to be done by evangelical people on the place of culture in hermeneutics and in mission. But at least a beginning was made at Willowbank.

Third, in 1980 the High Leigh Consultation on Simple Lifestyle took place. No sentences of the Lausanne Covenant had caused more critical comment or conscientious debate than those in paragraph 9: “All of us are shocked by the poverty of millions and
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disturbed by the injustices which cause it. Those of us who live in affluent circumstances accept our duty to develop a simple life-style in order to contribute more generously to both relief and evangelism."

The main criticism of this text was directed against the use of the absolute word “simple.” Why not make it relative and put “simpler”? But this would only have provoked the question, Simpler than what? The fact is that a whole cluster of words conveys a quality of lifestyle without indicating how it may be measured—words like “contentment,” “simplicity,” “generosity,” and “hospitality.”

The consultation’s report was entitled An Evangelical Commitment to Simple Lifestyle. Like the New Testament, whose teaching it seeks to reflect, it avoids the opposite extremes of materialism (a preoccupation with material things) and asceticism (an austere rejection of the good gifts of a good Creator). So the commitment begins with a paragraph entitled “Creation,” in which we celebrate the goodness of God’s creation and the rich abundance and diversity of his gifts, which are to be received with thanksgiving and shared with all. The report goes on to challenge our stewardship of the environment and its resources, our use of power, and our tendency to covetousness, of which Jesus told us to beware.

At the same time, the report is a balanced document. For example, it states, “We accept the distinction between necessities and luxuries, creative hobbies and empty status symbols, modesty and vanity, occasional celebrations and normal routine, the service of God and slavery to fashion.”

Fourth, there was the Grand Rapids Consultation on the Relationship Between Evangelism and Social Responsibility (1982). This was triggered by the publication of Arthur Johnston’s book The Battle for World Evangelization, in which he traced the decline in the World Council of Churches of commitment to biblical authority and Christian mission, warned that in his opinion Lausanne was going the same way as Geneva, and named me as the chief culprit!

Dr. Kenneth Kantzer allowed me to write for Christianity Today an “Open Letter to Arthur Johnston,” in which I sought to respond to his allegations. He and I then corresponded, met, and agreed that we should help mount an international consultation, whose participants would be truly representative of different countries, cultures, churches, and viewpoints.

I confess that, before the consultation convened, I had no very lively expectation that it would secure a genuine meeting of minds and hearts. For when the preconference papers and responses were circulated, some of them were not only dogmatic and unyielding but also shrill almost to the point of rudeness. And when we assembled, we spent the first few days digging in our heels and shouting at one another! Gradually, however, we tired of this unproductive inflexibility and began to listen to one another instead, until we heard not only what people were saying but what lay behind what they were saying. This is the point at which we discern what it is that people are wanting to safeguard, and often discover that we want to safeguard it too! This then becomes a catalyst for creative progress.

The Grand Rapids report has been criticized from both sides as being either too radical or too inconclusive. We cannot deny that in places we failed to reach agreement and so were obliged to write “some of us think this” while “others think that.” Nevertheless, it was surely an immense gain that we left Grand Rapids, after a week of concentrated debate, having all approved the report and so possessing a basis for mutual understanding and common action.
What many people remember from the report is its statement of a threefold relationship between evangelism and social activity. First, Christian social activity is a consequence of evangelism, since it is the evangelized who engage in it. Second, it is a bridge to evangelism, since it expresses God’s love and so both overcomes prejudice and opens closed doors. Third, it is a partner of evangelism, so that they are “like the two blades of a pair of scissors or the two wings of a bird.”

These four consultations, held over a period of five years and relating to aspects of church, culture, lifestyle, and mission, were all conducted in the Lausanne spirit of respect, trust, and tolerance, and each became both a milestone of progress and a springboard for further advance.

They were not the only Lausanne Consultations. For the sake of completeness, I must add the following: the Glen Eyrie Consultation on Muslim Evangelization (1978), the Oslo Consultation on the Work of the Holy Spirit and Evangelization (1985), the Hong Kong Consultation on Conversion (1988), and the Uppsala Consultation on Faith and Modernity (1993). But I was myself not involved in these, so that I have felt it right to restrict my comments to the first four.

**Pattaya 1980 and Manila 1989**

Next, I must mention the larger Consultation on World Evangelization (COWE), which was held in 1980 in Pattaya, Thailand. My personal desire was that it should be essentially a working consultation. In general the planning committee agreed, and seventeen miniconsultations were organized, each concentrating on Christian witness to a particular people, and each producing a report that was published as a Lausanne Occasional Paper. But the planning committee also decided that a plenary inspirational meeting was needed each evening. In consequence, there was inadequate time to grapple with the two main controversial issues that arose. The first was Peter Wagner’s audiovisual presentation of the strategy of evangelizing “people groups,” or people who perceive themselves as having some affinity with each other. The participants were divided over this methodology and were frustrated that there was no chance to debate it thoroughly.

The second issue concerned the report of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) Melbourne conference entitled Your Kingdom Come, which had just concluded. Emilio Castro visited Pattaya one evening, and a late-night meeting with him was arranged. But it was too formal and too brief, owing to shortage of time, and some of the evangelical contributions (including, I fear, my own) were abrupt and unnecessarily confrontational. Thus the opportunity for a significant ecumenical-evangelical encounter was lost.

The Pattaya Statement (1980) reaffirmed our commitment to both evangelism and social action, while at the same time acknowledging, as the Lausanne Covenant had done, that evangelism is “primary.” The reason given was that “of all the tragic needs of human beings none is greater than their alienation from the Creator and the terrible reality of eternal death for those who refuse to repent and believe.”

Then in 1989 the second Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization convened in Manila. About 3,500 people came together from 170 countries (more than were members then of the United Nations), including a substantial delegation from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. It was painful, however, that no one was permitted to come from mainland China.

Although Lausanne II was undoubtedly valuable, and even influential, it was overweighted on the platform by evangelical leaders from the North and West. Several notable Third World leaders were (for a variety of reasons) conspicuous by their absence.

The tension between charismatic and noncharismatic evangelicals surfaced at Manila. Pentecostals and charismatics had ample opportunity to teach and learn in several workshop tracks, and one evening plenary session was devoted to the work of the Holy Spirit. Jack Hayford and Jim Packer read position papers, but no interaction between them was scheduled. Would not a debate have been better? Are we evangelical people not now mature enough as a movement to refuse to sweep our differences under the carpet and instead to insist on bringing them into open discussion? Incidentally, Eugene Stockwell, director of CWME, wrote afterward that this was his chief criticism of Lausanne II, that there was a total absence of debate. Instead, the conference was “controlled.” How? By “plenaries loaded with long speeches and videos, but never once a plenary discussion on anything.”

**The Manila Manifesto**

At the conclusion of the congress, the Manila Manifesto was endorsed by a general expression of support. Its drafting committee was three times larger than its equivalent at Lausanne, and the manifesto is twice as long as the covenant. It begins by affirming the covenant, which it is intended to supplement and not replace. It clearly goes beyond the covenant in a number of areas. I give a few examples.

Its first paragraph (“Our Human Predicament”), which has no parallel in the covenant, affirms both our dignity as bearers of God’s image and our depravity as “self-centered, self-serving rebels.”

The second paragraph (“Good News for Today”) explains how it may rightly be said that the Gospel is good news for both the materially and the spiritually poor.

Paragraph 3 (“The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ”) concedes that the world’s religions “do sometimes contain elements of truth and beauty” but denies that they are “alternative gospels”; repudiates pluralism, relativism, and syncretism; and rejects “the thesis that Jews have their own covenant which renders faith in Jesus unnecessary.”

Paragraph 4 (“The Gospel and Social Responsibility”) reaffirms that “evangelism is primary because our chief concern is with the gospel.” Yet it goes on to insist on an “integration of words and deeds.” In addition, “the proclamation of God’s kingdom necessarily demands the prophetic denunciation of all that is incompatible with it.” This is “not a confusion of the Kingdom of God with a Christianized society” (which had been the fault of the liberal social gospel) but rather “a recognition that the biblical gospel has inescapable social implications.”

Paragraph 5 (“God the Evangelist”) rejects opposite extremes, “both the timidity which shrinks from the fullness of the
Spirit and the triumphalism which shrinks from the weakness in which Christ’s power is made perfect.

Paragraph 6 (“The Human Witnesses”) emphasizes the vital role in evangelism of laypeople, of children and young people, and of women. It acknowledges the giftedness of women and celebrates their record in the history of missions. While confessing frankly that we are not agreed “what forms their leadership should take, we do agree about the partnership in world evangelization which God intends men and women to enjoy.”

Paragraph 7 (“The Integrity of the Witnesses”) begins with these words: “Nothing commends the gospel more eloquently than a transformed life, and nothing brings it into disrepute so much as personal inconsistency.” It goes on to a detailed exposure of the failures of Christians and churches. Thus we allow “the prevailing culture to subvert the church instead of the church challenging and changing the culture.”

The remaining five paragraphs of the manifesto are as follows. Paragraph 8 (“The Local Church”) expresses our belief that “the local church bears a primary responsibility for the spread of the gospel.” Paragraph 9 (“Cooperation in Evangelism”) begins by declaring that “evangelism and unity are closely related in the New Testament” and goes on to emphasize “the internationalization of missions.” Paragraph 10 (“The Modern World”) gives a brief description of modernity as “an emerging world culture” that the Gospel must address. Paragraph 11 (“The Challenge of AD 2000 and Beyond”) supplies an analysis of our contemporary evangelistic task. And paragraph 12 (“Difficult Situations”) portrays Christians as conscientious citizens, from whom just governments have nothing to fear, but who nevertheless must expect to be persecuted.

The Look Forward

The four particular Lausanne Consultations discussed above, the Pattaya Consultation in 1980, and Lausanne II in Manila in 1989 registered some solid gains. They illustrate the value of the Lausanne spirit of evangelical openness, and they have given direction and inspiration to many to get involved in mission.

I now don the mantle of the prophet, and start looking forward. We are halfway through the so-called decade of evangelism. A.D. 2000 is only a quinquennium away. And the “AD 2000 and Beyond” movement has set itself the double goal by the end of the millennium of “a church for every single person, and the Gospel for every person.” It has been statistically demonstrated that world evangelization in these terms is attainable, not least because of the proliferation of indigenous missions in Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific rim of East Asia. These may under God not only take the Gospel to the ends of the earth but also revitalize the tired churches of the West.

There is, however, a danger of triumphalism. As we look ahead with hope, we must not overlook the spiritual factors without which, whatever the statistics may promise, world evangelization will not be attained.

First, we need a greater unity before the task. Paragraph 7 of the Lausanne Covenant (“Cooperation in Evangelism”) declared that unity strengthens our witness while disunity undermines it, expressed penitence for our “sinful individualism” and “needless duplication,” and pledged that we would “seek a deeper unity in truth, worship, holiness and mission.”

I wonder what has become of our penitence and our pledge? I can see few signs of them today. Although regional, national, and local unity in mission are all very important, are we to declare strategic planning on a global scale to be impossible? If we accept what is being written about “the 10/40 window,” with its concentration of the unevangelized and the poor, are we to acquiesce in the disparity that it reveals between mission needs and resources? And as the number of indigenous missions and missionaries explodes, are we to encourage a kind of free-for-all with little cross-cultural training, prayerful strategy, or focused vision?

A recent sobering example of our evangelical tendency to individualism and empire building is what happened when Euro-Marxism collapsed and the doors opened into the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. A most unseemly scramble of Western missionary organizations took place, bringing acute embarrassment to historic national church leaders, and enormous confusion.

What will happen when the doors of mainland China open? We all know what the Chinese think about “foreign devils.” Is it too much to hope that Western missions will impose on themselves a self-denying ordinance and will leave the evangelization of China to the Christian Chinese of the dispersion? In God’s providence Chinese churches outside China have proliferated during the last fifty years; are they not ready to undertake the evangelization of their own people and homeland? Or if Western missions are to be involved, may we hope that they will do so only at the invitation and under the direction of our Chinese sisters and brothers?

Other divisions that hinder cooperation in mission concern the charismatic movement on the one hand and the Roman Catholic Church on the other. I cannot help expressing regret that the Lausanne movement has now been paralleled by two or three other global missionary movements, which, though not perceived by their leaders as rivals or competitors, nevertheless divide and so weaken our mission forces. As for the rapidly burgeoning Pentecostal movement, in many areas there is a total lack of cooperation between charismatic and noncharismatic evangelicals. As for the Roman Catholic Church, despite its official commitment to world mission, and despite many individual evangelical Roman Catholics, Catholic dogma remains unchanged, the Catholic and evangelical understandings of the way of salvation are too disparate to permit common evangelism, and the pope’s recent definition of a sect in such a way as to brand evangelicals as sectarian has not helped. Yet are we to leave things there? Little Catholic-evangelical dialogue is going on. Ought we not to encourage more evangelical scholars to keep on pressing the Roman Catholic Church whether it is yet ready (as we ourselves desire to be) to subject all its traditions to biblical scrutiny and, where necessary, to reform?

Second, we need a greater visibility before the world. I do not mean by this that we should become ostentatious and deliberately draw attention to ourselves, in defiance of Jesus’ command that we are not to practice our piety before human beings in order to be seen and praised by them (Matt. 6:1-18). I mean rather that our Gospel lacks credibility if its transforming power cannot be

Is Lausanne to encourage a mission free-for-all with little cross-cultural training, prayerful strategy, or focused vision?

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seen. Douglas Webster put it well. “The communication of the gospel is by seeing as well as hearing. This double strand runs all through the Bible: image and word, vision and voice, opening the eyes of the blind and unstopping the ears of the deaf. Jesus is the Word of God and the Image of God. The Word became visible, the Image audible.”

The visibility of the Gospel should be personal, local, and social. First, personal. Nothing commends the Gospel like the changed lives of those who proclaim it, and nothing discredits it like its apparent failure to cause change. As John Poulton wrote, “The most effective preaching [he might have written ‘evangelism’] comes from those who embody the things they are saying. They are their message. . . . It is people who communicate primarily, not words or ideas. . . . What communicates now is basically personal authenticity.”

But the visible embodiment of the Gospel is not to be limited to the individual Christian; it is also and specially to be seen in the life of the local church. God intends each local Christian community to be a sign of his kingdom, a sample of what human society looks like when it comes under his rule, and so a viable alternative social reality. The apostle John put it most strikingly in his first letter. Affirming for the second time that “nobody has ever seen God” (John 1:18; 1 John 4:12), he went on to declare that the invisible God, who once was seen in Christ, may now be seen in Christians if we love one another.

The third way in which the Gospel becomes visible is in various forms of social action. Looking back over some twenty-five years of debate over the relation between evangelism and social activity, it is really extraordinary that the controversy ever arose. If in the public ministry of Jesus the audible proclamation of the kingdom was accompanied by a visible demonstration of its arrival, words and works cannot be separated in our ministry of mission.

Our Gospel lacks credibility if its transforming power cannot be seen.

either. The rising generation of evangelical leaders in the Third World hardly sees the problem that preoccupied our generation. To them it is self-evident that good news issues in good works. What is needed now is the development of more innovative models of integrated mission, in which the Gospel, far from being silenced or marginalized by social involvement, is illumined and enforced by it.

Third, we need a greater clarity before the Gospel. The Gospel itself in its essence does not change. Always and everywhere it concerns the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as both history and achievement, together with the offer of a new life in the Spirit and a summons to repent and believe. Yet our presentation of the Gospel is often culturally inappropriate, intellectually confusing, and spiritually stale. Each new generation of Christians has to recover and restate the Gospel; to struggle in its own context with the contemporary challenges to the Gospel; to proclaim it in a way that resonates with the prevailing culture, including in the West the fresh missionary encounter with Enlightenment culture for which Lesslie Newbigin has been calling; and to win the argument for the truth of the Gospel against all its competitors and rivals.

We evangelical people need to repent of every occasion on which we have divorced evangelism from apologetics, as the apostles never did. We have to argue the Gospel we proclaim. We need to be able to say confidently to our hearers what Paul said to Festus: “What I am saying is true and reasonable” (Acts 26:25). We cannot possibly surrender to the current understanding of “pluralism” as an ideology that affirms the independent validity of every religion. Our task, rather is to establish the criteria by which truth claims can be evaluated and then to demonstrate the uniqueness and finality of Jesus Christ.

As we do so, we automatically take care of the charge (occasionally just, usually unjust) of proselytism or “unworthy witness.” The “unworthiness” involved in a proselytizing witness may refer to our motives (concern for our glory, instead of Christ’s), our methods (trust in psychological pressure or in material inducement, instead of in the Holy Spirit), or our message (focused on the alleged falsehood and failures of others, instead of on the truth and perfection of Jesus Christ). Such lapses are as unnecessary as they are unwise. Instead of “secret and shameful ways,” deception and distortion, wrote Paul, “by setting forth the truth plainly, we commend ourselves to everybody’s conscience in the sight of God” (2 Cor. 4:2–3).

Fourth, we need a greater consistency before Christ. The analogy that Jesus himself drew between his mission and ours is fundamental to Christian thinking about the meaning of mission. Indeed, he made his mission the model of ours. “As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world” (John 17:18; cf. 20:21). It is not an exaggeration to say that all authentic mission is incarnational mission. It involves entering other people’s worlds in order to reach them (their thought-world, their heart-world, and the world of their social reality), as Christ entered our world in order to reach us. As Archbishop Michael Ramsey expressed it, “We state and commend the faith only in so far as we go out, and put ourselves with loving sympathy inside the doubts of the doubter, the questions of the questioner, and the loneliness of those who have lost the way.”

This approach means total identification, although without any loss of our own identity. For just as Jesus became one of us without ceasing to be himself, so we are called to become one with others, although without losing our Christian convictions, values, standards, and lifestyle. Judged by this principle, however, much of our evangelical evangelism falls short. Our stereotype of evangelism is an evangelist preaching to large crowds whose faces he cannot see, whose personhood he does not know, whose world he does not enter. I am not denigrating mass evangelism (since both Jesus and Paul preached to large crowds) but urging that it cannot stand on its own. In the case of Jesus, incarnation preceded proclamation. In the case of Paul, “We preach Christ crucified” was accompanied by “I have become all things to all men” (1 Cor. 1:23; 9:22).

If the incarnation is indispensable to Christian mission, so is the cross. Jesus stood in conscious continuity with the suffering servant, who was persecuted and killed in order to bring light and justice to the nations. And when those Greeks asked to see him, his response was unequivocal: “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds” (John 12:23–24).

Perhaps the best modern instance of the necessary costliness of mission is the experience of the church in mainland China. “The reason for the growth of the church in China,” Tony Lambert has written, “and for the outbreak of genuine spiritual revival in many areas, is inextricably linked to the whole theol-
ogy of the cross. . . . The stark message of the Chinese Church is that God uses suffering and the preaching of a crucified Christ to pour out revival and build his Church. Are we in the West still willing to hear?” Again, “The Chinese Church . . . has walked the way of the cross. The lives and deaths of the martyrs of the 1950s and 1960s have borne rich fruit.” This essentially biblical emphasis on the necessity of suffering and even death is incompatible with the false teaching of the prosperity gospel and with all horrid evangelical tendencies to triumphalism.

Fifth, we need a greater humility before God. The disciples of Jesus must never forget that the model of greatness in the kingdom that he chose was that of the little child. In consequence, nothing is so beautiful as humility, and nothing so obscene as arrogance. This is specially true in evangelism.

Perhaps the most eloquent part of the Willowbank Report is section 6, which is entitled “Wanted: Humble Messengers of the Gospel.” It provides “an analysis of missionary humility” that specifies five ingredients. I content myself with only two of them. The first is the need to renounce all cultural superiority and imperialism. “We advocate neither the arrogance which imposes our culture on others, nor the syncretism which mixes the gospel with cultural elements incompatible with it, but rather a humble sharing of the good news—made possible by the mutual respect of a genuine friendship.”

The second aspect of missionary humility is reliance on the Holy Spirit. At the heart of the Lausanne movement there is a tension between sociology and theology, between the development of techniques on the one hand and the practice of prayer on the other. Of course the two are not irreconcilable. Since the Holy Spirit works through social situations, carefully devised methods, and intellectual arguments, it is perfectly possible to deploy these and trust him simultaneously. Yet the temptation to which our self-confidence exposes us is to rely on the flesh, not the Spirit.

Several Lausanne documents have sought to avoid this danger by strong statements about the Holy Spirit. Here is the Lausanne Covenant: “We believe in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Father sent his Spirit to bear witness to his Son; without his witness ours is futile” (par. 14). The Holy Spirit is not only the chief witness, he is also “the chief communicator,” who alone opens blind eyes and brings people to new birth. And third, “God himself is the chief evangelist.”

Speaking personally, I have grave hesitations about contemporary popular teaching on “territorial spirits” and its inadequate biblical basis. I agree with the Lausanne Committee’s “Statement on Spiritual Warfare,” issued on August 27, 1993, which wisely calls on evangelical biblical scholars “to shed more light on this recent development.” Meanwhile, we should strongly reaffirm the decisive victory won by Jesus Christ over all the principalities and powers of evil, whom he dethroned and disarmed on the cross. And in our continuing conflict with this defeated enemy, we must remember that “only spiritual weapons can prevail, especially the Word and the Spirit, with prayer.”

In 1994 the Lausanne Committee, meeting in Stuttgart, announced a new vision and a new beginning, with new structures and new leaders (especially in national, regional, and special-interest groups), while still serving the same mission as before. The committee noted that the Lausanne movement “is more active today than at any time in its history,” mentioning as evidence that in 1993 eleven Lausanne consultations and prayer conferences had taken place in ten countries. Yet Lausanne remains an international movement, whose leaders “feel a strong and urgent need to re-connect internationally.” As they do so, we hope and pray that they will develop a greater unity, visibility, clarity, consistency, and humility in the service of the Gospel.

Nothing is so beautiful as humility, and nothing so obscene as arrogance.

Notes

8. Willowbank Report, par. 6(a).
Ralph D. Winter

As with others in this series, I too prize the pluralistic, even countercultural, experiences in my upbringing. Blame it partly on my parents. Long before I was born (in December 1924), they were wonderful people, faithful, devout, loyal Presbyterians, but they were also strongly influenced by the global, evangelical, mission-oriented Christian Endeavor movement, which was not very conventional.

It’s partly my own fault. At some point, realizing that my faith must be more than just inherited, I began to examine all sorts of other beliefs that went far beyond the highly interdenominational spectrum exhibited by Christian Endeavor. I took a look at the Roman Catholic tradition, Seventh-day Adventism, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and others. I can still remember the look of dismay on my mother’s face when she found me exploring the Book of Mormon.

Further cultural loosening up took place over the next few years through World War II. The Bible itself demanded a total parting of the ways with the assumptions undergirding inherited culture. While in high school, I was involved in a sort of Protestant version of the Jesuit order. The Navigators, also evangelical, which today has four thousand members in ninety-four countries, was strong on discipline and Bible study and involved serious daily and weekly commitments.

Attending the California Institute of Technology—all but the first year under the auspices of the navy (a cross-cultural experience in itself)—was a time of radical questioning of the social order in which I was born. Already scientifically inclined, I gained there a much deeper acquaintance with the wonders of science and theology.

All of these influences were in one way or another distinctly “countercultural.” Christian Endeavor, Navigators, and evangelicalism in general were all globally oriented. In that milieu it is not surprising that I came across one of the earliest anthropology books written by an American evangelical missionary—one by Gordon H. Smith. But that only whetted my appetite. A hefty 150-page chapter on anthropology by William Smalley and Marie Fetzer Reyburn (in an American Scientific Affiliation book entitled Science and the Christian Faith) made clear to me that anthropology, of all academic disciplines, offered more to a boy from the “evangelical ghetto” than any other field of study.

My parents (and others) thought I would never settle down to a career. (The Second World War’s GI Bill gave me college tuition that helped me study in eight schools beyond college.) Would I continue in engineering? Then why, as a college graduate, go back to a Christian college to learn Greek? Why take two years of seminary if I were not going to be a minister? Wycliffe’s Summer Institute of Linguistics seemed the logical next step in preparation for me to be a missionary. Why then to a Bible school to study a unique method of teaching the Bible? Why did I shift to an M.A. at Columbia University in Teaching English as a Second Language? (My family knew that I had initiated a movement to send evangelical teachers to a certain closed country, as well as opening the way for my older brother to head up an engineering school there.) Why did I decide to go on for a Ph.D. at Cornell? There I majored in structural linguistics, minoring in cultural anthropology and mathematical statistics. Finally, because of studying anthropology—and noting the general influence of the role of the witchdoctor—I did decide to return to Princeton Seminary (in 1956) and become a properly ordained “white witchdoctor.” Which is to say I concluded that ordained ministers possess unusual leadership opportunities.

At that point one of my professors at Princeton (Samuel Moffett) was also serving as interim personnel secretary at the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions in New York. He told my wife and me about a position in Guatemala where the field request was specifically for a couple where the man was ordained and had graduate training in linguistics and anthropology, and whose wife was a registered nurse. You would have thought that that would have made the decision for us, and perhaps it ultimately did.

At exactly the same time, however, because of the unusual mix of my Ph.D. dissertation, I was asked to join the faculty at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to help work in the mechanical translation of language—but only if I could promise more than two years. I was still very interested in the problems of language learning (as an aspect of the global mission challenge) and while at Princeton had worked out a “Contextual Lexicon” of the Hebrew text of Genesis. In 1956 I gave a paper on the subject of vocabulary statistics of the Hebrew Bible at the annual meeting of the Linguistic Society of America and coauthored another with Charles Fritsch (a Princeton Seminary professor) in relation to the pedagogical implications of Hebrew vocabulary statistics, the latter presented by Fritsch at the Society for Biblical Literature in the same year. It was a wrenching decision to turn my back on such a long-standing interest to go to Guatemala, but the “mission industry” did not seriously support background academic studies; between academics and mission, I chose the latter.

Before leaving for the field, at the end of 1956, we went through a really marvelous six-months-long “graduate school of mission” designed by our denominational board, a program that

I can still remember the look of dismay on my mother’s face when she found me exploring the Book of Mormon.

Ralph D. Winter and his family served for ten years in Guatemala under Presbyterian (U.S.A.) auspices, working with Native Americans of the Mayan tradition. He then taught for ten years in the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary. Ralph and his wife, Roberta, then moved into a new career in the establishment of the U.S. Center for World Mission and its associated university in Pasadena, California, which emphasize mobilization and education in the specific sphere of frontier mission outreach to groups with little or no Christian influence.
later was located at Stony Point, New York, and became ecumenical. This was one of the most valuable experiences of my life. In that period we went through some inner-city, coal-mining, and other “sand-papering” activities, but we also had some really straightforward studies in a superb library of global mission and were exposed weekly to serious outside lecturers ranging from Communists, Muslims, Hindus, and others to mission statesmen like Kenneth Scott Latourette and even seminary presidents like Henry Pitney Van Dusen. The formal ecumenical tradition was made familiar to us. Board policies and backgrounds were exposed. Interpersonal relationships were explored at the same time. All of these experiences, however, were little more than a prolonged prelude to our even more drastic cultural shake-up within the world of an “aboriginal” culture of the so-called New World, specifically the Maya of Guatemala.

Ten Years in Guatemala

My wife and I and our budding family were sent to work in what was considered by our mission board to be one of its “conservative” fields. After my studies and all the decontextualizing influences through which we had gone, I’m sure we seemed radical to some of the missionaries. We precipitated a major rejection by some when, after a great deal of thought, we tried to promote the idea that pastoral leaders in our mountain tribal churches ought to be trained in both theology and medicine (in view of that same range of functions of the native shaman). We also wanted to give certain minimal modern-day medical skills to local shamans as a means of protecting the people in general from careless medicine as well as to become friends with them. Such ideas encountered hopeless opposition. But we did train our future pastors in various kinds of business activities that enabled them to be itinerant or at least not to be tied to the soil. Although bivocational ministry was pervasive in Latin America, it was a pattern often opposed by expatriate missionaries.

A fundamental insight of another missionary, James H. Emery (whom I had known in seminary), pointed out that residential seminary training, so prized by our (historically recent) Presbyterian tradition back home, was clearly a mixed blessing in rural areas, where full-time professional ministry did not readily fit. I assisted him in bringing about an institutional revolution in the existing “seminary,” which had already moved from Guatemala City to the rural town of San Felipe. This move, now coupled with theological studies by extension, suddenly made ordination available to the Mayas and rural poor—providing they first completed a government-sponsored adult education program that we also set up and supervised nationwide with the cooperation of all the major missions.

During our second term of service I shared some of our experiences with James Hopewell, secretary of the World Council of Churches’ Theological Education Fund. This was in 1963, while in Mexico City working for a few days as a translator at the first meeting of the transformed International Missionary Council, later the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the WCC. Hopewell decided to put some TEF funds into our experiment in Guatemala and later contributed a chapter to a book I edited in 1969, *Theological Education by Extension*. The TEF also financed the sending out of one thousand copies of this book to schools all over the world.

Meanwhile, on our second furlough in 1966, I was invited to be a visiting professor at the newly founded School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary, sharing insights from the theological education experiments in Guatemala. After that year with Donald McGavran (of *Bridges of God* fame) and Alan Tippett (who had just finished his classic *Solomon Islands Christianity* as a WCC study), I was urged to stay on. I was reluctant to do so because we were involved so deeply in Guatemala, but leaders in my PC(USA) mission board decided to assign me to stay on. Was it because they wanted to know just what this new burgeoning school was teaching? Was it because they were aware of the negative reactions to some of our theories in Guatemala? Or was it because they realized that in this position what had begun in a corner in Guatemala might influence the whole world of missions? Again, it took some soul searching and a willingness to go in a new direction on behalf of the overall cause.

From Local to Global

During the latter part of that same second furlough in 1966—ten years since our formal commissioning as missionaries—I served as executive secretary of the Association of Theological Schools in Latin America, Northern Region (an accrediting association), the last expatriate to hold that position. In my travels in the seventeen northernmost countries of Latin America, I had a lot of opportunity to promote the off-campus education of pastors. I was then invited further south, speaking to groups of theological educators in Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, and Brazil. At the end of my week in Brazil, the sixty-five or so who attended decided to start an association of theological schools involved in extension, the Brazilian acronym for which was AETTE.

Ten years later, in 1976, I was invited back to speak at their annual meeting and to note their progress in theological education by extension (TEE). Again, at their twentieth anniversary I was invited back, but this time I discovered that they had dropped out the phrase “by extension” in their title, and that therefore the basic ideas in their founding had succumbed in a reversion to the residential tradition—even though it was more true than ever that all of the roaming growth of evangelicalism in Latin America consisted of movements that first selected charismatic leaders, then trained them, rather than groups that first trained young people and then hoped they would grow up to become leaders. Such is the dead hand of tradition!

In the ten years at Fuller, 1966–76, I met missionaries from many traditions, with loads of diverse grassroots experience in many lands. This period afforded me personally an incomparable education. In those first ten growing years of the school, students could not matriculate without at least three years of field experience. The result was as if I were the student and the students were the teachers!

It fell to me to teach TEE, statistics, and the history of missions. I was especially delighted with the history assignment, which introduced me to a vast additional array of new insights. This became my major focus. Ever since my first year at Princeton Seminary I had been a disciple-at-a-distance of Kenneth Scott Latourette. My job now required an overall perspective of both
historical and contemporary global realities. On the latter level I worked with Gerald Anderson to establish a scholarly society (the American Society of Missiology) that would bring together “Catholic, Conciliar, and Conservative” streams of mission scholarship. He became the first president, and I the first secretary.

I say “conservative,” although it would appear that, historically, the Pietist-evangelical stream of Christendom has been anything but conservative. The reality of unconservative “conservatism” is revealed by the fact that I had no trouble at the IFMA/EFMA Greenlake ’71 conference signing up sixty-five evangelical mission leaders as charter members of this new scholarly society in which Roman Catholics were scheduled to have a prominent place.

For the third three years of the ASM, I was the secretary and de facto business manager of the society’s journal, Missiology: An International Review. This journal started out with a bang, in part because I was able to negotiate a merger with the nineteen-year-old Practical Anthropology journal (and its three thousand subscribers), a journal that had all along been an enterprising and sprightly product of what you might call radical evangelicals in the world of missions—many of them protégés of Eugene Nida, whom I had followed with great respect ever since I had first met him a quarter of a century earlier as a professor in the Wycliffe Bible Translators’ Summer Institute of Linguistics in 1948, at the University of Oklahoma at Norman.

For an additional three years I was unable to shake off the business manager’s job, but it was not difficult, in view of my experience for some years in the publishing firm called the William Carey Library, which had been founded to assist in the publication of theses and dissertations that were pouring out of the Fuller School of World Mission in ever greater number. Although my wife and I took a deep breath before starting this publishing firm, it was not an unfeasible undertaking in view of my engineering degree, experience in small business development in Guatemala, plus teaching accounting both in Spanish and English. Little did I know that all this experience—and a very great deal more—would soon be required in a far larger project than a publishing company.

Two Disturbing Thoughts

The most momentous upheaval in my adult life came as a result of a slowly growing awareness of two serious limitations in contemporary mission strategy. First, pioneer missionaries in the Protestant tradition had become planters and then caretakers and then, finally, not much more than spectators in a vast global network of “national” church movements. That achievement was their pride and glory. Second, at the same time, mission agencies from the West almost uniformly failed to pass on a pioneer missionary vision to the “younger churches.” Missionaries were now wonderfully helpful to national churches that had been the product of earlier pioneer work; they were not now helping those national churches to do their own pioneer mission work elsewhere.

The Melanesian Brotherhood, for example, in Alan Tippett’s analysis of the Solomon Islands, was a historically unusual event in mission experience. The very concept of Third World missions was not yet discussed very widely. In 1981 I contributed an article to the International Review of Mission entitled “The New Missions and the Mission of the Church,” referring to the sprouting up of new mission-sending structures in the so-called mission lands. I was surprised that the keen eye of the editor, in pointing out certain details, also revealed in our early correspondence a total misunderstanding of the concept of new mission sending structures sprouting up in the so-called mission lands.

The hue and cry of the major denominational missions was to turn things over to national leaders and go home, or continue on a very passive, humble basis. But it seemed to me that practically no one was concerned about the still untouched ethnic pockets that, in aggregate, amounted to a significant

Pioneer missionaries in the Protestant tradition became planters, then caretakers, and then spectators of “national” church movements.

Doing Something About It

After three years at the Fuller Theological Seminary School of World Mission, I was asked by Zondervan to add an updating chapter to the seventh volume of Zondervan’s edition of Latourette’s History of the Expansion of Christianity. The unreduced version of my chapter came out separately as a little book entitled The Twenty-Five Unbelievable Years. There I observed that although between 1945 and 1969 the global colonial world had dramatically collapsed, the “younger churches” were for the most part left standing on their feet. The member denominations of the NCCCSUSA had provided 75 percent of all American missionaries in 1925, but by 1969 far less than 10 percent, even though the total number (deriving from many new sources) was at an all-time high. As Latourette had generalized, vitality is usually accompanied by profusion and confusion.

In 1974, the first of the Lausanne congresses took place in Switzerland. I was asked to present a paper focusing on the remaining task of mission. In those days most mission writers were still talking in terms of countries or major religious blocs. My focus at Lausanne was on the subtle barriers that subdivide human society at a vastly more detailed level than is implied by broad categories. (People used to think of “Chinese” as a single language, when it would be equally reasonable to think of “European” as a language.)

Also by 1974 (after two years discussing it), the fledgling American Society of Missiology had unofficially launched a call for a meeting in 1980 comparable to the 1910 meeting at Edinburgh, a global-level meeting of mission executives focused on finishing the task. It brought together an even larger number of mission agency delegates, fully one-third of them from the Third World, under the banner of World Consultation on Frontier Missions, and under the watchword “A Church for Every People by the Year 2000.”

Looking back, we see that a major shift of attention in
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mission circles has taken place as perceptions of the ethnic realities around the world have brought into focus “unreached peoples” rather than “unoccupied territories” (the 1910 phrase). Very little in the way of “territories” remained totally unoccupied by 1974, but literally thousands of “nations” (in the ethnic sense) were still sealed off by language and culture from any existing witness—and were not even on the agenda of the strategic dialogue in scholarly and agency circles.

The Final Plunge

At the end of ten years at Fuller—in 1976, at age 52—my own conscience would not let me continue as merely a professor. My wife and I felt we had to leave the scintillating and rewarding atmosphere of the Fuller School of World Mission and attempt to establish a major base for promoting and focusing increased efforts on outreach to those thousands of “frontier” groups within which there was not yet anything like a “national” church. The founding in Pasadena, California, of the U.S. Center for World Mission and its associated university in 1976 and 1977, respectively, pitched us into a whole new world of pressure, anxiety, and uncertainty.

Making the decision in the first place brought to mind the thought that “risks are not to be taken on the basis of their probability of success but in terms of the potential of their result.” What we attempted had little chance of success, but if successful, carried high importance. That was enough to go on. This change from a settled professorship into a totally new, unsponsored project requiring millions of dollars was the hinge of our lives. One of our daughters came up with the thought that “faith is not confidence that God will do what you want him to do for you. Faith is the conviction that you can attempt what he wants done and leave the consequences with him.” At no point in the years of struggle to pay for a thirty-three-acre campus was I able to feel confident that we would succeed. But, what I never doubted for a second was that our efforts, whatever the risk, were worth investing in even the possibility of success. I recalled what Dawson Trotman, the founder of the Navigators, had said in my hearing years earlier, “Never do what others can do or will do if there are things God wants done that others either can’t do or won’t do.”

Across the years we have spawned many programs, but the more important growth has been in seasoned and dedicated members of the Frontier Mission Fellowship (a kind of religious order) that is the basic entity guarding and governing our strategies. Without these real people and their long-term commitment and vitality, the property for which we struggled so long would be worth nothing.

Now, nineteen years (and quite a few miracles) later, we feel deeply gratified by the small role we have had in the much larger swirl of God’s initiatives around the world focusing on the remaining frontiers of witness. All four of our children are occupied in global mission, on three continents. In all this we have continually underestimated the number of people who are responsive to information about the work of God across the world. We have been sponsoring a three-semester-unit course “Perspectives on the World Christian Movement,” offering it in eighty places in the United States each year. Over 22,000 have taken this fifteen week program. The 944-page Perspectives Reader associated with this course has topped the 100,000 mark, being used in over one hundred colleges and seminaries. As a follow-on, we are now in the midst of preparing a seamless, integrated, interdisciplinary seminary-plus-global-mission curriculum (“World Christian Foundations”), the first part of which is already being used in both colleges and seminaries. Designed for off-campus use, this massive project will, we hope, be better than nothing for hundreds of thousands of pastors around the world—nine out of ten of whom, in the Two-Thirds World, have had no formal theological training.

Sending and Survival

To “declare his glory among the nations” is not a technically definable blueprint for action, but it is sufficiently clear in its necessary outworking to allow a truly amazing global fellowship of literally hundreds of agencies linked together eagerly and fruitfully. I speak of the unprecedented network of the AD 2000 and Beyond movement, an enterprise with a leadership no longer dominated by Westerners—a movement with a vision that outstrips that of most Western entities. For Archbishop Temple the “younger churches” were “the great new fact of our time.” Now the great new fact is the mission initiative of those same—now much more numerous—younger churches.

As with most of the others writing in this series, the most significant “lump” for me to digest in my lifetime has been the cross-cultural experience of a missionary career. On the basis of that experience, I have concluded that the Christian tradition down through the ages could not have survived had it not attempted to “give away its faith”—that is, sought to transcend the cultural institutionalization of its own experience in the process of mission outreach, the missionary process of sharing faith across cultures.

With other writers in this series, in particular H. D. Beeby, I am convinced that one of the most important functions of the missionary movement is to continuously rescue the faith itself from becoming lost through institutional and cultural evolution and absorption, and that this rescuing, renewing process is largely unintentional and unnoticeable; it is mostly the by-product of earnest attempts at cross-cultural outreach. Western outreach, however small and pathetic in any absolute sense, has inevitably involved many church traditions in “contextualization,” the startling and astringent process of “distinguishing the leaven from the lump”—to employ Eugene Hillman’s metaphor. That process of trying to make our faith understandable cross-culturally has in many different but vital ways pumped back into the home church a constantly renewed sense of what is, and what is not, the leaven. While a communal faith requires culture, just as the crustaceans require a shell, the life is not in the shell.

Now, however, thanks in part to Lesslie Newbigin—and Beeby—I realize that the equally urgent other end of contextualization is decontextualization. Unless we become as serious about rediscovering the true faith in contrast to the assumptions of our own culture, we will trumpet an uncertain sound wherever else we go. But the root of this danger is the distinct possibility that a sending church can no longer distinguish the leaven from the lump. This is a case where we must (here at home) depend on corrective insights from our own cross-cultural workers and, yes, brothers and sisters from the other “mission lands.” Frankly, I see the world church as being more than just the result of missionary outreach. By now it is an essential element in the survival of the West itself.
Language and Culture in the Development of Bible Society Translation Theory and Practice

William A. Smalley

The Burmese Bible, translated over a period of about twenty-five years by the legendary Adoniram Judson and published finally in 1840, was one of several contemporary Bible translations into languages without Christian traditions. Unlike most of those translations, however, a rival to Judson's Burmese Bible did not begin to appear until the beginning of the twentieth century, and neither it nor any other translation has ever fully supplanted Judson's work. In contrast, William Carey's primary translation—his Bengali Bible in many revisions—had a rival before the middle of the nineteenth century, and successors to Robert Morrison's Chinese translation were already in use by then also, to cite two of Judson's illustrious contemporaries. Judson's long-lasting success at any initial translation in a new language is rare in the history of Bible translation.

Many factors contribute to making a translation lose out, and an unsuccessful attempt to replace Judson's work illustrates one of them: inadequate translation theory, which often vitiates translation efforts. When the British and Foreign Bible Society began to publish what they expected would become a replacement for the Judson translation, missionary ideas about what translation should be like had come under the influence of the English Revised Version of 1881–85. This revision of the Authorized, or King James, Version was touted as being far more accurate in its wording than its predecessor, but part of what was called "accuracy" was a heavy literalism with none of the sensitivity to English style that characterizes many passages of the King James. The people who made the new Burmese translation adopted not only the improved textual base of the ERV but also what was considered its "modern" and "scholarly" approach to translation, so that like their model, their work sank under its own wooden literalness. A whole era of missionary translators tended to do much the same.

All Bible translators have assumptions about what translation should be like and how to achieve valid results. In many cases their assumptions are not fully articulated, often showing up primarily in gut reactions to translation problems. Sometimes a single translator may hold incompatible assumptions, as when many have believed both that a translation should be narrowly literal and also that it should be highly intelligible to the reader. Sometimes a translator's assumptions are inconsistent, as when some want to translate the texts as they stand but also occasionally seek to harmonize passages that are or seem to be contradictory.

Assumptions about what constitutes translation, the purpose of translation, what translations should be like, and how translation should be done are here called theories of translation or translation theories, whether they are consciously developed and carefully articulated or not. The translation theories of individual translators grow out of cultural attitudes, education, and experience. They also come from personal predispositions, as when some translators are cautious, others innovative. Theological assumptions, particularly those about the composition, nature, and use of Scripture, are foundational. And views of language and culture are critical.

For various reasons, most Bible translators start with a predisposition toward literal translation—some out of conviction, others because they do not know what else to do. They use the vernacular but not the idiom of the vernacular. But almost all Bible translators with any sensitivity to the receptor language recognize that a translation will not do if it says, for example, "The woman who is believing on the Lord is being saved by him" or "Take up your bed and go on walking . . . and he took up his bed and was walking." They know that such literalism must be tempered, but they believe that if they "go too far" from a literal rendering, the result will be what they call paraphrase rather than translation. The more sensitive they are to the receptor language and culture, the more they may be torn by the tension between the literalism in which they believe and the need for communication that they perceive. This is a pervasive translators' dilemma.

The need to translate into languages without Christian traditions and languages with structures significantly different from Semitic and Indo-European greatly compounds the problem. European languages have long been accommodated to biblical translationisms. Terms like "propitiation" and "sanctification" may not be clear, but they are deceptively familiar if one reads certain translations or goes to certain churches. The Bible is full of fresh problems for less "biblicized" languages.

What translators lacked until the middle of this century were broad cross-linguistic and cross-cultural criteria by which to judge when a translation is both natural and faithful to the original. Nobody had studied the task of Bible translation worldwide from the perspective of the receptor languages in an attempt to find solutions to the translators' dilemma. Clearly, knowledge of the original languages and of the text, available to scholarship through the centuries, was not enough. Neither was such knowledge enough when combined with a profound knowledge of the receptor language, as may be seen in the struggle many native speakers have had when translating into their own languages.

Language and Culture in Translation Theory

Bible translation involves accommodating three sets of languages and cultures—those of the original documents, those of the readers, and those by which the Bible and the faith were mediated to the translator (and in some cases to the local church). Idiosyncratic interpretations in translations of this intermediary category tend to be reproduced in the translations of the people they influenced. Archaic or flat and stilted translations tend to become models for new translations. Anyone who tries a fresh translation into some languages finds that the previous translations have set bounds to what people expect and will accept. Breaking out of the Elizabethan English of the Authorized Ver-
sion, for example, was slow in coming and is still not yet accept-able to all English-speaking Christians.

Translations for minority groups, furthermore, are often constrained by preexisting translation in the major language of the country. In Vietnam, for example, if a translation in a language of one of the minority peoples did not match the Vietnamese translation rather literally, it became suspect. Translators who sought to communicate the meaning of Scripture by using the full resources of the minority language were cramped by the more narrow translation theories of their readers, who based their judgments on a translation in an intermediary language, good or bad.

Problematic as the effects of the mediating languages and cultures may be, ultimately the greatest difficulties that translation theories must address come primarily from differences between source and receptor languages and cultures. More than once, for example, new or prospective translators have told me that the language they were learning was so defective that it did not have a word for "love." I asked them if parents do not love their children and talk about it. Well, yes, but they use verbs, but they do not have a noun for "love." The new translators do not yet see that "God is love" may be translated naturally in such a language with a grammatical construction like "God loves" or "God is the one who loves."

Similarly, differing cultural attitudes toward sheep in different parts of the world contrast with the biblical stories and figures depicting idealized sheep. In some societies people see sheep as rather stupid animals, as dirty, and as the property of undesirable aliens. But sheep are essential to and pervasive in the text being translated. What does a translator do with nonequivalent sheep?

Ever since the Christian message was expressed in tongues other than its original ones in the first half of the first century, the Gospel has been clothed in multiple languages and has also been colored by those languages and by the cultures of which they are a part. We cannot translate into Thai without Buddhist terminology, which then gives the Christian message a Buddhist cast different from the Jewish and Greco-Roman cast of the original, or the cast given by Muslim or Hindu or Confucian terminology, or the cast of the mediating North Atlantic culture. Even the word for "God" is weak in Thai because deity is not strong in Buddhism. But although the Bible is colored by the Buddhist medium, it also challenges the medium because the Bible reverberates with the story of a strong God, and if that story is translated powerfully, it partially changes the coloring for those who hear.

Missionary Translator Response to Language and Culture

Missionary translator response in the face of languages and cultures that are radically different from their own has varied almost as widely as the response of the larger missionary commu-nity. But the need to translate forced many missionaries to take the language and culture more seriously than they might otherwise have done. Out of the repeated struggle to translate the story appropriately in that new medium has arisen much of the missionary exploration of language and culture over the past two hundred years, constrained by several overlapping types of missionary contexts: Context one is the context of the pioneer missionary; context two is that of the well-established missionary community; context three is the social science context.

Context one is represented in the work of Judson, Carey, Morrison, and their contemporaries. A few others preceded them, and many followed. These translators were forced to explore new languages and cultures in order to survive and to communicate at all. Carey passed harsh judgment on many aspects of Bengali culture but was nevertheless an insatiable student of it all of his life in India. Judson is said to have "abjured English preaching, English reading, English society" for years to immerse himself in his single-minded pursuit of Burmese.

Native speakers, members of the local culture, were the primary sources of information for context-one missionaries, although in many cases the missionaries also learned from colonial officials and others who had been on the local scene longer. But even in the latter case these missionaries drew information from the people around them rather than being taught predigested knowledge. How they used what they learned in their translations varied partly because their theories of translation varied. Their translational decisions resulted primarily from the assumptions they brought with them intersecting with what they learned from local people. Some results were remarkably good, others remarkably bad.

Not all pioneer context missionaries learned enough from native speakers to influence their work significantly, however, for several reasons: many died too soon; the home-grown theo ries of others were too strong; and some missionaries were in too much of a hurry. For example, Carl A. F. Gutzlaff (of later fame in China) spent less than three years in Siam, during which time he translated the whole Bible into "imperfect Siamese" and portions into Lao and Cambodian.

The second context consists of missionary communities already in place, usually with churches already established, some translation already done, patterns of communicating the Gospel already habitualized. In this consolidation context new missionaries often learned as much or more from their senior colleagues as from local people. In any case, the new missionaries were expected to conform to the ways and ideas of the earlier missionaries. Native speakers were still their language tutors, but experienced missionaries set up the curriculum for their study, examined them on it, set the bounds of what was considered important to learn, and taught them how the missionary community judged aspects of the language and culture.

For example, one young second-generation missionary re-turned to the African language she had spoken until she went to the States for college. Like all new missionaries in her mission, before she could be accepted as a full-fledged colleague, she was required to complete a two-year language course designed by missionaries of her parents' generation and to pass examinations given by those missionaries. On the one hand, senior missionaries recognized that her knowledge of the language was in some ways already superior to their own and soon appointed her to the Bible translation committee. They also recognized that she was doubtful right when she pointed out mistakes in the language course. On the other hand, instead of freeing her to explore deeper aspects of the language than she had known as a teen-
In the meantime, however, not all later missionaries became trapped by context two. A number continued to live and work in pioneer contexts as contemporaries of the consolidation-context people. Some were forced to do so because they worked where other missionaries had not preceded them. But curiosity, the challenge to understand ways of life other than their own, and the desire to communicate meaningfully also drove them on.

Some explored the local language and culture in spite of opposition from senior context-two people who did not want them wasting their time with “heathen” things. Some of them fulfilled the mission study requirements set by their seniors but learned vastly more from local people as well. Some wrote valuable ethnographies or grammars or dictionaries based on years of investigation. Ironically, these added not only to the contemporary development of anthropology and of linguistics but also to the material that later context-two missionaries would study in place of learning directly from the people themselves.

For example, Maurice Leenhardt of the Paris Missionary Society was a notable pioneer-context missionary scholar in New Caledonia in the first quarter of the twentieth century—one hundred years after Carey, Morrison, and Judson. Every step he made in translating the New Testament, in teaching the Christian leaders, and in leading the congregations was marked by his own intensive search within New Caledonian language and culture and by drawing the New Caledonians into the discussion of alternative ways of saying things. But older context-two missionaries in the Loyalty Islands 150 miles away knew better and forced changes more to their liking. Leenhardt did not return to New Caledonia but became a leading French anthropologist and authority on Pacific cultures.

The third, or social science, context developed in the mid-twentieth century. Context-three missionary translators are like those of context one in that they focus on learning from people in the local culture, but they do so equipped with new tools and insights gained from disciplines that specialize in that kind of learning. They usually have some significant degree of training in linguistics, some influence from anthropology, and some exposure to the translation theory that has been developing in their same environment. Today the long-standing flow of information from translators to anthropology and linguistics also meets another tide of information flowing from those disciplines and others into Bible translation.

Several earlier people had noted and promoted the possibilities especially of linguistics in the formation of missionaries, but it was W. Cameron Townsend who in 1934 started what became the most extensive context-three training program for prospective Bible translators. It was built on the emerging field of descriptive linguistics, which Townsend had found helpful when translating the New Testament into Cakchiquel of Guatemala.

The Summer Institute of Linguistics (Wycliffe Bible Translators) grew rapidly and has trained several thousand would-be social-science-context missionary translators around the world, sponsoring many of them to translate under its own auspices. Much of this success became possible primarily because by 1939 two unusually gifted young men were regular teachers at the summer training program. Of these, Kenneth L. Pike ultimately developed into a leading linguistic theoretician and the intellectual flag bearer of SIL. And Eugene A. Nida, who first shared with Pike the leadership role in SIL linguistics, eventually moved out and led in the formulation of an applicable, teachable theory of translation within the Bible societies.

Ostensible context-three missionary translators around the world vary widely in the depth of their commitment to, and their skill in learning from, local people. Some have great aptitude, others not. They range in training from doctorates in linguistics or anthropology to one three-month course or less. Many do not balance their efforts to learn and analyze the local language with equal sophistication in the original biblical languages. Many do not balance their linguistics with equal sensitivity to local nonlinguistic culture. Many who have had context-three training still act like context-two missionaries. But without question, in the aggregate social-science-context missionary translators have radically changed Bible translation.

The context-three approach to missionary translation, which got its first major impetus in SIL, was adapted to a wider constituency when Nida began working with the American Bible Society in 1944 and eventually became executive secretary for translations. Instead of waiting in New York for manuscripts and inquiries to come to him, as his predecessors had done, in true context-three fashion he traveled all over the world for months at a time, working with translators, studying the linguistic and cultural problems they faced, seeking to generalize the search for solutions, and influencing the process of translation before manuscripts ever arrived at the Bible society for publication. This was
the watershed point in the development of Bible society translation theory and practice.

Nida soon began writing and teaching what he was learning, with books entitled Bible Translating, Toward a Science of Translating, and The Theory and Practice of Translation. Under his leadership, translation consultants of the American Bible Society and later the United Bible Societies conducted translator seminars all over the world, published many helps for translators, and issued a quarterly journal called the Bible Translator. They criticized and taught his ideas, adding refinements (or at least variations) of their own. In the early days most of them were anthropological linguists, soon joined by biblical scholars. Substantially the same theoretical point of view was also held and taught by some members of SIL, a few of whom also contributed textbooks. During the 1950s the translations department of the ABS also indirectly sponsored Practical Anthropology, a small journal in which context-three missionaries could share what they were learning about culture and cultures. Nida also published Customs and Cultures, an influential book among missionary translators.

Dynamic Equivalence Translation

Context three was thus the climate in which developed what is now the body of translation theory most widely applied to Bible translation around the world. It came after and was informed by 150 years of explosion in the number of translations into new languages. It added roots in linguistics, anthropology, and communication theory to the roots in biblical studies already nurturing Bible translation. Nida first called the theory dynamic equivalence translation, switching to functional equivalence translation in the 1980s. Mildred L. Larson of SIL calls it meaning-based translation in what currently seems to be the best textbook on the subject.

Dynamic equivalence translation, as I will continue to call it, is like a stone with at least six major, mutually interreflecting facets. Each of them, in turn, has many subfacets and angles, which we cannot explore here.

Dynamic equivalence translation first assumes that the translator will do everything possible to arrive at and translate a well-founded understanding of the meaning of the text, based on the best resources available from biblical studies. But as the history of translation and of biblical studies has shown, this assumption raises some difficult questions, like How is the text to be translated in light of the complexity of the Bible's composition and transmission? and Whose interpretation of the meaning do we follow? In practice, answers to the first question are partially suggested by the Greek and Hebrew texts that were edited by ecumenical committees of scholars and published by the United Bible Societies. Answers to the second question are partially suggested in translators' handbooks concerning the various books of the Bible.

The second facet of dynamic equivalence translation is its insistence that to translate means not only to understand the meaning of the source text but also to express that meaning in clear natural equivalents. Most earlier translations around the world did not meet this criterion, for literalness does not lead to naturalness. The questions posed by this facet are monumental: What does faithfulness to the biblical text mean in light of cultural and linguistic differences Western biblical scholars never dreamed of? What is cross-cultural linguistic and cultural equivalence? Much of the discussion and experimentation within dynamic equivalence theory has dealt with ways of handling such issues.

The third facet of dynamic equivalence translation is its communicative and missiological focus. It assumes that the Bible as translated into any language should be accessible to all kinds of people, and that the message of the Bible should be clear and convincing on all levels of society. The Bible should be read and understood by non-Christians as well as by Christians, by new Christians as well as by ones with long Christian experience, by laity as well as the theologically trained, by working-class people and the unemployed as well as by the elite, by people of limited education as well as by the well educated, by people with fragile literacy as well as those who read well. It should be suitable for hearing when read aloud as well as for private reading and study. The ultimate measure of any translation is to compare what varied readers of the translation actually understand with what the original readers are believed to have understood, and what the modern readers feel with what the original readers probably felt. Such an assumption entails not only the question of equivalence again but adds complications like, How can any translation be made equivalent for people with such an array of linguistic and cultural levels of experience, and if it cannot, how can the need be met? Concepts such as "common language translation" and "popular language translation" have grown up within dynamic equivalent translation to suggest partial answers. At present, also, an ABS team is engaged in intensive study and experimentation with computer-interactive audiovisual hypertexts for selections from the Bible.

The fourth facet of the theory is the assumption that texts are structured in many meaningful ways and that equivalency applies in some degree to the meaning of each type of structure, but most fully to the meaning of the whole. Thus, the Bible in the original languages has grammatical structures, meaning structures, the structural organization of ideas, poetry/prose structures, rhetorical structures, genre structures, plus others. Literal translation tends to restrict its consideration of equivalency to words and phrases, maybe sentences. It rarely considers equivalency of paragraphs or of stories or of whole books. Dynamic equivalence translation struggles with some of these multiple layers of equivalency and asks, for example, Is the translation of Ruth in a given language an equivalent story to the original story? Or does it come out as a plot between an alien woman and her scheming mother-in-law to gain security and status by seducing a wealthy landowner? Does the translation of any particular psalm provide the modern reader with an equivalent expression to that provided early Hebrews by the Hebrew psalm? Research into this growing area of the theory, often called discourse analysis, is not yet as fully developed as some of the others.

The fifth facet of the theory of dynamic equivalence translation results from the fact that cultural behavior has meaning and that behavior depicted in the Bible may be misinterpreted because it conveys a different meaning to the reader. When people beat their breasts in sorrow in the Bible, that action in another
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Dr. Charles E. Van Engen, associate professor of theology of mission in Fuller's School of World Mission, is a veteran of 12 years of teaching pastors on the mission field in Mexico and is a published author of a number of works, including God's Missionary People.
Behavior depicted in the Bible may be wrongly interpreted because it conveys a different meaning to the reader.

keeping with other criteria, the translation should enable the reader to understand the events depicted. Yet the Bible is describing particular sets of peoples with their own particular characteristics that God used historically to carry God’s message. Biblical cultures, biblical societies, and biblically recounted behavior are themselves often integral parts of the history of faith, thus part of the message. So how can translation be made meaningfully equivalent without distorting the biblical cultures that carry the message? This question remains one of the most perplexing facets of the theory.

Finally, the sixth facet, the one at the center of the stone and touching on all the others, is that meaning takes precedence over form, over literalism, that a formal correspondence that does not adequately convey the meaning of the source text to the reader in natural fashion is not suitably equivalent. However, when the form itself has significant meaning, that meaning of the form should be reflected in the translation as much as possible. Thus biblical parallelism, repetition, and chiastic structures often carry their own meanings in the original, with different parts of the structures often highlighting, reinforcing, or clarifying each other. Such meaning is not usually captured in the translation unless the translator uses equivalent ways of highlighting, reinforcing and clarifying characteristics of the receptor language. Literal

Noteworthy

Announcing

The Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, Connecticut, announces the 1995 grantees of the Research Enablement Program. Eighteen scholars, representing Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, Germany, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malawi, Myanmar, Nigeria, Peru, the United States, and Vietnam received awards for research projects in the study of Christian Mission and World Christianity. The Research Enablement Program is funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and administered by OMSC. The grants, which will be dispensed for work in the 1995-1996 academic year, total approximately $252,000.

Gerald H. Anderson, OMSC's director who also serves as director of the REP and chair of the Review and Selection Committee, states, “The number of high quality applications from the non-Western world dramatically increased this year. The Committee is particularly pleased to have awarded over half of the grants to scholars from the southern and eastern continents.”

This year the REP received 139 applications. Twenty percent of the applicants were women, and over fifty percent were citizens of countries outside Europe and North America. The grantees represent a variety of ecclesial communities.

The REP is designed to support both younger scholars undertaking dissertation field research and established scholars engaged in major writing projects dealing with Christian mission and Christianity in the non-Western world. The grantees, listed by category, are as follows:

Postdoctoral Book Research and Writing

Waldo Aranha Lenz Cesar, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro: “Pentecostal Responses in Brazil to the Suffering of the Poor: An Interdisciplinary Study of Recent Theological Developments”


Richard H. Elphick, Wesleyan University: “Mission Christians and South African Social Thought”

Juan Samuel Escobar, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary: “From Millennial Dreams to Socio-Political Agendas: The Coming of Age of Peruvian Protestantism”

Gail O. King, Brigham Young University: “Candida Xu and the Growth of Christianity in Seventeenth Century China”

Matthews Akintunde Ojo, Obafemi Awolowo University: “Perspectives on Missions and Missionary Enterprises among Nigerian Charismatic Movements”

Peter Cho Phan, Catholic University of America: “Religious Inculturation into the Vietnamese Society: A Study of Alexandre de Rhodes’ Contribution to Vietnamese Culture”


Dissertation Field Research

May M. Cheng, University of Hong Kong: “Christianity Fever: Contagion and Constraint of a Religious Movement in Contemporary China”


translation will not usually do it. But biblical scholarship does not always provide answers to what purposes the literary structures of the Bible served. We ask, "How should the structural meanings be translated if we are not sure what they are?"

Dynamic equivalence translation thus takes age-old problems of Bible translation and studies them from several angles: missionary purpose, worldwide missionary experience, linguistics, cultural anthropology, and communication theory, in addition to biblical exegesis. It also includes new, nontraditional concerns coming from recent study of language, culture, and communication. None of its assumptions can ever be implemented in full, for there is always loss in translation, and the translator must weigh the sometimes conflicting demands of different facets. Overall, however, it has elevated the level of translation problems from superficial words, phrases, and sentences to deeper issues of structure, style, and culture. Sometimes, to be sure, it is weakly applied and not very successful, but in most cases it has led to more readily accessible translations and has occasionally been applied with brilliance.

The multifaceted stone that is dynamic equivalence translation reflects the message in different ways as it is turned in the light. In some translations one or more of the facets is more prominent than the others. Some facets are more adequately developed and implemented in the theory than others. Translators exercise considerable "elasticity" in their application and have different levels of skill. The combination of these facets makes the translator's task far more complex than the task of anyone who translates literally. The missiological result, however, is also far more profound.

In a recent insightful critical review of the theory, Carson judges that with a minimal number of deliberate exceptions, aspects of dynamic equivalence translation have largely prevailed even in Western language translations that are not intended for missionary purposes and even when the translators judge their own work to be literal. Although some of these translators still prefer the more literal end of the continuum, under the influence of dynamic equivalence theory, that end has itself shifted more toward what was the center. Once more in history, creative forces first felt on the frontiers of the world church have spread back to older parts of the church as well.

Daniel P. Míguez, Free University of Amsterdam: "Pentecostal Growth, Faith and Community in the Suburbs of Buenos Aires"
Peter VonDoepp, University of Florida: "Churches and Political Change in Malawi"

Missiological Consultations
L. R. Bawla, Presbyterian Church of Myanmar: "First Ecumenical Missiological Consultation, Myanmar"
C. René Padilla, Kairos Foundation: "Biblical Perspectives on Mission: A Latin American Contextual Approach"
Andrew Wainwright Thornley, Pacific Theological College: "One Hundred and Sixty Years of Methodism in Fiji: Retrospect and Prospect"

Planning Grant for Major Interdisciplinary Project

In addition to these mission research grants, the Pew Charitable Trusts have announced the awarding of a $310,000 three-year grant in support of a major collaborative missiological research project. The "University of South Africa Project on African Mission Initiatives," with Inus Daneel (University of South Africa) as its international coordinator, has been awarded through Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts. A second major project, "Emergence of Popular Catholicism in the World Christian Movement," headed by Jean-Paul Wiester (Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America, Inc. a.k.a. Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers), has been awarded $304,000 over three years. The members of the Review and Selection Committee for the 1994 round of grantmaking in this field of collaborative research were: Joel A. Carpenter (PCT Religion Director), Alan Neely (Princeton Theological Seminary), Lamin Sanneh (Yale University, Divinity School), and A. Christopher Smith.

The 1995 annual meetings of the American Society of Missiology and the Association of Professors of Mission will be held jointly, June 15-18, at Techny, Illinois (near Chicago). The theme of the meeting will be "Mission Studies: Taking Stock, Charting the Course." Wilbert R. Shenk is president of the ASM and Anthony Gittins, C.S.Sp., is president of the APM. For further information and registration, contact George Hunsberger, Western Theological Seminary, 101 East 13th Street, Holland Michigan 49423-3622. (Fax: 616-392-7717).

Personalia
On May 1, 1995, Joachim Wietzke will become General Secretary of the Northelbian Center for World Mission and Church World Service of the Northelbian Evangelical-Lutheran Church (NMZ) in Hamburg, Germany. Since 1984 he has been Director of Evangelischen Missionswerk (EMW) in Hamburg, and also General Secretary of the International Association for Mission Studies (IAMS). His successor in the EMW and IAMS posts is Klaus Schäfer, former missionary in India who has a doctorate in New Testament from Hamburg University.

Died. David G. Scotchmer, 51, Presbyterian missionary and linguist of the Mam language (Mayan) of Guatemala, 1969-1983, and Associate Professor of Mission and Evangelism, University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, on February 25, 1995, in Dubuque, Iowa.

Died. James E. Goff, 78, Presbyterian missionary for 38 years in Colombia, Mexico, Peru and Nicaragua, on July 23, 1994, in Claremont, California.


Died. Christian G. Bäta, 86, one of the most eminent African churchmen and scholars of his generation, on December 29, 1994, in Ghana.

Education and Application

Theory without skillful application will not produce good translations, so the Bible society translation consultants work to educate translators in the theory and to help them to apply it to their translation problems. But from the beginning the most helpful influence on translators has come from a process of guiding them to discover for themselves sample inadequacies in their own translations and from suggesting how each example could be overcome. Native speakers become the measuring stick as the translation consultant (who usually does not know the language) asks them to explain in some language they have in common the meaning of passages taken from their translation. As misunderstandings or lack of clarity emerge, the consultant analyzes the probable cause and makes suggestions that the translators try out on the spot so that they gradually learn some of the theory through its application. Missionaries learn to ask more helpful questions. Both missionaries and native speakers work with more assurance, having learned better to resolve their problems.

Simply to illustrate how the theory has helped Bible translators all over the world, I will mention two elementary concepts that come up immediately when translators begin to learn to use their words as verbs. Thus, “John, who baptized people, appeared in the wilderness.” The most natural translation of such events into many languages requires rendering some or all of them as verbs. Thus, “John, who baptized people, appeared in the wilderness.” He preached that they should repent and be baptized, and that God would forgive the evil they had done.

This example also illustrates another entry-level concept of wide applicability for translators. None of the words that seem to have been “added” in the “translation” above—such as “people” and “God” in various places—actually added to or changed the meaning. These meanings were already implicit in the meanings of the English (and Greek) string of events represented by nouns. Translating events as verbs usually requires that the implicit participants be made explicit.

Similarly, on one level of culture, “in one of the languages of central New Guinea one can speak of God’s forgiveness only by saying, ‘God doesn’t hang up jawbones.’ In English we ‘love with the heart,’ but in many languages in West Africa one must ‘love with the liver.’ Strangely enough we speak of the larynx as ‘Adam’s apple,’ while the Uduks of the Sudan call it ‘the thing that loves beer.’” Such idioms carry the color of culture, but the reality of language. They are local means of expression, the use of which may be important in translation.

But cultural equivalences in the receptor language cannot always be so readily used. The cross, for example, was a cultural instrument of torture and execution characteristic of a particular civilization, a particular time and place. Dynamic equivalence translation rejects using a noose, an electric chair, burial up to the neck in sand near a colony of fire ants, stoning, spearing, or any other such cultural equivalent, as a translation of “cross.” The meaning to be translated is precisely what was done to Jesus in his particular time and place. Idioms may have culturally appropriate local equivalences, but a historical event does not, only analogues. The translation is made in order to tell what happened when it happened, and the way it happened.

In its most profound sense, dynamic equivalence translation, like most other missionary translation, grows from roots deep in the local culture. For example, adopting a local term for God makes a powerful statement about cultural equivalence, even as the translation alters what people understand about God. In Thai the weak term for God occurs in such preposterous sentences, from a Buddhist point of view, as “God is love.” In Buddhism love attaches and engages, and thus brings sorrow, trouble, and suffering, the antithesis of ideal Buddhist detachment. But the Bible tells the story of an active God, saving, defending, and above all loving so much that Jesus died for people, having participated in their sorrow, trouble, and suffering. This is new fruit grafted on Buddhist cultural roots.

From Missionary Translators to Native Speakers as Translators

In keeping with the times in which dynamic equivalence theory developed among Bible translators, I have emphasized the missionary role. But even context-two translators normally worked at least to some degree with native speakers, although missionaries normally controlled the process and made the decisions, especially in earlier times. Today native speakers have taken over much of the task of Bible translation from missionaries around the world.
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to that of the missionaries, and as fewer missionaries had a profound knowledge of the language. But even where not much of a church yet exists and education is low, responsibility for translation has often shifted completely or in part to native speakers. One way of marking the beginning of this trend is by the first article to describe and advocate it in the Bible Translator, in 1969.

The advantages that native speakers have over missionaries as Bible translators are weighty, but they do not eliminate the need for a coherent and applicable theory of translation. Several hundred who are translating into their own native languages have learned dynamic equivalence translation in UBS and SIL workshops and other training programs and follow it to varying degrees. Present UBS translation consultants work a great deal with such people.

Some people from the younger churches are also contributing to the development and spread of dynamic equivalence translation theory as UBS translation consultants now include people from the Philippines, Taiwan, Burma, Ceylon, and some African and Latin American countries.

On the one hand, the worldwide church is returning steadily to an older pattern, the one usually followed before the nineteenth century, when most translation was done by people translating into their own languages. On the other hand, the church now generally sees the process of translation through different eyes. Whether native speakers or missionaries, translators can now learn about, debate, and apply the linguistic and cultural sides of translation issues with more conscious sophistication than could Carey, Morrison, Judson, or their native-speaker predecessors. Still, we also know that much more is yet to be learned and that translation remains a multifaceted art that some people practice with skill and insight but that others fail to apply at a suitable normal and eloquent level of equivalence. And we remember Judson, Leenhardt, and others ahead of their times who discovered for themselves enough about language and culture in meaningful translation to stand far above most of their contemporaries, and also of ours.

Notes

1. In fairness to Carey, we should note that one reason why his Bengali translation spawned rivals so soon lay in ecclesiastical politics; he was a Baptist in a country where most missionaries were Anglican. Nevertheless, the limitations of his translation were severe. See William A. Smalley, Translation as Mission: Bible Translation in the Modern Missionary Movement (Macon, Ga.: Mercer Univ. Press, 1991), pp. 47–52.

2. I do not mean to imply that longevity is necessarily good for a Bible translation. Languages change, and new insights into the Bible need to be brought into new translations. Longevity also tends to create an unhealthy "King James effect," where people assume anything different from the old translation is wrong.


4. I do not believe this term has any place in serious discussion of translation. All translation is paraphrase in the sense of "saying the same thing in different words," and the use of "paraphrase" as a pejorative term is not precise enough for identifying what may or may not be wrong with an attempted translation.


6. For a rich source of examples illustrating the problems created, and a thoughtful discussion of their solutions, see Ernst R. Wendland, The Cultural Factor in Bible Translation (London: United Bible Societies, 1987).

7. I should make it explicit here that I am talking about Protestant missionaries. I do not know how closely such contexts constrained Catholics.

8. Smalley, Translation as Mission, pp. 43–47.


12. The development of English as a world language widely known and sought after by people everywhere has more recently created context four, the language-avoidance context. With the increasing accessibility of many people who speak English, it is often easy now for missionaries to find excuses for not learning the local language at any depth. Also, as native speakers have developed into translators, many Westerners—even ones serving as biblical exegetes on the translation committee—sometimes now think that they can get away with less knowledge of local languages and cultures than their precursors could. See William A. Smalley, "Missionary Language Learning in a World Hierarchy of Languages" (paper read to Congress on Language Learning, August 8–12, 1993); William A. Smalley, Linguistic Diversity and National Unity: Language Ecology in Thailand (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 343–45.


14. Practical Anthropology was started by Robert Taylor in 1953 as a forum for communication between Christians in academic anthropology. About 1956, after becoming an associate of Nida, I became editor and shifted its focus to deal primarily with the cross-cultural communication problems of missionaries.


16. SIL and the Bible societies were not alone in expanding social-science-context missionary translation in its early years. For a time, for example, the Kennedy School of Missions of the Hartford Seminary Foundation had an excellent linguistics/anthropology program, and Fuller Theological Seminary later continued some of that tradition, especially in anthropology. See, for example, Charles H. Kraft, Christianity in Culture: A Study in Dynamic Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1981).

17. Nida, Toward a Science; Nida and Taber, Theory and Practice.


20. Different translators have different levels of competence in biblical studies and therefore make use of different resources.


Betsey Stockton: Pioneer American Missionary

Eileen F. Moffett

Born to a slave mother about 1798 in Princeton, New Jersey, Betsey Stockton was the first unmarried woman missionary ever sent by a North American mission agency beyond the borders of the United States. She went to the Sandwich Islands back in 1822, when James Monroe was president of this young Republic.

We know little about Betsey’s family except that her mother was owned by Robert Stockton, one of Princeton’s distinguished citizens whose home was “Constitution Hill.” Robert was a cousin of Richard Stockton, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and both of them were grandsons of one of the original pioneer settlers of the town. There is no record of Betsey’s father at all, and it seems likely that she never knew who he was, though either her father or grandfather was probably a white man, since in her will she describes herself as a mulatto.

But her story, even with some pieces lost, is particularly fascinating because of its precedent-breaking character. A black, a slave, a woman, and the first single woman missionary from North America.

When Betsey was a small child, Robert Stockton gave her as a little servant girl to his oldest daughter, Elizabeth, who was the wife of a Presbyterian minister in Philadelphia named Ashbel Green. The Greens had three sons, Robert, Jacob, and James. James, the youngest, was six years old when, back in Princeton on his grandfather Stockton’s farm, the little slave girl, Betsey Stockton, was born.

Much later, Dr. Green, in a letter of recommendation for Betsey, supporting her application as a missionary candidate, wrote: “By me and my wife she was never intended to be held as a slave.” Dr. Green was a strong antislavery advocate of his day, as was his Presbyterian minister father before him. Green’s letter continued: “We deliberated seriously on the subject of dedicating her to God in baptism. But on the whole concluded not to do it. Betsey gave no evidence of piety, or of any permanent seriousness till she was near twenty years old. On the contrary, she was, at least till the age of thirteen or fourteen, wild and thoughtless, if not vicious. She always, however, manifested a great degree of natural sensibility, and of attachment to me and to her first mistress; and a great aptitude for mental improvement.”

So we know that Elizabeth and Ashbel Green had discussed the question of her baptism. There was, however, some ambiguity in Presbyterian Church law as to whether believing masters and mistresses who had slave children under their care should see it as their duty and responsibility to baptize them and oversee their Christian nurture—or whether such children might be presented only by believing parents. For whatever reason, the Greens decided not to sponsor her baptism, even though they took seriously their responsibility to instruct and nurture her and their other domestics in Christian faith and life.

Of Betsey’s growing-up years we have only snatches of information. We know that she was precocious and, by Dr. Green’s account, became alarmingly wild and willful. She was treated in their household kindly as a little servant girl, and one for whom they had a growing affection. She was systematically tutored in the academic and spiritual disciplines given their own children.

Elizabeth Stockton Green died in 1807, when Betsey was about nine years old. Betsey stayed on with the family for all but three or four of her childhood and early teenage years. She was included in family prayers and “home-schooled” by Dr. Green, who often heard her catechism lessons, and by his son, James, who took a particular interest in her education. She developed a sisterly affection for James and his older brother, Jacob, and later in Hawaii took pains to collect and send home to Jacob from the...
Jersey (now Princeton University). He had married a second time in his home, and the young girl made the most of it. Green's worries about the unhealthy influences of Philadelphia city life on this impressionable young girl.

During the winter term of 1814–15 at the college in Princeton, a remarkable and spontaneous "revival of religion" took place under Dr. Green's tenure. As well as reinstating the study of Latin and Greek into the curriculum, Green had organized a College Bible Society and offered regular instruction in the sacred Scriptures, examining the students himself on their knowledge of the Bible. Each Sabbath day the young men of the college and of the theological seminary next door gathered together at Nassau Hall for worship. When the revival broke out in early 1815, the atmosphere of community life among the students was greatly affected for good, and this eventually spilled over into Betsey's life. She attributes her conversion, though, to the ministry of a seminary student, Eliphalet Wheeler Gilbert, over a year later, in the summer of 1816, while sitting in the gallery of Princeton's First Presbyterian (now Nassau) Church.

The session minutes of that congregation record that on September 20, 1816, "Betsey Stockton, a coloured woman living in the family of the Rev. Dr. Green, applied for admission to the Lord's table." The session was satisfied as to the evidence of what they called her "experimental acquaintance with religion" and her good conduct and agreed to receive her into full communicant membership. She was publicly baptized at that time and admitted to the Lord's Table. It was sometime either that year or within the next two years that she was legally manumitted by Dr. Green.

Betsey's Growing Interest in Mission

Betsey's maturing Christian faith gradually gave form in her mind to a sense of the duty that Christians bear toward the "lost" of the world. This was a clear reflection of the American evangelical faith of her times represented by Dr. Green, by the seminary students who were her Bible teachers, and by her own pastor in the First Presbyterian Church in Princeton. All of them shared this Christian worldview, which was grounded on the premise of the love of God in Jesus Christ for the whole world—and the conviction that salvation is found only in Christ. Betsey believed with all her heart that it is the sacred duty of Christians to offer themselves in humble obedience to God's call to carry out his plan of salvation through Jesus Christ for the world. This persuasion soon blossomed into a desire to go to Africa as a missionary. Some of her friends opposed her plan, but she continued to read and study, hoping for such an opportunity.

During this time she started a little class of instruction for several black children of the Princeton community. And for about a year and a half she was a member of a Sabbath school class taught by a seminary student, Michael Osborn, who was impressed by her serious scholarship. When eventually called upon for a letter of recommendation, he wrote: "She has a larger acquaintance with sacred history and the Mosaic Institutions than almost any ordinary person, old or young, I have ever known." (He explained that by "ordinary" he meant one not a member of the clergy or a candidate for the ministry.) Osborn went on to say: "I recollect a multitude of instances where, for my own information, I have questioned her about some fact in Biblical history, or some minute point in Jewish antiquities, and have immediately received a correct answer." Dr. Green was not among those who tried to discourage Betsey's missionary ambitions, although he must have wondered what opportunity she might ever have for such a commission, particularly as a single woman.

American Protestants were not yet ready to send single women overseas without a protector. There were all kinds of problems to overcome in even considering such a radical step. For one thing, there was the danger that a single woman, who would be expected to live in a married missionary's home, might be imposed upon to act as little more than a domestic servant or built-in baby sitter. And there was also the risk that the people among whom they worked would assume that the male missionary kept two wives.

Betsey Stockton and a Princeton Seminary student, Charles Stewart, had been acquainted for several years, since he had been in and out of the Greens' home often from his earliest days as a college student. Stewart had been one of those converted during the period of spiritual awakening among the students in 1815, and he attributed to Dr. Green's preaching and counsel the first effectual turning of his heart to the Lord and to a missionary purpose.

When Betsey learned that this young friend and his bride-to-be were going out as missionaries to the Sandwich Islands, her heart must have skipped a beat in wondering whether it might be possible for her to accompany them. She was well trained in domestic concerns, had skills as a nurse through useful life experience, and was also well prepared as a teacher, though without a day of public instruction in her life, apart from that received at home and church. But the possibility of her accompanying the Stewarts as a missionary must have seemed at first preposterous.

Nevertheless, on September 3, 1821, Dr. Ashbel Green wrote a letter to the secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions recommending Charles Stewart as a missionary candidate and, as he noted in his diary, another "one for my Betty." "She had saved her wages," he said, "by which, with some small assistance from myself, she was able to prepare her outfit for the mission." We can only guess at the negotiations that had been taking place in designing the innovative plan that resulted in her trailblazing appointment. While the "mission family" concept was not guaranteed to forestall a possible misunderstanding about a missionary keeping two wives, it did at least provide protection and security for a single woman. The arrangement agreed upon was that Betsey would become part of Charles and Harriet Stewart's family.

Stewart had graduated from Princeton Seminary in 1821 and was married in June of 1822. Five months later, on November 19, the Stewarts and Betsey, bound as a family in this unique but happy association, joined the little band of eleven other missionaries and four native islanders leaving American shores to go as the first reinforcements to the Sandwich Islands mission established by its pioneers three years earlier. These islands, which we now call Hawaii, were discovered by Captain James Cook in 1778 and named for the Earl of Sandwich, who had invented one of the
most enduring fast foods of the Western world. The mission was under the direction of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, with its headquarters in Boston. This board, known as the ABCFM, was the joint missionary agency of the Presbyterian and Congregational churches in America at that time.

It was still true then, and for quite a while longer, that only the ordained men had a vote in the mission and were officially appointed “missionaries.” Wives and single women were “assistant missionaries,” without vote. But it only fair to say that the same was true for a time, of unordained men such as physicians and printers. And one of the reasons for that was undoubtedly the fact that American evangelical Christians between 1810 and 1840 considered the proclamation (i.e., preaching) of the Gospel to be the highest priority in missions. Wives, teachers, physicians, and other workers were important partners to the preachers, but in a secondary role. It was the preachers who most unequivocally bore the name “missionary.” So, it was as a member of a “mission family” that Betsey’s dream of becoming a missionary, even an “assistant missionary,” was worked out.

Betsey’s appointment was carefully worded to define her status. The official document, still in the ABCFM archives, spelled out the essentials of this unusual appointment. Among other stipulations, it read: “She is to be regarded and treated, neither as an equal nor as a servant, but as a humble Christian friend.” The wording may have been a bit ambiguous but not paralyzingly so. And by this distinctive appointment Betsey Stockton became a missionary.

In the first letter that Betsey wrote home to Dr. Green during the long five-month voyage, she confessed to “the most deathlike sickness I ever felt in my life, occasioned by the motion of the ship. Every person in the mission, except Mr. Stuart and Kermoola [one of the returning islanders], was sick at the same time. The weather became very boisterous . . . I am happy to tell you that since I left home, in all the storms and dangers I have been called to witness, I have never lost my self-possession. This I consider as a fulfillment of the promise that as my day is, so my strength shall be. But we have not yet come to the most trying part of the voyage. We are now near the coast of Africa, and I fear I shall not act the Christian, in the thunder storms which are to be expected here.”

She continued: “I wish it was in my power to give the ladies of your family some account of our manner of living . . . sometimes in imagination, I visit them in the night, and get a piece of bread; for there is nothing I have wanted so much since I left home, of the provision kind, as bread. Ours is pilot-bread and crackers, and by using them in our seasickness I took a dislike to them. But we have pudding, boiled rice, and mush once a week, and beans, potatoes, boiled onions, fruit, etc. The cook, however, is a dirty man, and we are obliged to eat without asking questions. While I was sick, they gave me a mug of chicken soup—the grease, the pepper, and the feathers, floated together on the surface.” She went on to describe their sleeping arrangements and how her hammock pitched and rolled. “Whenever my head went to leeward and my feet to windward, which was the case every five minutes, it made me very sick . . . The second night the ship rolled without pitching, and I was thrown back and forth as fast as I could go, until about 12 o’clock at night, when . . . I was thrown up, first against the ceiling and then on the dining table . . . The water running on the deck, and the trunks falling in the cabin, allowed me to think very little of myself.”

Later on a calmer day she wrote in her journal, “If it were in my power I would like to describe the phosphorescence of the sea. But to do this would require the pen of a Milton: and he, I think, would fail, were he to attempt it.”

Finally the long five-month voyage ended, and their schooner pulled into the harbor at Honolulu. Betsey described her feelings at the first sight of the native islanders, who came out to welcome them in little canoes, as a chilling effect. “They were mostly naked except for a narrow strip of tapa around their loins. When they first came on board, the ladies retired to the cabin and burst into tears; and some of the gentlemen turned pale . . . my own soul sickened within me, and every nerve trembled. Are these, thought I, the beings with whom I must spend the remainder of my life? They are men and have souls—was the reply which conscience made . . . We informed them that we were missionaries, come to live with them and do them good. At which an old man exclaimed, in his native dialect, ‘. . . That is very good. By and by know God.’” Betsey went on to say: “In a short time our unpleasant feelings were much dissipated.” One morning a few days after they landed, the queen spoke to a messenger asking solicitously, “Have they hog still?” “Yes,” he answered. “Any dog?” “No eat dog.” “Any potatoes?” “No.” “Any melons?” “No.” An order was immediately given, and two men were despatched with potatoes and melons for the missionaries. “In fact,” they wrote, “no Christian congregation in America could, in this respect, have received a clergyman, coming to administer the word of life to them, with greater hospitality, or stronger expressions of love and good will.”

After about a month at the mission base in Honolulu, Betsey Stockton and her family, Charles and Harriet Stewart, together with Mr. and Mrs. Richards, were sent to open a new mission station on the island of Maui at a place called Lahaina. There was by then also a baby with them, little Charles Stewart, who had been born on board ship just before they landed in Honolulu.

Betsey was greatly skilled in all matters related to caring for a household, including care of the sick, which was providential, since Harriet Stewart was quite ill for weeks at a time during their residence in the islands. This valuable friend and companion threw herself into the concerns of the Stewart family and the small mission station at Lahaina. But perhaps her most notable contribution as a missionary assistant in the Sandwich Islands was as a teacher. It is significant that she helped to organize and was put in charge of the first school in the islands open to commoners—predominantly farmers. She wrote to Ashbel Green in 1824: “I have now a fine school of the . . . lower class of people, the first, I believe, that has ever been established.” Charles Stewart wrote that these common folk had made application for books and slates and a teacher. So, beginning with about thirty individuals, this school was formed in the chapel, meeting every afternoon under the superintendence of Betsey, who, he said, “is quite familiar with the native tongue.” Other missionaries had established the first schools in the islands, usually attended by the upper classes. Betsey, the former slave, was the first to organize a school for the disadvantaged.
Return to New Service in America

After only two and a half years in Hawaii, Mrs. Stewart became so ill that their whole family, including a new little daughter born to the Stewarts during that time, found it necessary to return to America. Betsey chose to leave with them. They were offered a gratuitous passage to England by Captain Dale of the English whalship *Fawn*. After a six-month voyage, from October 15, 1825, until April 1826, they arrived at the English port of Gravesend. Following a layover of several months in London, they continued the return journey to America, arriving at New York in August. Although her ministry in the Sandwich Islands was relatively brief, her missionary impulses never diminished to the end of her life.

Following her return from the Sandwich Islands, Betsey kept an infant school for black children for a while in Philadelphia. But because of Harriet Stewart’s continuing frail health, she stood ready and went on a number of occasions to help care for Harriet and the children. Charles Stewart had been forced to resign his missionary commission because of his wife’s health and had joined the navy chaplaincy. Betsey was with Harriet and the children in Cooperstown, New York, during the winter of 1826 and probably through most of 1827. For four months during the summer of 1827 their “Aunt Betsey” and the children were in Albany, New York, while Mrs. Stewart was away travelling with her husband.

Sometime in the summer or autumn of 1829 a Methodist missionary, Mr. William Case, traveled to Philadelphia, where Betsey was living again, with the purpose of trying to persuade the young woman to answer another missionary call and go with him to organize schools and instruct native Indian children at Grape Island across the border in Canada, near upstate New York. She went for a few months and on her return brought a birchbark canoe about three or four feet long to little Charles Stewart, then about six years old. The family was in New Haven, Connecticut, that year, staying with Harriet’s “adopted” father while Charles Stewart was away with his ship.

When Harriet Stewart died in 1830, just four years after they had returned from Hawaii, “Aunt Betsey” answered a call again and went to Cooperstown, New York, to care for the (by now) three motherless children. Their father soon had to leave again, as he so often did for long stretches of time when his ship was away at sea.

In 1833 Betsey decided to move the children and herself back to Princeton, even though Dr. Green and his household had been living again in Philadelphia for the past eleven years. James Green, her childhood family tutor, had married and established a notable law practice in Princeton. So Betsey undoubtedly had his family to help her relocate to the town she thought of as home, though under very changed circumstances. She enrolled young Charles, then about eleven years old, in the Edgehill School on Hibben Road.

Charles Stewart, the children’s father, remarried in 1835 and they went back with him to New York. But Betsey stayed on in Princeton. She was truly alone for the first time in her life and had some depressing bouts of illness. It was a very distressing time for her. Should she go back into domestic service to earn her living? Where was her family? And who was her family? After a while she moved beyond the time of gloomy loneliness and anxiety over her future and succeeded in opening a public, or “common,” school for black children, which she served with great distinction for many years as principal.

During the time of her early years back in Princeton, there was some racial tension at the First Presbyterian Church, Betsey’s home church. In the mid-1830s an opportunity arose for the black members of the church to separate and form their own congregation—a few blocks away. Betsey Stockton’s name heads the list of the founding members of the Witherspoon Street Presbyterian Church of Princeton. She helped to found a Sabbath school for children and young people in connection with the church and was its most faithful teacher for twenty-five or thirty years. Providentially, the records of this school for about a ten-year period have been preserved and are now lodged in the Rare Books and Archives section of Princeton University’s Firestone Library. Among the early superintendents, most of whom were drawn from among students at the theological seminary, was John L. Nevius, later of China missionary fame, known widely for his Nevius Method of missionary strategy, so successfully used in Korea and often referred to as the Three-Self Movement.

Mr. Nevius, in a letter to his future wife, wrote from Princeton in 1852, “Mr. Williams [a fellow seminary student], of whom I have spoken to you, intends going with his wife to the island of Corisco, Africa, and thinks of taking with him a negro named Aunt Betsy, and all my . . . Sunday-School class!” It was probably wishful thinking but indicated the high regard in which he held them.

She also persuaded a student at the seminary in Princeton, the Rev. Lewis W. Mudge, to open a night school for young black men and women who were employed during the day. According to Constance Escher, a Princeton teacher and writer, “[Betsey] Stockton used to read Caesar’s *Commentaries on the Gallic Wars* in Latin with Mudge.”

“Aunt Betsey” grew to be one of Princeton’s most admired and beloved figures, though unassuming and gentle in spirit. She had a quiet, steady Christian influence, particularly on young people, with whom she was always surrounded in week-day school and in Sunday school.

Escher mentions that “one of the first women teachers at the [Witherspoon Street] Sabbath School, Cecilia Van Tyne, went to Rio de Janeiro in 1848 as a missionary.” It is not hard to trace the influence of Betsey Stockton in the life of this young woman.

The three Stewart children were very close to her heart. Young Charles, who was nurtured and trained by “Aunt Betsey” from the moment of his birth until the time of her death, and was as close as she ever got to having a son of her own, graduated with highest honors at the head of his class in the military academy at West Point and went on to a distinguished career as a brigadier general. The children, for their part, loved her dearly. And when she died in 1865, a few months after President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, her funeral was conducted by the president of Princeton college, Dr. John Maclean, who preached the sermon; by Professor Duffield, of Nassau Hall; and by Dr. Charles Hodge, senior professor of the theological seminary at Princeton. She
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was lovingly laid to rest in beautiful Lakewood Cemetery in Cooperstown, New York, overlooking Lake Otsego, beside the rest of her Stewart family, some of whom died before she did, and some after.

Betsey Stockton was a remarkable nineteenth-century woman missionary pioneer. She must have faced what many today would call daunting identity problems. She was obviously marginalized and often lonely, perhaps feeling that she did not completely belong to anyone or any place. She might well have carried a burden of resentment. But that would have been a costly burden to bear, too costly for Betsey. Instead, like a much earlier missionary pioneer, she discovered a secret that became her victory over loneliness and despair. Paul described it as being “in Christ.” Betsey learned that secret, too, through a lifetime of walking with her Lord. She learned the happy secret that “in Christ,” one does not live altogether “under the circumstances,” whatever they may be.

Notes

1. A widow, Mrs. Charlotte White, was appointed a few years earlier by the recently formed Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, to go to Burma. But on the journey to her field she met and married an English missionary in India and remained there with him. There had also been unknown Moravian girls sent abroad to marry men already on the field (R. Pierce Beaver, American Protestant Women in World Mission, rev. ed. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980], pp. 63–66).

2. It is frustrating at times groping through the shadowy details of Betsey Stockton’s life because there are so many clues missing. One researcher wrote, “It’s like trying to read a book when some of the pages are torn out, or trying to sing a song when some of the words are forgotten” (Carol Santoki Dodd, “Betsey Stockton: A History Student’s Perspective,” Educational Perspectives [Journal of the College of Education, University of Hawaii] 16, no. 1 [March 1977]: 10–15).


6. Session Minutes, First Presbyterian Church, September 20, 1816, Archives of Princeton Theological Seminary.


10. Notes from the diary of Ashbel Green, September 3, 1821, Princeton University Rare Books and Archives.


13. From the document of Betsey Stockton’s official appointment, signed by Ashbel Green, Charles Samuel Stewart, and Betsey Stockton, Princeton, October 24, 1822, and approved in behalf of the ABCFM by the Corresponding Secretary and Clerk of the Prudential Committee, Mr. Jeremiah Evarts. This document is in the archives of the ABCFM, Boston.

14. The quotes in this paragraph are all from the letter of Betsey Stockton to Dr. Ashbel Green, written on board the ship Thames bound for the Sandwich Islands, December 19, 1822, excerpts of which were published in the Christian Advocate 1 (September 1823): 423–26.


The Continuing Legacy of Stephen Neill

Eleanor M. Jackson

Why should anyone write another “Legacy” article about Stephen Neill, when such an admirable tribute was penned by Christopher Lamb, who clearly knew him well? A few minor inaccuracies concerning Neill’s early life notwithstanding, that article covers the broad span of his ecumenical life and work extremely well. However, the publication of God’s Apprentice: The Autobiography of Bishop Stephen Neill and the reaction to it necessitate a further assessment. The passage of time should render this more objective, though even if the principle de mortuis nihil nisi bonum no longer applies, it is still necessary to protect the confidence and reputation of the living. It is now possible to see more clearly which parts of Neill’s legacy will have abiding value, while the issues involved in Neill’s work, and his heroic struggle with his personal problems, remain highly relevant today. If one may sum up his life in a single verse of Scripture, the most appropriate text would seem to be, “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us” (2 Cor. 4:7).

Family Background and Formative Years

Stephen Charles Neill was born in Edinburgh on December 31, 1900, the third child of missionary doctors working in Ranaghat, Bengal, under James Monro, his maternal grandfather. (He had no recollection of those early years in Bengal to aid him when he became a third-generation missionary.) James Monro was a former district commissioner in the Bengal Civil Service. Appointed commissioner of the new Scotland Yard, C.I.D., he felt obliged to resign when his campaign for better pay for police constables was rebuffed. After studying medicine, he returned to Bengal to create his own mission. In later years he often had charge of Stephen and his siblings during their parents’ absence, and his strong sense of duty, evangelical convictions, and Victorian view of personal discipline seem to have made a deep impression on Stephen.

Stephen’s father, the Reverend Dr. Charles Neill, the son of a wealthy Ulster wine merchant, was greatly influenced by Dwight Moody and evangelical revivals, being converted while a medical student. When Stephen entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1919, having been converted in 1914 while recuperating from mumps at boarding school, he joined the Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union (CICCU). He was therefore surprised to be invited to become chairman of the Cambridge Student Christian Movement (SCM) for 1922–23. It was his first real exposure to ecumenism on a national scale, for the SCM, riding on the crest of the 1921 Glasgow Quadrennial conference on the theme “Christ and Human Need,” was at the peak of its missionary influence. Neill was drawn into organizing university missions, student missions to towns and villages, and Bible study programs. It was the beginning of an important career as missionary and evangelist, which tends to be eclipsed by his work as scholar and teacher.

At Cambridge (1919–24) Neill “kept the Sabbath” by studying various theological subjects, a break from his weekday diet of Greek and Latin classics. When he was not out on the river rowing for his college, playing practical jokes in the college debating chamber, lunching in various student clubs, working in inner-city settlements and organizing boys’ camps, and supporting SCM or CICCU activities, Neill took examinations: to win scholarships in order to supplement what his father, with four sons and two daughters to educate, could afford to give him, to fulfill his course requirements, and as a sort of hobby. He read theology and history for part 2 of his tripos, obtaining a “double first,” and crowned his academic achievements by winning one of the coveted fellowships to Trinity College with a thesis comparing the writings of Plotinus with the Cappodocian fathers, particularly Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzen. It is typical of him that he did so at a time when there was no definitive text of either side, and relatively little was then known about the importance of Plotinus. The thesis involved ten months’ intensive study, but the fact that he succeeded with relative ease in producing an acclaimed work of original research made him deeply suspicious, he says, of scholarship and academic life.

Before he knew the results of his thesis, Neill had decided that in any case he would dedicate himself to missionary service in India. In his autobiography he implies he went out in 1926 as a layman to teach and to learn the language, being later ordained on the insistence of Bishop Tubbs and his colleagues in the Tirunelveli (Tinnevelly) diocese of the Anglican Church in India. The bishop’s correspondence in the Church Missionary Society archives, however, indicates that Neill did not join the CMS until after his return on furlough in 1928, though he had been teaching in mission schools. His description of his arrival in Tamil Nadu is only one of a number of red herrings in the autobiography.

Recent research into the matter by Jocelyn Murray substantiates the account given of his first year in India by Elisabeth Elliot in her biography of Amy Carmichael.3 Neill in fact joined his parents and one of his sisters in Dohnavur but was forced to leave the following summer after a number of clashes with Amy Carmichael. What no one has explained is how Neill thought he could work with such a powerful woman with her highly original methods. His parents would have known of her through the Keswick Convention. Interestingly, though the experiment with the Neills failed, when the Webb Peploe family joined Carmichael’s work two years later, it worked. It is striking that in a MS of over one thousand pages, Neill makes no mention of Amy Carmichael. On her part, she severed her mission’s connec-

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Eleanor Jackson worked at Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, Madurai, 1979–82, and Serampore College, Bengal, 1983–86. She is the author of Red Tape and the Gospel: A Biography of Dr. William Paton, 1886–1943 and edited Stephen Neill’s autobiography. She is a lecturer at St. Martin’s College, Lancaster, U.K.

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Stephen Neill’s concern to provide good Christian literature was matched by his intolerance of bad or old-fashioned efforts.

Stephen Neill’s concern to provide good Christian literature was matched by his intolerance of bad or old-fashioned efforts. The effectiveness of the books, many by well-known theologians, has never been denied. It was not actually an original idea, only the adaptation of the SCM studybook principle for a broader audience with a more general purpose than providing material for church and college study groups.

Stephen Neill’s concern with the provision of good literature was matched by his intolerance of bad or old-fashioned books. On several occasions in India and Africa he took his own advice and buried the offending volumes in a hole in the ground. He played a pioneering role in getting high quality literature written and theological education conducted in the vernacular, the importance of which is impossible to overestimate. The well-known Tamil medium theological college Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, in Madurai, is part of his continuing legacy, though the plans for a united seminary, of which he would have been principal, were not realized until thirty-five years later, in 1970. He could only implement the idea of building a simple Tamil village-style compound for the college, later copied in Madurai.

Fifth, there are his consistent attempts to improve levels of spirituality, whether by encouraging the Tinnevelly custom of holding evening prayers every evening in the village outside a cottage or by conducting monthly sessions for catechists, by leading retreats in the hills for missionaries, by introducing daily prayers in the WCC offices, or by helping students develop meaningful worship in Hamburg and Nairobi. His retreats, with their simplicity and strengthening power, have been mentioned again and again in the recent correspondence about his autobiography in the Church Times. They were clearly watered from his own deep wells of suffering and spiritual struggle.

Finally, Neill was a superbly efficient organizer, but he was far more than a “tidier upper and setter in order,” as he once described Archbishop Laud.7 As far as circumstances allowed, he organized his day with the kind of clockwork precision associated with William Carey’s day.8 It is therefore not surprising that he achieved as much as Carey with his numerous translations, dictionaries, and grammars. Neill too was a great encyclopedist and editor, leaving an important literary legacy in this field. It is, however, a debatable matter to what extent he used his great erudition to write the book that was needed at the right time, to discern where there was a yawning gap and to plug it, for example, as he did so superbly with The Layman in Christian History (coedited with Hans-Ruedi Weber in 1963), and to what extent he was an original thinker.

As a church historian, Neill painted a broad canvas with wide sweeps of the brush, but whereas he was meticulous in his pursuit of the original sources, the detail can be misleading, if not actually wrong, and the bias is very obvious.9 As a New Testament scholar, his work was invaluable in bringing the fruits of modern scholarship to a wider readership. Early on he grappled with Rudolf Bultmann’s ideas, fully realizing the challenge Bultmann presented. It is interesting how he used the most radical methods to arrive at conservative conclusions, thus helping to assuage the fears of conservative evangelicals. Similarly many of his ideas were not new, such as in his encouraging the self-support of Tinnevelly congregations, or founding credit cooperatives to help individuals overcome the endemic problem of debt, or using a model farm as a base for mission in East Africa. By his drafting skills at the International Missionary Council meeting in Whitby, Ontario, in 1947 he launched the idea of “partnership in mission,” an idea rediscovered in the 1980s, but to be found earlier in the speeches of Tamil and Chinese delegates at the Jerusalem meeting of the IMC in 1928. Again, he had discerned an idea whose time had come. Sadly, his protests against the centralization, bureaucratization, and clericalization of the World Council of Churches went unheeded.10

In the original manuscript of his autobiography, Neill devoted many pages to his travels, his evangelistic work, and his writings, which I was not able to include in God’s Apprentice. About the only advantage he could see in being single was the freedom he had to pick up his suitcase and travel to any part of the globe “in the service of the Gospel.” His assessments of the sociopolitical situation are now out of date, and some would say the same even when they were penned. However, he did not hesitate to say unpopular things, and he is shown as unflagging
in his hatred of racism and his efforts to combat it. He was also revealed as a bon vivant, constantly seeking out new restaurants and local delicacies to try. His style is part of his legacy; his activities were a seamless whole, flowing from one sphere to another and thus were genuinely ecumenical. He was the thinking man's John Mott, with the emphasis on "man." His books bristle with sexist statements. Three Tamil-speaking women missionaries whom I consulted who met him in Kodaikanal felt he was both patronizing and dismissive of their work.

**Apologia Pro Vita Sua**

In one sense it is unfortunate that Neill set out to write an autobiography that, as he says, is a record of events, not an apologia pro vita su. The volume provides a unique record of the major events of modern ecumenical history (i.e., the creation of the Church of South India, the formation of the WCC, the growth of the worldwide Anglican Communion), but there is too little about his inner spiritual journeyings. He concludes with: "All I ask for, really, is courage—to carry out the duty as long as it is required, not to grow impatient, to work as long as I can while it is day, for night comes when no man can work—but after all there is no night time but, as John Donne was tireless in insisting, only the unchanging radiance of an everlasting day." What inner experiences framed these lines?

Of his conversion, he writes:

> It occurred to me that, if it was true, as I had every reason to believe, that Christ died for my sins, the rest of my life could not be spent in any other way than in grateful and adoring service of the One who had wrought that inestimable benefit. Even now I can see no way of improving on that discovery. I can recall no emotional accompaniment. All that happened was that I got out of bed and said my prayers, a ceremony which I had neglected for a considerable period. . . . I did not speak to anyone of what had happened to me; nor do I imagine that my family noticed any great change in me.11

Neill believed that this event made him human, that he gradually got his temper under control. He started to join in the religious life of the school, to take an interest in people for their own sakes, and to come out of his reclusiveness. At the same time he began to develop an appreciation of the beauties of the natural world, to which he had previously been blind.

Of his decision to become a missionary, he writes:

> There can never have been anything less emotional than my acceptance of the vocation of a missionary. For years I had been convinced that, since Christ died for all men, no less than for me, this gospel of Christ must be preached to all men, whether they will hear or forebear; that this gospel will not be preached unless a sufficient number of those who are young, free and in reasonable health, are prepared to forego all worldly ambition and accept the call to become Christ's witnesses and stewards.12

Neill declared that he never had any regrets about his decision to go to India. His love of the Indian people, especially Tamils, is palpable, but it is difficult to avoid asking why he should have had any regrets anyway. Thanks to the Student Volunteer Movement, his decision was not so uncommon, although for Trinity College it was. Speculating on what he might have been had he stayed in Cambridge, the works of scholarship he might have produced, the ecclesiastical rank he might have attained, had he directed theological education in Britain instead, is futile. Like his Greek heroes in his beloved Aeschylus, he was driven by fate—in his case, the Monroes' inexorable sense of duty—and because of chronic ill health, violent temper, and repressed sexuality, he carried within himself the seeds of his own destruction, his own personal tragedy. He himself insists that had he married, as he aspired to do in his early twenties, he would have been a better man. Like Archbishop Garbett, also intensely shy, when his hopes were disappointed once, he never developed a comparable romantic attachment.

Neill declares in the autobiography that if a boy lets it be known that he has "certain principles," no attempts will be made to corrupt him at public school, and he insists that although he knew Tawney and the "Apostles" at Cambridge, he was not in their circle.14 Homosexuality was a crime in Britain until 1968, and certainly for one brought up in a strict evangelical house-

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**Neill did not hesitate to say unpopular things and was unflagging in his efforts to combat racism.**

hold, a sin. There is no evidence that Neill ever admitted having a problem in this area. But since the publication of God's Apprentice there have been several testimonies about his character published in the Church Times.15 Clearly it was a crisis of some sort that led to his having to leave India. Neill, historian that he was, cannot have expected other church historians to compromise their integrity by colluding in the "conspiracy of silence" that Bishop Holloway says surrounded his name. In the end, it is impossible to say whether it was ill health, rumors of homosexuality, or his courageous criticism of colonial administrators that blocked his path to preferment after 1944.

There is too little in the published autobiography about his struggle with depression (diagnosed by a Swiss psychotherapist as manic depression, and the diagnosis leaked in a frightful breach of confidentiality, which ended a promising course of treatment in 1958), insomnia, circulatory problems, and "mixed laterality," as the affliction of one who is neither right-handed nor left-handed is known. This in fact is the paradox, that such a seriously flawed individual should have brought such pastoral and intellectual help to so many, and should have won so many for Christ.

Stephen Neill's continuing legacy is of abiding importance first because of his books, some of which will endure as classic works of reference, and many of which made a lasting impact on their readers. Second, there was his impact on ecumenical institutions, especially in the development of the Church of South India and the World Council of Churches and the pattern of theological education in the Third World.16 Finally there is his personal influence. It could be argued that it was his suffering and his theological interpretation of it which made him such a helpful counselor, but he himself hints that he felt he had suffered a little too much, whereas in other episodes in the autobiography, there is the harassed figure of one who feels himself persecuted for righteousness' sake. He is brutally honest about his rages, his selfishness and ambition, while his vanity is transparent, but this is mitigated by a keen sense of the ridiculous and a delicate irony in his writing.

When all is said and done, the autobiography is an inspiration to all who wrestle with depression. However, it raises in
acute form the question of who cares for the carers. Only once did Neill have a sympathetic bishop. Another told him to take some aspirin and pull himself together. He kept going through years and years of darkness until he found peace. The story has inspired Professor C. F. D. Moule to write, in his foreword to God’s Apprentice, “Readers will want to give thanks for the grace of God—grace abounding—and for the extraordinary achievements of this much-tempted, brilliant, enigmatic man.”

Notes

2. E. M. Jackson, ed., God’s Apprentice: The Autobiography of Bishop Stephen Neill (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991). The original manuscript that Neill left for publication after his death was over one thousand pages long. At the insistence of the publishers, I greatly reduced its length in my editing. The original is in the CMS archives, 157 Waterloo Road, London, and may be seen by qualified scholars.
5. There is a whole chapter describing Neill’s literary work in the original manuscript of his autobiography.
9. For example, A History of Christian Missions, on single women on the mission field (p. 256), on Carey (p. 260), on Ward (p. 264).
12. Ibid., p. 70.
14. R. L. Tawney was a leading Christian socialist and author of Religion and the Rise of Capitalism. The “Apostles,” a group of Cambridge economists inspired by Tawney and disciples of John Maynard Keynes, were known for their homosexuality.
15. The Church Times is the principal newspaper of the Church of England. Bishop Holloway’s frank review, which appeared in the issue of November 9, 1991, started a controversy that was continued in the remaining November issues.
16. Neill was invited to participate in the commission on theological education at the 1938 IMC meeting in Tambaran, which proved to be his entree into the ecumenical world. His survey of theological colleges in Africa in 1952 proved to be a seminal work.

Selected Bibliography

Writings of Stephen Neill

Stephen Neill was immensely proud of the serried ranks of his own books upon his bookshelves. A complete bibliography would number more than sixty-five books, apart from articles and reviews. It is curious, as he himself remarked, that although so many of his lectures were published, no volume of sermons appeared. The following selected bibliography is based on a chapter in the full length manuscript of his autobiography but which was excised from the published volume. In the excised chapter he explained which of his writings he felt were the most significant.

1957 Seeing the Bible Whole. London: Bible Reading Fellowship.

World Christian Books (all published in London by Lutterworth)

1954 The Christian’s God.
1955 The Christian Character.
1956 Who Is Jesus Christ?
1958 Paul to the Galatians.
1960 What Is Man?
1962 Chrysostom and His Message: A Selection from the Sermons of St. John Chrysostom.
1963 Paul to the Colossians.

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Book Reviews


This is an erudite interpretation of Christian history with a particular emphasis on the African dimension of the process. The book demonstrates how culture is at once a natural ally and a natural foe for the Gospel (p. 20). It faces head-on “the view that in Africa, Christianity could not be shaken out of its Western cultural forms” and pursues “the historical roots of the religion-versus-culture controversy in Western intellectual thought” (p. 16). The volume is a trenchant critique of well-known positions and also offers pointers to newer and more fruitful perspectives on the subject as well as on Christian faith itself. It is enriching to ponder the paradoxes inherent in “the translatability of Christianity” (p. 120) and “the restricted value of territorial designations for religion” (p. 222). In an age of fanaticism and violent extremism, religious and otherwise, it is fruitful to explore with the author the idea that “we have to seek a deeper responsibility for witness, tolerance and sharing on the basis of God’s intention for human beings” (p. 224). Missions must take this advice to heart, especially in the light of what Sanneh calls “our defensive complex about Christendom” (p. 223).

I wish to take issue on three points. First, there is need to nuance the author’s bold statement that “the Christian missionary movement was the funeral of the great myth of Christendom, because mission took abroad the successful separation of church and state, of religion and territoriality” (p. 191). The spirit of Christendom was evident, however, in several missions in Africa. The practice of *tabula rasa*, the negative response to the nomination of Samuel Adjayi Crowther as the first black Anglican bishop, and the incipient ideology of social Darwinism in mission practice smelt of the Christendom ideology. It was alive in spirit.

Second, while the works of the great Lesslie Newbigin are copiously cited, there is a deafening silence on what Africans have said. It is rather odd that a book with the subtitle “The African Dimension” is silent on people like Msgr. Tsibangu of Zaire, Jean-Marc Ela of Cameroon, Bénézet Bujo of Zaire, and Harry Sawyer of Sierra Leone, when Vincent Donovan is cited. At least a footnote of acknowledgment of the work of E. Bolaji Idowu (Nigeria) would have strengthened the argument. Equally surprising is the silence on the genius of African Instituted Churches.

Third is the language used of the grant made by the WCC to the freedom fighters (not “guerilla forces,” as Sanneh puts it), while being silent on the fact that the government of Rhodesia was not only minority and white but also—and more important—racist and illegal (p. 211). I question the value of this example as illustrating a “willingness to relinquish Establishment control and exercise responsibility for a de-territorialized Christianity” (p. 210).

However, this is an important book to be reckoned with, especially in the contemporary study of Gospel and culture. The elegant, flowery language makes it interesting to read, though occasionally it gets uncomfortably pithy and ponderous.

—John S. Pobee

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Coping with Poverty: Pentecostals and Christian Base Communities in Brazil.


As vast numbers of poor people in Brazil find themselves caught up in an often desperate struggle for survival, major changes are taking place in their attitude toward, and use of, religion. In this book, Brazilian sociologist Cecilia Loreto Mariz attempts to understand this new situation of the poor from their perspective and analyzes the contribution of four religious movements to their struggle: folk Catholicism, Afro-Brazilian spiritism, Christian Base Communities, and Pentecostalism. On the basis of interviews with members and leaders of these communities, participation in their meetings, and the study of their writings, she explores the material, political, and cultural strategies developed by each for coping with poverty.

The author's research led her to the conclusion that the Christian Base Communities and the Pentecostal churches offer the most effective and innovative strategies. Moreover, she found that their strategies are quite similar. Both contribute to the relative rationalization of the religion of the poor at the same time that they focus on the plan of God for the life of each person. Their “religious proposals share important characteristics and may in the long term lead to similar changes of attitude and behavior among the poor” (p. 161). At the same time, the Pentecostals get much closer to the religious world of the poor; they offer them a rich experience of the presence of God in the midst of daily life that empowers them to reorganize their lives around a new center and often motivates them to struggle for social and political change.

This excellent sociological study makes an important contribution to our understanding of the power of religious faith in the lives of those struggling for survival; it also challenges us to look more carefully at Pentecostal movements and the contribution they are making.

—Richard Shaull

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Richard Shaull, Henry Winters Luce Professor of Ecumenics, Emeritus, Princeton Theological Seminary, was a Presbyterian missionary in Colombia (1942–51) and Brazil (1952–62).
Aimee Semple McPherson: Everybody’s Sister.


In her entertaining, well-written biography of Aimee Semple McPherson, Edith L. Blumhofer tells the story of one of the most fascinating religious celebrities of the twentieth century. “Sister,” as she was known to her followers, was an immensely popular female evangelist who preached to hundreds of thousands of people in the 1920s. Combining an intense piety with a flair for the dramatic, she spread her “old-time religion” to converts across the United States and Canada. Her appeal, as Blumhofer argues, lay in her ordinariness. Even though she was a religious entrepreneur who became an expert at exploiting technological advances (particularly the radio), her warm, domestic personality earned her the name “Everybody’s Sister.”

Blumhofer situates the story of McPherson’s tumultuous life within a larger framework of American religious history. Besides sensitively recounting Sister’s personal struggles, Blumhofer uses her story to illuminate the central themes of early twentieth-century evangelicalism as a whole. In one of the most important insights of the book, she argues that scholars have overemphasized the differences between mainline Protestants and Pentecostals. Certainly, these groups argued over points of doctrine, but they were also linked together by their shared faith in “Bible Christianity” (p. 186). By preaching her simple message of the “Four-Square Gospel,” McPherson appealed to men and women across denominational lines.

This book is narrative history at its best, and it should appeal to both scholarly and popular audiences.

—Catherine A. Brekus

Catherine A. Brekus recently received her Ph.D. in American Studies from Yale University and is Assistant Professor of the History of Christianity at the University of Chicago Divinity School.

New Face of the Church in Latin America: Between Tradition and Change.


Many readers will be surprised, if not shocked, to discover that a volume bearing this title is, according to editor Guillermo Cook, “largely a Protestant story” (p. xiii). This book does justice to the transition of Protestantism from a marginalized minority to a vigorously growing movement.

However, Roman Catholicism is not ignored. In addition to the balanced treatment accorded the colonial legacy, the book devotes significant attention to the contemporary struggles of the Catholic Church in Latin America to be faithful to the Gospel in the midst of social injustice, political violence, economic oppression, and hierarchical domination.

This book is written in three tenses: past, present, and future. Twenty-one chapters of varying length are divided into four sections. The first, which follows Cook’s introduction, consists of three chapters devoted to the historical development of Christianity since 1492. Chapters 4–8 focus upon the dynamics of socioreligious change that has taken place in recent decades. The third section includes five chapters that explain and assess the place of folk religion among both Roman Catholics and Protestants. Five case studies com-

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The Caribbean: Culture of Resistance, Spirit of Hope.


This monograph is designed to educate the North American Christian community about Caribbean realities and to invite collaboration for the common mission of the church. The Caribbean has long been romanticized as beaches, sea, and sun, and its history as either the adventures of buccaneers or the horror of slavery. This book succeeds in allowing North Americans to listen to authentic Caribbean voices.

While the book as it stands is divided into three sections, there is in fact a fourth consisting of the last two chapters, which have a different focus. An introduction by the Cuban theologian Sergio Arce Martinez and his wife, Dora Valentin, gives a general overview. This is set within its historical context by Dale Bisnauth. A Guianese historian, theologian who was a faculty member at the United Theological College of the West Indies and associate general secretary of the Caribbean Conference of Churches, and who now is minister of education in Guyana. Current questions facing Caribbean Christians are explored from differing perspectives and deal with topics such as women's issues, the debt crisis, and the drug trade. In the last two chapters Adolfo Ham, a Cuban theologian and the general secretary of the Caribbean Conference of Churches, and Bisnauth attempt a theological and ecclesiological interpretation, not only of the events in the Caribbean but also of the relationships between North American churches and the Caribbean.

This book is a must for mission executives and theological students, since it is the first time that so many statements shared in common by Caribbean leaders...
can be found in one place. It is a timely call to discuss new North American Caribbean Christian relatedness against a background of common concerns and mission.

—Horace O. Russell

Horace O. Russell is a Jamaican church historian, formerly President of the United Theological College of the West Indies and now Dean of Chapel and Professor of Historical Theology at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Dizionario di Missiologia.


Some of the most important Roman Catholic work on missiology over the years has appeared in Italian. I have on my bookshelves, for example, several such volumes on recent trends in mission thinking. Acquaintance with such books is important to gain perspective on how official Roman Catholic policies and statements are often so different from what one commonly finds expressed by Catholic theologians and mission leaders.

The Dizionario di Missiologia is, to this reviewer's knowledge, the most comprehensive and reliable book on official Roman Catholic missiological thinking in existence. Its theological depth is most impressive, perhaps especially in carrying home the point that Christian life and the church are intrinsically ordered toward mission, and that mission is more than this-worldly rescue work. It is less successful in reflecting how mission has important lay, noneclesiastical dimensions.

Every library seriously collecting mission studies materials should have this book. This is not to say that many articles will not be controversial, only that—within the limits of its perspective—this dictionary is amazing in its comprehensiveness and clarity. It shows that Roman teaching on mission needs to be taken much more seriously than it often is by both Catholics and others. That said, it is sad that so much of the dictionary is written as if Protestants and the Orthodox did not matter in mission, when the opposite is clearly the case.

The dictionary is arranged alphabetically from Ad Gentes (the Vatican II decree on mission) to vocazione missionaria (a challenging study of the obligatory nature of the missionary call for all Christians). It contains articles with geographic reference (Africa and Latin America, for example), with conceptual-theological reference (salvation, non-Christian religions, and catechetical pedagogy, for example), and with historical reference (mission ecyclics and [mission order] founders, for example).

Superbly cross-referenced articles are accompanied by bibliographies of uneven quality. The typography is clear and inviting. Lacking is a good index of subjects, persons, papal teachings, and Scripture citations, but this is one of the few failings I have found in the dictionary.

—William R. Burrows


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Cardinal Lavigerie: Churchman, Prophet, and Missionary.


Charles Lavigerie was undoubtedly one of the most powerful figures within nineteenth-century church history and, especially, the development of missionary activity in Africa. He founded the society of missionaries that came to be known as the White Fathers, probably the most effective of any group at work in modern Africa. But he was also a continuously influ-
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A Roman Catholic School For Ministry
The title of this book might cause the missiological community to overlook it, but it definitely merits our attention. The author, a sociologist at the University of Southern California, spent a decade examining the rich archival resources of the Evangelical Missionary Society of Basel (Switzerland) to gain insights into the organization of the Christian missionary movement and to discover why it has persisted for so long in spite of the contradictions and difficulties that are part and parcel of the enterprise. Focusing specifically on the Basel Mission’s leaders and their work in the Gold Coast (now Ghana) from 1828 to 1918, the author utilizes theory from organizational sociology and the social psychology of religion to explain the group’s ideology and action.

Miller’s thesis is that Basel’s controlling elite, who were of a higher social class standing than the missionaries themselves, successfully channeled their enthusiasm in the pursuit of larger collective purposes without dismantling the social barriers. The critical factor was the pietist ethos that institutionalized religious zeal and the voluntary acceptance of divinely ordained authority. Although conformity was promoted through tight authority structures and the practice of “mutual watching,” the “rule-followers” could not cope with extraordinary events on the field that demanded creative solutions, and the mission had to tolerate some who violated the rules to forestall collapse of the work. A further problem was that the social control device of constant surveillance of each other often transformed the missionaries’ interpersonal solidarity into bitter estrangement and undermined the fraternal cooperation needed for a sustained effort.

The author fully appreciates the spiritual motivation of the Basel missionaries and provides a sensitive, insightful account of their successes and failures in community building in Africa. He has a good understanding of the historical side of the mission’s development and is quite conversant with the secondary literature. Most important, he has broken new ground in analyzing the organizational structures of mission societies.

—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 has been a Fulbright professor in Germany and is interested in German imperialism and Protestant missions.

Many Are Chosen: Divine Election and Western Nationalism.


An important justification for cross-cultural studies, written by Harvard historian William R. Hutchison, “is a concern about the insularity of much that scholars teach and write about particular societies” (p. 3). Seeing how other societies were affected by a sense of chooseness and its relationship to nationalism raises questions about claims to uniqueness. These essays, by several distinguished historians and scholars of religion and edited by Hutchison and Hartmut
Lehmann (director of the Max Planck Institute for Historical Studies in Göttingen, Germany), are particularly effective in implicitly discrediting the notion of American exceptionalism, an idea currently under attack. Americans were decidedly not the only people to feel a sense of chosenness—though perhaps, as the Irish scholar Conor Cruise O’Brien put it, they are “a chosen people with tenure” (p. 18).

James H. Morehead’s essay on the Americans appears only after those about other “Chosen Imperialists”: the British, French, Germans, and Afrikanners. The second section of the book, “Suffering Servants and Unchosen People,” discusses African Americans, Israel, Sweden, and Switzerland. Even these (except perhaps for the Swiss) exhibited a kind of chosenness—though Paul Mendes-Flohr makes an interesting (if unchallenged) case for a lack of chosenness among Zionists.

All of the contributions are well done. I found particularly thoughtful and well researched Hartmut Lehmann’s essay on Germany, Andre du Toit’s discussion of the Afrikanners (he argues, contrary to the commonly accepted wisdom, that an Afrikaner sense of chosenness was late in developing), and Mendes-Flohr’s provocative piece on Israel. Hutchison’s introduction lucidly identifies common themes and points the way for future research.

As Hutchison acknowledges, these essays only introduce the connections between chosenness and nationalism. Southern and Eastern European countries were not represented in the collection, not to mention Islamic, black African, Latin American, or Asian cultures. But the book is an excellent starting point.

—Kenton J. Clymer


Jan Slomp, to whom this volume of essays is dedicated, was engaged in Muslim-Christian dialogue for some twenty-five years, from 1968 to 1977 as staff member of the Christian Study Centre in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, and from 1977 to 1993 as secretary of the Committee for Muslim Relations of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

The essays cover a considerable diversity of topics, arranged under three main headings: “The Worldwide Context,” “The European Context,” and “Paradigm Shift in Dialogue.” The first section provides the reader with an inside view of Muslim-Christian relationships in Africa, Indonesia, and Pakistan. The most fascinating is that by C. Van ’t Leven, who describes the situation in the tiny West African nation of Gambia. While 95 percent of its population is Muslim, only 3 percent is Christian. Yet, the relations between the two groups, as described by Van ’t Leven, is marked by respect and cooperation. Astonishingly, 90 percent of the children at Christian schools are Muslim. In fact, she reports that “more than once, Muslim pupils have won the yearly Bible knowledge prize” (p. 16).

The second section covers many facets of the European situation, such as the historical background of church-state relations, interfaith marriages, organizations that attempt to integrate Muslims in Germany, and the relation of Christians and Muslims with respect to the educational institutions in the Netherlands. The title of the third section promises more than is delivered. The first of two essays traces some “developments in dialogue with Muslims” in the World Council of Churches, while the second analyzes Pope John Paul II’s pronouncements on the relationship of mission and dialogue with respect to Muslims.

This book presents many helpful insights, most of them drawn from the experience of cooperation or friction between Muslims and Christians in varied political and social circumstances. Unfortunately, this volume is severely marred by countless typographical errors and by tortuous English constructions that result from the literal translation of Dutch idioms. Finally, it would have been extremely helpful to highlight the many English articles by Slomp in the extensive bibliography of his writings (pp. 184–206).

—George Vandervelde

George Vandervelde is Professor of Systematic Theology at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto and President of the North American Academy of Ecumenists.
Emerging Voices in Global Christian Theology.


Keeping abreast of changes in theology is almost a full-time occupation nowadays. All the more so when we are faced with so-called Third World theologians producing an ever-increasing volume of solid theological books and articles, with North American and European theologians learning how urgently they need to break out of their own ethnocentrism, and with all of us recognizing that our proclamation is hollow and ineffective if we have not yet learned to respect and listen to those to whom we would proclaim the Lord.

Our task is now made easier, thanks to this handy volume by Dean William Dyrness of the School of Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary. His own teaching experience in Nairobi and Manila equipped him well for recognizing the quality evangelical voices now emerging in theology, and to tap their expertise for this volume.

There are nine articles here: three each from Africa and Asia, two from Latin America, and one from Eastern Europe, all tied together by Dyrness's own introductions and comments. About half of them actually do theology; the rest are rather more descriptive of the theologies of their region. So the student of evangelical theology now has in hand a representative sample of what the mature churches in former mission lands are actually producing.

There is great richness here. It is a pity that the contributors could not somehow have been in direct conversation with each other. For example, Croatian Miroslav Volf's superb piece on ethnocentrism and reconciliation in the former Yugoslavia might enrich South African Anthony Balcomb's reflections on intercultural conversations in his own country now. And Evelyn Miranda-Feliciano's very moving experiences in the Filipino revolution need to speak to Brazilian Antonio Carlos Barro's historical outline of Latin American Protestantism.

Other chapters are by Cyril Okorocha on salvation from an Igbo point of view, Kwame Bediako on Jesus from a Ghanaian perspective, Ken Gnanakam on ecological themes. David Lim on another "Great Awakening," and Samuel Escobar on Latin America's search for a missiological Christology. There is no index or bibliography, and many typos (especially in Latin phrases). All in all, however, a good sampler for students.

—Simon Smith, S.J.

Simon Smith, S.J., served in Iraq in the 1950s, was executive secretary of Jesuit Missions in the 1970s, director of Jesuit Refugee Service in Africa in the mid-1980s, and then served two years in Jordan. Now he staffs the Refugee Immigration Ministry in Boston, Massachusetts.

Faith and Modernity.


This is a collection of fifteen essays by North American and European scholars

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written from a broad evangelical perspective about Christian attitudes to modernity.

The first two essays are concerned with the nature of the challenge that modernity and postmodernity present to Christian faith. They draw a distinction between the rationalistic premises that stem from the Enlightenment and their disintegration into the relativism and pluralism that mark what is now described as postmodernity. This is a peculiarly contemporary phenomenon that, because of its incoherence, is an even greater challenge to faith than that which confronted Christians in previous generations.

The book suffers from the defects of most symposia in its piecemeal treatment of the subject: a systematic work by one author based on these essays would be more satisfactory. Perhaps they will stimulate someone to make the attempt.

Following the introductory papers, I found the first two contributions by Bishop Lesslie Newbigin and Professor Harold Netland the most stimulating in that they open up the debate on whether modernity and postmodernity can be countered by natural theology. Newbigin’s radical rejection of this, especially in his footnote reply to Netland, I believe, has the stronger argument. Newbigin maintains that all human speculation depends on a faith commitment and that trust in the crucified, risen, and ascended Christ provides the only secure basis for countering the conflicting claims that characterize modern culture.

These two papers seem to set the scene for the systematic treatment of the subject that the other essays, in spite of their merits, cannot supply. All the same, this is a welcome volume and focuses attention on the major theological task confronting Christians today.

—Paul Rowntree Clifford


The archives in the library at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, are a major resource for missionary research. The library itself has about 800,000 volumes and subscribes to some 5,000 periodicals. The archives presently hold some 750,000 documents, with “6,500 boxes and volumes containing minutes, letters and reports, about 18,000 photographs and ... some 20,000 published works, including memoirs, histories, translations, missionary magazines and printed annual reports” (p. 4). About two-thirds of the archival material documents the work of British Protestant missionary work in Asia, Africa, Oceania, America, and Europe. These include the archives of the London Missionary Society (now the Council for World Mission), Methodist Missionary Society, China Inland Mission, Anglican Melanesian Mission, Conference of British Missionary Societies, and several other missionary societies, supporting organizations, and parachurch agencies such as Christian Aid.

In addition there are the private papers of individual missionaries, such as Gladys Aylward, Thomas Birch Freeman, James Legge, David Livingstone, Robert Moffat, Robert Morrison, J. H. Oldham, Bishop Patteson, and J. Hudson Taylor.

The Guide provides lists, describes the holdings, and includes seventeen il-
Illustrations taken from the archives. Scholars are much indebted to Rosemary Seton for this splendid tool to facilitate missionary research. Those who wish to use the collections should write or telephone in advance of their visit to the archives at SOAS, Thornbough Street, Russell Square, London WC1H OXG.

—Gerald H. Anderson

Gerald H. Anderson is Editor of the International Bulletin of Missionary Research and Director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, Connecticut.

Redemption and Dialogue: Reading Redemptoris Missio and Dialogue and Proclamation.


This volume is a compact, diversified, rich, and useful collection of studies on the state of the question in the theology of mission in the Roman Catholic Church. The book both studies this issue and models its pluralism with its three levels of development and multiple voices.

First, the book provides the texts of Redemptoris Missio, the papal encyclical that summarizes mission theology from the perspective of official Catholic teaching (1990/91), and Dialogue and Proclamation, an official statement of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and the Pontifical Council on Inter-Religious Dialogue (1991).

Second, the book contains expert commentary on these documents by Marcello Zago and Jacques Dupuis respectively. These authors bring a great deal of learning to bear on situating and interpreting these ecclesial teachings.

Third, the book also assembles nine short essays by missioners, Catholic and Protestant, male and female, from a variety of situations in different continents, with distinct charges and expertise. These essays of reception react to the teaching of the documents; they reflect diverse points of view, methods, content, and understandings of the many issues involved in the question of mission today.

William Burrows, who planned and edited the volume, is managing editor of Orbis Books and has extensive missionary experience. He concludes the work with some incisive and wise observations that arise directly out of the multilayered data presented in the book; among other things, Catholic teaching itself must become less didactic and more dialogical in the future.

This book is an indispensable source for teachers of current Catholic mission theology and for everyone interested in the state of this question in Catholic teaching.

—Roger Haight, S.J.

Roger Haight, S.J., is Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He is currently President of the Catholic Theological Society of America.

The Story of Faith Missions.


Based on a thesis that earned Klaus Fiedler a doctorate in theology from the University of Heidelberg, this book describes how faith missions grew out of pietist revivals influenced by Arminian theology, which held that salvation is open to all, yet gained the support of Calvinists,
many holding that salvation is available only to “the elect” (p. 297).

The movement's interdenominational structure led to use of “the neglected resources of the Church” (p. 141), which included recruits who did not fit traditional educational qualifications. One result was rapid growth. Another was the Bible school movement, devoted to the preparation of missionaries (p. 144).

Fiedler analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of faith missions. Since he lectures at Chancellor College, University of Malawi, many of his illustrations are from Africa. However, his grasp of missiology is global. Extensive notes reflect scholarly thoroughness. (An index would enhance the volume's usefulness.) Fiedler does not hesitate to challenge traditional assumptions. For instance, he points out some negative results of Roland Allen's indigenous principles (p. 335). He also challenges sloppy research in gathering statistics pertaining to Third World missionaries (p. 367). Assessing the mixed record of faith missions in such areas as race, sexism, social concern, and church relations, he nevertheless affirms their overall effectiveness.

Fiedler regrets that faith missions have not publicized a distinctive “creative missiology” and “conscious ecclesiology” (p. 401), which he feels would make a needed contribution to missiology. Perhaps developing these topics is the next major contribution Fiedler himself should make.

—W. Harold Fuller

Mission Schools in Batakland (Indonesia), 1861-1940.


On the one hand, this book is a theological treatise on the encounter between two cultures: the indigenous Batak culture and the secular and Christian culture of Europe. On the other hand, it presents a detailed historical analysis of German Protestant mission activities in the field of primary and secondary education.

In the first part Jan Aritonang, a native Batak, Protestant minister, and lecturer of church history at the Protestant Theological Seminary in Jakarta, elaborates the history of education in northern Sumatra, identifying and describing its three determining sources: the Dutch colonial system of education, the indigenous Batak tradition of education, and the missionaries' concepts of education. The second part is a chronologically arranged analysis entitled “Details of Encounter,” covering the period from the beginning of missionary activities in 1861 to the end of German missionary activities in 1940. Aritonang concludes his research with an interpretative part called “The Impact of the Batak Mission’s Endeavor,” where he outlines results in various fields, most prominently in the “church and the spiritual life of its members.” Aritonang intends to write a theological study without neglecting other disciplines, and so the evaluation also includes political, social, and cultural aspects.

In these last chapters, however, the author’s perspective seems to be very often that of the Protestant missionaries and their boards. This tendency might be ascribed to the available sources, the huge amount of printed material in the mission archives, and the relative scarcity of evi-
ertheless this well-documented work of Indonesian church history represents an important contribution to the knowledge of sociocultural change of Batak society in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

—Klaus H. Schreiner

Klaus H. Schreiner, specializing on issues in modern Indonesian political and religious history, is a staff member of the Southeast Asia Information Centre, Bochum, Germany.

Whose Ministry? A Ministry of Health Care for the Year 2,000.


Gillian Paterson has written this book at the request of Dr. Benjamin Pulimood, then director of the Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore, South India. The institution was in the process of a two-year study of its present and future mission.

The World Health Organization has been focusing on "health for all" by the year 2000, enlisting both the private and public sectors. This book wrestles with the question of Christian mission and the diaconal aspects of that mission. CMC Vellore, owned by a council of churches, must ask, What is their health care ministry? How can CMC minister to the churches? How can CMC and the churches best serve the needs of the nation? Is the training of staff for the mission hospitals still a priority? and if so in what ways? What is the ministry of the administration as distinct from that of the medical, nursing, paramedical, and maintenance staffs? These and other questions need clarification. They are often in tension. CMC has always been international in staff and funding. What is the new expression of that heritage when expatriot staff are basically not needed or permitted, and when a self-governing, self-supporting, and self-perpetuating institution needs hard currency for state-of-the-art technology?

Institutions tend to self-perpetuating, readily becoming ends in themselves. They must grow or go. How can the vision of the movement that created them reform them, re-inspire them, and keep them on the ministry course?

Paterson offers no answers to "whose ministry?" The questions are there, in abundance, inclusively, and in a specific context. The 311 diaconal institutions related to the United Church of Christ in the United States, for example, and thousands of others throughout the world, need to wrestle with the question "Whose ministry?" in their own contexts. Paterson's book is on target and will be stimulating and relevant as we measure ourselves by the objective norm of the lordship of Jesus Christ, are open and honest in our assessing, and wrestle with our real-life ambiguities.

—Herbert O. Muenstermann

Herbert O. Muenstermann, now retired, served for fourteen years in the New York office of the Vellore Christian Medical College Board.


Astronomers in late-seventeenth-century Paris, seeking comparative data from the Middle East and China, succeeded in persuading Louis XIV to support a plan to send six Jesuits to Beijing. In Siam, the
looking there asked one of them to return to France to get Jesuit astronomers for his court. The other five entered Beijing in February 1688. The Manchu emperor ordered Gerbillon and a confère, Joachim Bouvet (1656–1730), to work at court, whereas the others could live in China wherever they wished.

This short book describes such facets of Gerbillon’s life as his efforts in learning Chinese and Manchu, teaching geometry to the emperor for several years, and seeing his student engaged in applying his new scientific knowledge on the eight trips to western and eastern Tartary (Mongolia and Manchuria) up to 1698. Gerbillon’s endurance for such journeys had been tested earlier during his trip to Nerchinsk, where he and another confère, Tomas Pereira (1645–1708), were interpreters and negotiators in the 1689 treaty that settled a significant part of the vast boundary between China and Russia. As superior general of the newly founded separate French mission in China, he faced many obstacles from confèreres in the capital and elsewhere in China. In showing deference to the first papal legate to China, Charles Maillard de Tournon (1668–1710), who was trying to settle the Chinese Rites Controversy, Gerbillon displeased the emperor, who refused to honor him at his funeral.

The strength of this work is in the extracts from many of the manuscripts and published letters and reports of Gerbillon. Its weakness is the absence of an assessment of the significant topics presented in them.

—John W. Witek, S.J.

John W. Witek, S.J., teaches in the Department of History, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.

**Dissertation Notices**

Aryee, Seth.
"The Bible and the Crown: Thomas Birch Freeman’s Synthesis of Christianity and Social Reform in Ghana (1838–1890)."

Douglas, Ian T.
"Fling Out the Banner: The National Church Ideal and the Foreign Mission of the Episcopal Church."

Dunne, James W.
"Creoles and Catholics in Freetown, 1864–1896."

Fernandez, Eleazar.
"Toward a Theology of Struggle in the Philippine Context."

Holden, Gregory.
"Crossing the Missionary Boundary: The Role of Personal Expectations in the Transition to Cross-Cultural Ministry."

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"Vulnerability in Cross-Cultural Mission."

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