Culture: The Ambiguous Ally of Mission

Last November, in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, the World Council of Churches convened a Conference on World Mission and Evangelism and addressed the topic of Gospel and culture. On page 52 of this issue readers will find the official conference message. A key sentence highlights the ambiguity inherent in culture: “We have sought to understand better the way in which the Gospel challenges all human cultures and how culture can give us a clearer understanding of the Gospel.” Obviously, understanding culture may be the key for entree to a particular people. But both the culture of the recipients and the culture of the messengers may also stand in the way of authentic engagement with the Gospel of Jesus and his kingdom.

Our lead article provides seasoned reflections on the Salvador conference by Lesslie Newbigin, INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN contributing editor. Newbigin reports that he perceived a one-sided emphasis on affirming culture at the WCC conference. One cannot blindly affirm culture, for to do so could lead, as Newbigin offers by way of illustration, to “legitimating the Afrikaner reading of the Bible as validating apartheid .... The Bible cannot be read simply as validating the [status quo or] as validating protest against the status quo. We have to listen seriously to each other, and listen to the whole of Scripture, if we are to be guided into the truth.”

The role of culture and personal experience in shaping one’s theology and missionary message is dramatically seen in Kosuke Koyama’s “My Pilgrimage in Mission.” As a young boy, Koyama glimpsed in Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress a key to the meaning of life; as a teenager, he survived the daily rain of American bombs on Tokyo. Later, he counted up the countries with which Japan had been at war—fifty-two. He concluded there is such a thing as “demon progress” that must be avoided at all costs. “Violence,” he writes, “has defined my life in this century.” Clearly, the twentieth century’s culture of violence has come to shape his understanding of the message of the Gospel and the hope of Christ’s kingdom.

Other features in this issue, while not addressing the culture issue directly, are full of intriguing insights and hints. Ronald Davies reveals the missionary dimensions of the life and ministry of Jonathan Edwards. Donald Meek surprises us with the fact that one of the earliest stirrings of the modern Protestant mission-
The Dialogue of Gospel and Culture: Reflections on the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil

Lesslie Newbigin

The latest in a long series of world mission conferences dating back to Edinburgh 1910 was held at the end of 1996 in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil. I am grateful to have been present as an invited guest. The invitation was a generous gesture on the part of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and its Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, especially in light of the fact that I have been critical of the stance of the WCC in matters of world mission.

Even for a seasoned ecumeniac, world conferences can be very hard to grasp in a coherent way. The 600 participants represented a very wide range of ethnic, political, and theological backgrounds. In spite of the good-faith efforts of the conference organizers to include those with strong evangelical convictions, Pentecostal missions, which represent such a large proportion of the total Christian enterprise, were thinly represented. The strongest voices were from those who have been grievously hurt by the globalization of the free market and the power of the Western and Northern nations, and who see the modern missionary movement as deeply involved in oppression. Representatives of aboriginal peoples were particularly vocal. Some of the participants representing the traditional sending churches of the North and West, who had not had previous experiences of WCC meetings, found this threatening.

Worship and Repentance at a Slave Wharf

Without question, the most moving moment in the whole conference was the Saturday morning service at the dockside where for centuries slaves exported from West Africa (at least those who had survived the passage) were unloaded and auctioned at the dockside. The service was conducted by representatives of the descendants of those slaves, with the deepest sensitivity and a real acknowledgment of the fact that we all share in the guilt. The impact of that service will, I think, make this event the longest remembered of the whole conference.

Throughout the Salvador conference I could not help thinking of the contrast between this gathering and that of 1910. Those who gathered in Edinburgh were those who were in charge of the world mission. Except perhaps for the five-minute speech in which the young Vedanayagam Azariah voiced the aspiration of Indian Christians to be friends and not just objects of missionary strategy, the voice of the 1910 conference was that of those who were in charge of operations.

By contrast, the WCC seeks always to give a voice to the voiceless—to those who have been on the margins. This makes for a very different kind of meeting, one that brings its own problems. Those who have been deeply hurt, who feel that their integrity and the integrity of their native cultures have been pushed aside, have here an opportunity to voice their grievance on a world stage. The danger is that the meeting can become overwhelmed by these voices. God forbid that the marginalized should be suppressed; yet in a meeting designed to further the dialogue between Gospel and culture, it was almost inevitable that the claims of oppressed cultures to be recognized and not to be overridden by the claims of the Gospel should dominate the agenda.

Although the main emphasis was on culture rather than on the Gospel, I do not think enough attention was paid to the complex nature of culture. In any given society there are conservative and radical elements—there are those who welcome something new, and there are those who resist anything new. An example would be South India, where the Gospel came as a word of liberation to the Dalits but as a threat to the Brahmins.

In spite of some individual voices, and some scattered references through the documents, I must say that I missed very much the sense that we do have a Gospel—that we have good news, and that it has been entrusted to us as a precious treasure on behalf of the whole world. I do not mean to say that the tone of the conference was overwhelmingly negative. On the contrary, I was struck by the liveliness of the plenary sessions and the way in which members spontaneously applauded when something was said that touched their hearts. And all of us were greatly uplifted by the worship of the conference at the beginning of each day. Nevertheless, in the plenary discussions and in the findings there was hardly any reference to evangelism as a joyful exercise to which we are all invited.

Proselytism a Major Concern

An important factor here was the anger generated among churches, particularly the Orthodox and those in the former Eastern bloc countries, about the aggressive and heavily financed efforts of Western missionary agents in their territories. The issue of proselytism was never far out of sight. I am bound to sympathize with those churches that have struggled to preserve a Christian witness during the long years of Marxist dominance and who now find themselves treated as though they were heathen people to whom the Gospel had never been preached. I have shared these feelings myself when, as the bishop of a South Indian diocese, I have met enthusiastic American missionaries who, not having the time to learn any Indian language that would enable them to reach the Hindu population, were proposing in their own words, "to evangelize the nominal Christians." It is against this background that one has to understand the many negative statements in the conference findings about aggressive and insensitive forms of preaching.

Even for a seasoned ecumeniac, world mission conferences are hard to grasp in a coherent way.

Lesslie Newbigin, a contributing editor, was a bishop in the Church of South India. He was general secretary of the International Missionary Council at the time of integration with the World Council of Churches in 1961. He is now retired in London.
Christian witness, and religious freedom were thrashed out seems to be trying to preserve the old territorial principle that regards the presence on Russian soil of any form of Christianity other than its own as illegitimate. These issues of proselytism, Christian witness, and religious freedom were thrashed out thirty-five years ago at the time of the integration of the International Missionary Council (IMC) with the WCC. It would have been helpful if more use could have been made of this valuable material. This is surely one of the places where we must accept the obligation inherent in our membership of the WCC, namely, the obligation to receive correction from one another. Those of us in long-established and perhaps too complacent churches may need the challenge of missionaries from other churches in other lands. In the same way, those missionaries may need to learn from the long, and sometimes very costly, experience of churches already established in the areas to which they go. This is one of the many areas in which it is vital that we attempt real dialogue between those churches that are members of the WCC and those churches and other Christian agencies that remain outside it.

Scripture—at the Conference, and in Mission

One of the very good practices of the WCC is that each day of such a conference begins with Bible study in small groups. Salvador was no exception. I think there should have been more discussion in the various sections about the central role of the Bible in the relation between Gospel and culture. The fact that the Bible has now been translated into many hundreds of languages that previously had no written literature is surely of central importance to this whole discussion. Professor Lamin Sanneh has in many ways drawn our attention to the enormous consequences of this accomplishment in the revitalization and preservation of indigenous cultures. This positive aspect of the impact of the Gospel on cultures was not brought out at Salvador.

The translation of the Bible into a new language is a giant step, perhaps the most important step, toward the enculturation of the Gospel in the culture that that language embodies. Translators of the Bible must perforce use the words of that language that perhaps the most important step, toward the enculturation of the Gospel in the culture that that language embodies. Translators of the Bible must perforce use the words of that language that themselves resonate with meanings derived from a non-Christian culture. It is only as the story and the stories of the Bible are interpreted by those who held the power in the church. It would be a mistake to simply to validate the status quo—or protests against the status quo.
Independent Churches at Salvador. It is, of course, right to say that the Bible can be read, and is read, from many different perspectives. The danger is in leaving the matter there, as though anyone’s reading is as good as anyone else’s. That would, for example, legitimize the Afrikaner reading of the Bible as validating apartheid. Thank God that particular reading has been corrected. All of our readings of the Bible need to be corrected as, on the one hand, we listen to one another’s readings from different cultural perspectives and, on the other hand, we read the Bible as a whole with its central clue the incarnation, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Bible cannot be read simply as validating the authority of the churches as they are. Nor can it be read simply as validating protest against the status quo. We have to listen seriously to each other, and listen to the whole of Scripture, if we are to be guided into the truth.

I referred earlier to the fact that the Salvador conference was held as a fresh link in the continuous chain stretching back to Edinburgh 1910. This has been possible because at the time of the integration of the IMC with the WCC, provision was made for a distinct division of the WCC to carry on the specific concerns of world mission and evangelism. There is at the present time before the member churches of the WCC a document entitled “Towards a Common Understanding and Vision of the World Council of Churches.” This proposes very important changes in the structure of the WCC that will come before the Eighth Assembly at Harare in 1998. The conference at Salvador took steps to ensure that during the further discussion of these proposals, the concern for world mission and evangelism should be adequately represented. This is a matter of real urgency. An earlier draft of the document appeared to display an almost total amnesia regarding the missionary concern. In an account of the origins of the WCC, no mention was made either of Edinburgh 1910 or of the role of the International Missionary Council in the genesis of, and the later development of, the WCC. The present document does provide for the continuation of the work of the IMC among the responsibilities of the council. However, I must say that the document as a whole is almost exclusively concerned with the issues of visible church unity and of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. References to world mission and evangelism are rare, and at no point highlighted.

**Prospects for Linking with Evangelicals**

In the same document the authors plead for closer links with such evangelical bodies as the World Evangelical Fellowship, and they penitently acknowledge the extent to which the WCC is itself responsible for their absence. But I do not think that the desire here expressed will be fulfilled unless the WCC gives much more evidence of being filled with a longing to bring the Gospel to all peoples. It is right to stress that the responsibility for mission and evangelism lies primarily with each congregation in the place where it is. But it is necessary also to remember both that there are vast areas where there are no Christian congregations, and also that none of our local churches so fully reflect the glory of Christ that they do not need help from others.

The WCC has given courageous leadership in the struggle for peace and justice in the fight against racism and in concern for the integrity of creation. It has been the prime mover in the search for closer Christian unity. But in so powerfully challenging the churches on these issues it does seem to have lost the missionary passion that was the vital force that created the ecumenical movement in the closing years of the nineteenth and the opening years of the twentieth centuries. The demand for unity among the churches and the demand for justice and peace among the nations, if they are not rooted in what God has done for all the world in Jesus Christ, can themselves become new forms of domination. There cannot be any greater task, or any deeper joy, than to tell the world what God has done for us in Jesus Christ and to enable others to know, love, and serve him as Lord and Savior.

The World Council of Churches can only be what its member churches make it. As one who is a member of a member church, I cannot speak as a critic from outside. I can only pray and work and hope that God, who has so marvelously created and sustained the World Council of Churches throughout half a century, may grant it a deep renewal of joy in the Gospel, which may enable it to fulfill in a greater measure the desire of our Lord that those who believe in him may be one, that the world may believe.
The Conference on World Mission and Evangelism has met in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, at a significant moment in history—the approach of the end of the century and of a new millennium.

Soon after the start of this century, the first comprehensive ecumenical mission conference took place in Edinburgh. It stated: “The work [of mission] has to be done now. It is urgent and must be pressed forward at once.” The work of mission, however, did not turn out to be straightforward. Within four years of that conference the world was engulfed in war. Since then it has known massacres and mass deportations, another world war, the development of new forms of colonialism, life under nuclear threat, the destruction of ecosystems by human greed, the growth and collapse of the Soviet bloc, violent and separatist ethnic struggles, rampant capitalism leading to an ever-greater gap between rich and poor.

We believe that it is still the church’s primary calling to pursue the mission of God in God’s world through the grace and goodness of Jesus Christ. Yet this mission, history-long, worldwide, cannot be seen today in narrow ways—it must be an every-member mission, from everywhere to everywhere, involving every aspect of life in a rapidly changing world of many cultures now interacting and overlapping.

In conference here in Salvador, we have sought to understand better the way in which the gospel challenges all human cultures and how culture can give us a clearer understanding of the gospel. It would be difficult to find a more appropriate venue for such a conference. Brazil has the second largest population of people of African origin of any nation. Salvador is a microcosm of the world’s diversity of cultures and spiritualities. Yet this very place made us aware of the pain and fragmentation that comes from the racism and lack of respect for other religions that still exist in sectors of the Christian churches.

The theme of the conference was “Called to One Hope—The Gospel in Diverse Cultures.”

The hope of the gospel is expressed in the gracious coming of God in Jesus of Nazareth. From the day of Pentecost this hope manifests itself as the fruit of faith and in the struggle of the community of faith. It reaches out to all people everywhere. This conference has been a foretaste and impulse of this hope.

In the conference we have experienced much which has given us such hope.

• The wide diversity of peoples and churches represented (in Edinburgh in 1910 the large majority of the participants were European or North American; in Salvador over six hundred Christians of a wide spectrum of cultures from more than one hundred nations participated in the life of the conference).
• The genuine attempt which has been made to listen and to share ways and wisdoms across cultures.
• The thrill of participating in the life of a community where the voices of young and old, women and men from Christian churches around the globe have all been speaking out.
• The willingness of the churches and mission agencies to admit past failures and to refuse to engage in stereotyp-
which led one speaker from Africa to say, "Times are ripe for flirting with hopelessness," and we have been astonished at the strength and determination of African Christians, women in particular, to share the pain of their people and to combat despair and plant the seeds of both food and hope.

- We have benefited from hearing of the long-term experience of Asian Christians of living a life of Christian discipleship in multifaith societies, sometimes as vulnerable and threatened minority groups. We have also heard of a surge of grassroots missionary activity.

- We have been moved by the experiences of Christians in the Middle East living with the privilege and pain of life in a "holy land" torn apart by division and injustice, and their indignation at the way in which biblical texts are misinterpreted so that their culture is blemished and some are made to feel strangers in their own land.

- We have admired the commitment of those from the Orthodox and other local churches in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe now determined, in the new atmosphere of religious freedom, to serve their people in such a way that the faith which sustained many through times of persecution might now be an equal blessing in times of new challenge. We have heard their protest at the ways in which rich foreign Christian groups are seeking to proselytize their people.

- We have recognized the caution of Christians in Germany about being too ready to see God's spirit in all human cultures, growing out of their painful memories of how the churches risked becoming captive to Nazi ideology in a previous generation.

- We have heard how the churches, against the background of the post-modern culture influencing much of Western Europe, are studying the phenomenon of secularism and engaging with those turning from traditional faith and seemingly seeking a private "pick and mix" spirituality.

- We have heard reports of the growing localism of North American churches which, while strengthening their commitment to mission and evangelism in their own context, may lead to an isolation and insulation from global realities.

- We have shared the concern of many at how the global free-market economy seems to exercise sovereign power over even strong governments, and how the mass media disseminate worldwide images and messages of every description which influence—and, some believe, undermine—community and faith.

- We have discussed how, perhaps as a reaction to these developments, new fundamentalisms are emerging in all world faiths, adding to the divisions in an already fractured world.

- We have heard how Christians in many places around the globe are engaging in serious dialogue with people of other faiths, telling the Christian story, listening attentively to the stories of others, and thus gaining a clearer and richer understanding of their own faith and helping to build a "community of communities" to the benefit of all.

In such ways we have recognized how the church engages in mission with cultures around the globe today. What then would we want to emphasize from this conference?

- The church must hold on to two realities: its distinctiveness from, and its commitment to, the culture in which it is set. In such a way the gospel neither becomes captive to a culture nor becomes alienated from it, but each challenges and illuminates the other.

- Perhaps as never before, Christians in mission today need to have a clear understanding of what God has done in history through Jesus Christ. In this we have seen what God requires of individuals, communities and structures. The biblical witness is our starting point and reference for mission and gives us the sense of our own identity.

- We need constantly to seek the insight of the Holy Spirit in helping us better to discern where the gospel challenges, endorses or transforms a particular culture.

- The catholicity of a church is enhanced by the quality of the relationships it has with churches of other traditions and cultures. This has implications for mission and evangelism and calls for respect and sensitivity for churches already located in the place concerned. Competitiveness is the surest way to undermine Christian mission. Equally, aggressive evangelism which does not respect the culture of a people is unlikely to reflect effectively the gracious love of God and the challenge of the gospel.

- Local congregations are called to be places of hope, providing spaces of safety and trust wherein different peoples can be embraced and affirmed, thus manifesting the inclusive love of God. For congregations in increasingly plural societies, inclusion of all cultural groups which make up the community, including those who are uprooted, marginalized and despised, is important. Strengthening congregations through a spirituality which enables them to face the vulnerability involved in this openness is critical.

- Small steps which involve risk and courage can break through barriers and create new relationships. Such steps are available to us all. They can be the "miracle" which changes a church or community's self-image and enables new God-given life to break forth.

Music at the conference has had a rhythm, a harmony, a beat. In a place with a deep African tradition it is natural that in our worship the beat of the drum has frequently been the vehicle to carry our souls to resonate with the beat of God's love for us and for all people. With hearts set on fire for the beat of mission and a prayer on our lips that many will share with us in being "Called to One Hope" and take and find "The Gospel in Diverse Cultures," we commend to Christians and churches everywhere the fruits of the conference. Our profound hope is that they too may be renewed in mission for the sharing of the knowledge of Christ, to the glory of the triune God.
Born in 1929 in Tokyo, Japan, I was about ten years old when I was introduced to John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. I still remember the excitement with which I held the book in my hands and examined the picture of the weary traveler, kneeling before the cross. It was the first theological book I read in my life. Though my understanding of it was limited, its symbolism beyond my comprehension, I was drawn by the devotion of Christian, the main character of the book. His determination to reach the goal, overcoming all obstacles and temptations on the way, left a deep impression on my soul. Finally, he arrives at the cross, and the burden he has been carrying falls from his shoulders. The strange impression of this travelogue has stayed with me as though it were my personal secret. Today I can see that the book introduced me to the Christian understanding of history. Our lives, and even the great panorama of human history, have beginnings and ends that contain the movement (i.e., the pilgrim’s progress) toward God. This understanding of life and of history gives a fundamental orientation for the Christian understanding of mission.

**Pilgrim’s Progress versus Demon Progress**

About the time I encountered *Pilgrim’s Progress*, the Japanese military was already active against Manchuria and China. The war thus begun eventually became the Fifteen-Year War. At the time of Japanese surrender in 1945, Japan was at enmity with fifty-two nations. Between 1941 and 1945 I experienced utter confusion, violence, and destruction. Night after night the bombs rained down upon us. Yet, somehow, the idea that our life, personally and collectively, must be a movement toward God survived in my soul. I sensed, though vaguely, a great contrast between pilgrim progress and the “demon progress,” as it were, of the cult of emperor worship. I concluded that Japan became a heap of ruins because it engaged in the cult of a false god—in idolatry. Perceiving that this would sound extremely strange to my friends, I kept it to myself. My thought was simple. The emperor is human. It is not right to say that he is divine. Idolatry, a theme foreign to Japanese culture, became a part of my mental vocabulary. It came together with the experience of the terrifying violence of war. I was baptized during the war years not so much from an awareness of my personal sinfulness as from the immediate experience of the destruction of my country by war. The minister who baptized me told me that the God of the Bible is concerned about the well-being of all nations, even including Japan and America. To hear this at the same time that we were being bombed by America was quite startling. This was my first ecumenical lesson.

My life, spanning the bulk of this century, has been continuously invaded by the violence of wars. The twentieth century has been a century of genocide and wars. When I pray, “Lead us not into temptation,” I am, in fact, saying, “Lead us to the eradication of violence.” It is violence, not temptation, that has defined my life in this century.

The Christian faith came into the Koyama clan when my paternal grandfather became a Christian some 130 years ago. With his grandfatherly authority, he encouraged us to read the Bible and to freely discuss our thoughts about it. Strange names—Adam, Eve, Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, Paul, Peter—gradually became familiar to us. Because of my grandfather’s wisdom, the Bible has always been for me a companion book that initiates fascinating and serious discussion about our life in the world. I hold today that the Bible is the Word of God not because it is so defined by the church, but because it speaks to us urgently and deeply. Many years later my mother told me that my grandfather had been praying for one of his grandchildren to become an evangelist. Without knowing this, I entered the preparatory course of Tokyo Union Theological Seminary in 1946. Tokyo was desolate, and I was tormented by hunger. I remember that one morning at chapel Dr. Kuwada, president of the seminary, read from 2 Kings 25:6–7. The American president, Mr. Truman, he said, treated the Japanese emperor Hirohito far more mercifully than Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had treated Zedekiah, the king of Judah. I felt thankful for that. On the day when the top Japanese war criminals were hanged, Dr. Kuwada spoke of international justice. But, I thought, had Japan won the war, they would surely not have been hanged.

*As the bombs rained down on us in Tokyo, I sensed a great contrast between pilgrim progress and demon progress.*

Through these “international” events, I learned to pronounce the names of Nebuchadnezzar and Zedekiah, turning them over on my tongue in my Japanese accent with great delight. They sounded impressive!

I graduated from Tokyo Union Theological Seminary in 1952 with a thesis on St. Francis of Assisi. In my mind St. Francis’s ability to converse with a wild wolf was united with his mystical reception of the holy stigmata of Christ. I concluded that the lifestyle of the stigmata overcame all barriers to communication, even between the animal and human worlds. I seemed to detect an Oriental (India, China) element of saintliness in Francis.

**A Time of Cultural and Theological “Floating”**

From 1952 to 1959 I studied “Western theology” in theological schools in Madison and Princeton in New Jersey. During those years I was convinced that whatever my professors taught me was universally valid, since, after all, Christian theology had been developed in the West. Almost intentionally, I ignored my own culture and language, deciding that they were worthless. It was a time of cultural and theological floating that continued for seven years. I was able to obtain the doctoral degree in theology from Princeton Theological Seminary without bringing what I learned in New Jersey to dialogue with my own spiritual and cultural roots. Vaguely, however, I was aware of the need for integration.
Many of my Asian friends had also experienced the war, but as victims of Japanese imperialism.

tempted to say that anyone who wants to understand multiculturalism or religious pluralism would first have to endure this linguistic baptism. It was the language study that grounded me from that rootless floating. For all the tongue twisting and mental humiliation, after a year of language study I ventured to lecture in Thai at Thailand Theological Seminary in Chiangmai. My students heard the countless mistakes, both hilarious and dangerous, that I made in the classroom.

Coming to Thailand, I entered the young yet venerable heritage of Asian ecumenism, which began in 1949 with the Bangkok conference entitled “The Christian Prospect in Eastern Asia.” Under the leadership of D. T. Niles, U Kyaw Than, and Alan Brash, the East Asia Christian Conference (EACC) was formed in 1957. The theme of its inaugural conference at Prapat, Indonesia—“The Common Evangelistic Task of the Churches in East Asia”—was still echoing when I arrived in Chiangmai. I experienced firsthand the reality of the community of faith spread throughout Asia. My theological ministry found a new strong context in the “Common Evangelistic Task.”

Luther’s Theology in Chiangmai

With the kind help of John Hamlin, the principal of the seminary, and of faculty colleagues, my appreciation of the Thai Theravada Buddhist–animist culture gradually deepened. This new development shook my confidence in the New Jersey theology. When one day in the classroom I realized that my lecture on Luther’s theology was a complete flop, I panicked. The waves of the panic reached back all the way to my wartime experience. The realization that many of my EACC friends also knew the war, but as the victims of Japanese imperialism, was important for my new theological orientation.

What, I asked myself, is the connection between Chiangmai and Wittenberg? I could not justify myself by saying that for my New Jersey professors, Wittenberg was important. There was a serious question of relevance here, as the EACC was pointing out. Between northern Thailand and New Jersey there are such vast differences in religion, culture, and language. If I speak about Luther’s theology in Chiangmai, I must know what my Chiangmai students need to know and understand about such theology. If I did not face these questions, how could I participate in “the Christian prospect in Asia”?

This simple question of relevance was for me Elijah’s hand-sized cloud that became, in a short time, a storm. I found the question far more difficult to answer than I at first anticipated. I saw that I must first understand the history of the Thai people and their religion and culture. This would take, I said to myself, more than my lifetime. To begin with, why did I, a man from Tokyo, think Luther’s theology was meaningful to me? This question revealed to me how long I had been floating from my own roots. Even this personal question I was not sure how to answer! Suddenly I was confronted by the question of my own personal and theological identity. I realized that the last time I was really I was during the daily bombings of the war. Under the bomb I was totally vulnerable and naked. Kyrie eleison (Lord, have mercy!) was the only word left for me then. And that was a strong identity!

Yet I could not allow what I learned in New Jersey to simply disappear like a mist. I needed to reconstruct my theological knowledge in terms of my experience in Thailand. I was involved in a triple accommodation process with Tokyo, New Jersey, and Chiangmai. Should I look at New Jersey and Chiangmai from Tokyo? Or Tokyo and New Jersey from Chiangmai? Or Tokyo and Chiangmai from New Jersey? How could I come to some kind of meaningful integration of my theological thought that would express itself in Japanese, English, and Thai? Gradually, the intense wartime experience of Kyrie eleison reclaimed the center of my theological thinking.

The experience of vulnerability under the bomb began to cast its light upon the confusing triple accommodation process. I became Tokyo-centered, but this Tokyo had, in my theological map, remained ever desolate. Tokyo, in being reduced to a ruin, participated in the ancient story associated with Nebuchadnezzar and Zedekiah. From that memorable day when I lectured on Luther in Chiangmai up to the present, I have been continuously challenged by the question of “one Gospel and many cultures.” Often this challenge comes to my mind with the image of King Zedekiah, his eyes torn out and taken into exile. The theme of “Christ and culture” and my firsthand experience of the destruction of Japan were welded together in my soul. Ecumenism is a serious subject because it affects the destiny of nations. Japan, behaving like Nebuchadnezzar, “put out the eyes” of countless Asians. How do we affirm the ecumenical Gospel in the face of global violence?

Singapore: The Decolonization of Theology

In 1968 I moved to Singapore to take up the position of dean of the Southeast Asia Graduate School of Theology (SEAGST), which was formed in 1966. This school was an outcome of a historic theological education consultation held in Bangkok in 1956. In the record of the consultation we read, “The teaching of systematic theology must be relevant to the environment. It must, on the one hand, be grounded in the Bible; and on the other, related to the actual situation. . . . The Christian faith should be presented in relation to the totality of questions raised by the local situation, and it should not be assumed that certain questions are relevant to all times and situations” (italics added). Repeating in my
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WHERE SHARING THE GOSPEL MEANS SHARING YOUR LIFE
mind the last line of the above quotation, I succeeded John Fleming from Scotland. With the 1956 Bangkok conference, we consciously began the process of the decolonization of theology. The selfhood of the Asian church became a subject of serious discussion.

Though my office was located at Trinity Theological College in Singapore, I was kept busy most of the time flying around in the countries of Southeast Asia. From the beginning, the SEAGST faculty knew that there are not one but many religious and cultural contexts in Asia. In fact, the variety in Asia is both staggering and impressive. The SEAGST focused its attention on the academic and historic strength of schools in various cultural contexts. Thailand offered Buddhist studies, while Indonesia and Malaysia were responsible for the study of Islam. Hong Kong and Taiwan presented Confucian studies. The Philippine seminaries were the locus for the study of church history. In 1975, after three years of study and discussion, the Senate of SEAGST came to a consensus to adopt a “Critical Asian Principle” in theological education. It urged the schools to be contextual to regional situations and called the faculty’s attention to at least four principles: situational, hermeneutical, missiological, and educational. The Senate approved the presentation of graduating theses in the students’ own Asian languages if they preferred. Studying Christianity under these principles, my students of a Buddhist land and students of other Asian cultures could see afresh their own religious heritage, and in doing so, they saw Christianity afresh. By providing theological students with the opportunity to study in other Southeast Asian countries, SEAGST made it possible for them to get out of their own cultural turf for a while in order to become more communicative in theology and language. This is what makes ecumenical education exciting.

While I was the dean, some eighty Ph.D.s constituted the federated faculty of professors who taught in the theological schools in several countries of Southeast Asia. The degrees of all of these professors, including my own, were earned from theological schools in the West. All of the professors were people of two cultures (“fork and chopsticks”), committed to the direction of theological education expressed at the Bangkok conference of 1956. In our Senate discussions we explored together the nature and limits of cultural accommodation of the Gospel not from the bear “good fruits” (Matt. 7:17). The “no other name” theology (Acts 4:12) signifies an exclusiveness whose character is “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Unlike the ordinary cultural concept of exclusiveness, this Christological exclusiveness, drawing its life from love of unfathomable depth (1 Cor. 13:13), goes far beyond any comparative discussion of superiority or inferiority of religions.

The SEAGST, from its inception, has been a busy center of ecumenical theological discussion. John Fleming, Shoki Coe, Erick Nielson, D. T. Niles, U Kyaw Than, Ivy Chou, Alan Brash, M. M. Thomas, Alan Thomson, Henry F. Van Dusen, John Bennett, and Charles West, just to mention a few, were dear friends always ready to become most serious discussion partners with SEAGST.

An Unexpected “Bombing” in New York

In 1974 I left Singapore for New Zealand, where I was senior lecturer in religious studies at the University of Otago. Six years later, in 1980, I received a long-distance call from Donald Shriver, president of Union Theological Seminary in New York, inviting me to become professor of ecumenics and world Christianity. In this exciting environment I experienced a “bombing” quite different from that I had known during the wartime of my youth. There, for the first time, I encountered the Jewish and black peoples. New York abruptly forced me to respond theologically to the fact of enormous violence suffered by these two peoples. My concept of theology, which is ecumenical by nature, did not allow me the excuse that I come from a land in which these two peoples had no historical connections. I sensed that my identity would be directly threatened if I did not come to terms with the twofold encounter. My happy confidence that I was bringing the excitement of Asia to Union was thus shaken soon after I came.

In Asia I had learned that culture is an extremely ambiguous concept. The male-dominated culture of China, in its ten centuries of foot binding, had crippled one billion women. For centuries Hindu caste culture has delegated millions to lives of hopeless poverty and despair. In my thinking, I had come to a theologia crucis (theology of the cross) in which love, becoming completely vulnerable to violence, conquers violence. In my Asian theologia crucis “Christ and culture” and “Christ and liberation” were united. New York approved the essential relatedness of the two, but it questioned my theologia crucis.

The experience of blacks and Jews challenged the heart of the Christian faith as I understood it at that time. I came to see that their critical appraisal of Christian faith derives from their historical experience of violence. It is sad to know that Christian theology and the church have participated in the violence they suffered. These two peoples are a symbol representing millions of other people who have suffered violence and perished in the course of human history. Their very presence in our midst raises the ultimate question of violence in human civilization. This was the same question I had whispered to myself in the war years; why is it that someone throws bombs upon us from the sky?

Previously, I had read books by Martin Buber, Abraham Heschel, and Louis Finkelstein. But the living presence of a vibrant Jewish community, with their erudite and influential rabbis, their lively theological education, and the ongoing ancient tradition of the synagogue worship in which I participated from time to time in the city, impressed upon me the truth of the continuity of the Abrahamic covenant. One must not speak easily, I said to myself, of the superseding of the Old Covenant by the New Covenant. With this monologue, my Jewish-Christian

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I found that blacks and Jews assess the Christian faith from their historical experience of violence.

North Atlantic theological perspective but from the contexts of diverse local cultures in Asia. A marked absence of paternalism and imperialism among these multiculled faculty members nurtured the healthy growth of the school.

The SEAGST viewed Asia as one part of the global web of cultures and languages. It affirmed an ecological image of interrelatedness instead of viewing Asia as an independent, isolated entity. In my mind the ecological opposes violence, and the image of interrelatedness replaces that of “superiority.” I decided not to use the language of superiority within the context of theology. Superiority is a cultural, not theological, concept. To say that Christianity is superior to Buddhism, or vice versa, is empty talk. The Gospel is not to be called superior. It calls us to...
dialogue in New York began. I noticed that the theology of superseding has given to Christians a specious sense of superior-
ty, not only over Jews, but over peoples of other faiths as well, an
attitude that has contributed to the increase of violence in the
world. A sense of superiority too quickly becomes a self-righ-
teous complex that generates violence.

Theologically, I began to notice a difference between the
Jesus I had known in Tokyo and the Jesus I found in New York.
My Tokyo Jesus was the divine redeemer of the Gentiles. His
Gospel could be proclaimed without making one reference to the
Jewish people of today. There is Christology in Tokyo.

In New York, however, Jesus is, first of all, a Jewish person
of great spiritual stature. And equally important as Jesus of
Nazareth is the name of Rabbi Akiba. There is no Christology
here. One has to come to New York to experience Jesus the Jew
without a trace of Christology. This absence of Christology
shakes the foundation of the Christian faith. The theologia crucis
may speak of the theology of the Suffering Servant of God (Isa.
53) but nothing more. What the name Jesus stands for is no more
than a part of the historical experience of the people of Israel. In
the same way that the message of Jeremiah is universal, Jesus is
universal. Jesus in Jewish New York is “down-sized.” Here, he is
no longer vere Deus vere homo.

A critical moment came to me when I finally came to feel the
enormity of evil of the holocaust of European Jewry. In Asia I had
been able to engage in theology at a safe distance from Auschwitz.
In New York that distance once for all disappeared. All civiliza-
tions are violent, I saw. But why should Christian civilization be
so especially violent?

Again, in Asia I had engaged in theological work at a safe
distance from the history and the effects of black slavery in the
United States. Even in my student days in New Jersey, only rarely
had my professors mentioned the violence of the Crusades, of
the Inquisition, of the colonization and settling of the Americas,
of slavery, and of the Holocaust. Asians are color-conscious racists.
Yet it took New York to confront me with the violence of racism.
For the first time in my life I asked what had seemed a strange
question. Was Jesus white? Was Augustine black? The New
Testament and the creeds of the church never mention the color
of Jesus. The enormity of the suffering of black people in the time
of slavery and the continuing reality of vicious racism today has
made me speak carefully about the theologia crucis.

“I Desire Mercy and Not Sacrifice”

Theologia crucis must not approve or encourage “sacrifice-making.” To say that as Jesus sacrificed himself, we too should
sacrifice is dangerous because it could suggest that sacrifice-
making itself has Christian value. Sacrifice (sacer, holy; facere, to
make) makes human life holy only when it is an expression of
love. Sacrifice itself is tragedy. Over the years in New York I have
come to see a connection between sacrifice and violence. Sacrifice
is often another name for self-protection and even for self-
righteousness. In view of the tremendous gap between the
affluent and destitute sections of humanity, we find it difficult
not to accept the equation that sacrifice is violence. We need to
remember that theologia crucis is a doctrine of love, not of sacrifice.
The predication of black people has compelled me to meditate
upon the words of the prophet Hosea: “I desire mercy and not
sacrifice” (6:6).

The primary duty of theologia crucis is to confront violence
and destroy it. Grace is global. Violence also is global. My New
York theologia crucis began to have the two themes simulta-
neously: grace and violence. I came to understand that grace is
the grace of God, but it must become our inner power to resist and
eradicate violence as personally demonstrated by Martin Luther
King, Jr. In this empowerment the grace of God becomes real.

The power of bombs is naked violence. The Hindus say that
those who bomb others will eventually bomb themselves. This is
the law of “action and reaction,” or karman. Impressive as the
karman philosophy is, the theologia crucis is not identical with it.
If I were to say that they are identical, all of Asia could be easily
evangelized. “Action and reaction,” though profoundly under-
standable, cannot be the final words to bring about the elimina-
tion of violence. In fact, somehow the chain of “action and
reaction” must be cut. It is the power of grace that can cut this
chain. At this cutting, the Semitic faiths (Judaism, Christianity,
and Islam) encounter the Hindu spiritual world.

What if the karman doctrine were to bring forth a less violent
world than the Semitic doctrine does? The final test for the
truthfulness of the theologia crucis is whether this Christian teach-
ing truly contributes toward the removal of violence in the
world. Our commitment to the removal of violence must express
itself in a number of important areas. That is the content of
ecumenism and mission. In interreligious dialogue we must
study how each tradition struggles against violence. Inquisition
is violence. Inquisition is the death of evangelization. I believe we
can speak forcefully and intelligently about Christian faith only
when we are engaged in the common battle against violence.
Christian speech on the uniqueness of Christianity would speak
to the world if the world had been impressed by Christian work
toward the elimination of violence.

The oikumene Christ loves is full of violence. Bombing is
going on everywhere. Every bomb strikes the God of Jesus
Christ. Every bomb is a denial of the “breath of God” that came
into our nostrils (Gen. 2:7). Does not this one word—“bombing”—
characterize the mode of human life upon this planet in the
twentieth century? Perhaps, in different ways, previous centu-
ries were as violent as ours. But we are living in the twentieth
century and are responsible to this century and its future. Why is
the human being so violent? Why are all civilizations—but in
particular, why is the Western civilization, informed by Chris-
tianity—so violent? The source of human violence is a mystery.
It takes the mystery of Eucharist to counter it. Someday, with
the help of the Jewish people, black people, and many others, I may
be able to stammer a few words about the mystery of the
Eucharist that can expose the mystery of violence and thus move
toward its elimination more courageously and intelligently.

My pilgrimage in mission began with my incomprehending
reading of Pilgrim’s Progress. I have lived all my life from one war
to another. My experience of bombing has caused me to be less
interested in individual salvation or a blessed eternity after
death, and more passionate about salvation now, in this life.
Christian “eschatology” is focused on the present. For me the
Christian mission is to bring forth the wholesomeness of abun-
dant life to all upon the earth. In this way, perhaps only in this
way, can we proclaim confidently and joyously the name of

The grace of God must become our power to resist and
eradicate violence.
Jonathan Edwards: Missionary Biographer, Theologian, Strategist, Administrator, Advocate—and Missionary

Ronald E. Davies

Most ordinary Christians, and many non-Christians, at least in the United States, know of Jonathan Edwards (1703–58) only as the hellfire preacher of the Great Awakening. But Christians with missiological interests should know that Edwards had a number of connections with missions, especially missions to the North American Indians. He edited David Brainerd’s journal for publication after the latter’s death, and the resulting volume became one of the most influential missionary biographies ever written. He also spent the last seven years of his life as a missionary to the Indians in the remote frontier village of Stockbridge in western Massachusetts, leaving there only in response to an insistent invitation to become the president of Princeton College.

Mission historians are aware that Edwards’s writings were extremely influential in the beginnings of the modern missionary movement in Britain, including the founding of the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792 and the London Missionary Society three years later. On the American side of the Atlantic, Edwards’s concept of “love for being in general,” which he set forth in one of his last works, The Nature of True Virtue, provided the incentive for Samuel Hopkins to develop his idea of “disinterested benevolence,” which was a powerful incentive in missionary motivation after the War of Independence, when North American Protestants developed their own missionary work both on their own continent and beyond. On both sides of the Atlantic and in the new mission areas, Edwards’s God-centered postmillennial optimism was a powerful incentive to persevere under the most discouraging and depressing circumstances.

Edwards’s Influence Often Minimized

These achievements, however, are often minimized or even ignored altogether. Scholars involved in the modern Edwards Renaissance play down this side of his work as an almost embarrassing irrelevance. It is suggested that in editing Brainerd’s journal he distorted the real Brainerd and in fact was not so much interested in missions as in using Brainerd’s diary to underline some of his own ideas that he had emphasized in earlier publications. Regarding the years in Stockbridge, it has often been suggested that Edwards had no interest in evangelizing the Indians but went there only because he had nowhere else to go when he left Northampton; and that he only wanted a quiet situation to get on with his writing. The statement is often made that he did not prepare new sermons in the Stockbridge years but merely reprinted earlier sermons. An examination of the facts shows that each of these points is inaccurate, as we shall see below.

It is past time to recognize Edwards’s influence on the development of the modern Protestant missionary movement. William Carey is often spoken of as the father of modern missions, and a similar epithet is sometimes used of Samuel Hopkins in the American scene. In that case, Jonathan Edwards deserves the title “grandfather of modern Protestant missions,” on both sides of the Atlantic!

When did Edwards’s interest in missions begin? Was it in 1747, when the dying missionary David Brainerd rode into Edwards’s yard at Northampton and, before his death, asked Edwards to prepare his diaries for publication? It is certainly very probable that the work of editing Brainerd’s writings strengthened Edwards’s interest in the Indian work, and it has been suggested that when he had to leave Northampton following dismissal from the pastorate, Brainerd’s example reinforced his own call to the Stockbridge mission.

But in fact, Edwards’s own missionary interest long antedated his contacts with Brainerd. Such interest began at least twenty-five years earlier. Writing about 1739 in “Personal Narrative,” Edwards recalls that during his pastorate in New York (August 1722 to April 1723), “I had great longings for the advancement of Christ’s kingdom in the world; and my secret prayer used to be, in large part, taken up in praying for it. If I heard the least hint of any thing that happened in any part of the world that appeared in some respect or other to have a favorable aspect on the interests of Christ’s kingdom, my soul eagerly caught at it; and it would much animate and refresh me.”

Around the same time, his grandfather Solomon Stoddard published two works in which he reversed his previous indifference to Indian missions and argued strongly that it was the duty of New Enganders to work actively for the conversion of the Indians, claiming further that God was angry with the white population for ignoring this duty. He also argued that the Great Commission was of continuing validity, a point that many Protestants denied. When Edwards returned home in May 1723, he would undoubtedly have seen copies of these books in his father’s home. Even if he did not read them then, there is no doubt that he would have done so once he settled at Northampton as Stoddard’s assistant in 1727.

Evidence of Edwards’s Interest

There is evidence of Edwards’s continued missionary interest over the next several years, in spite of the increasing demands of a busy pastorate. In 1727 he noted on page 3 of his “Catalogue” that one of the books he wanted to read was “Millar’s History of the Propagation of Christianity,” which gave an account of Christian missions from the apostles up to the time of writing, together with a number of arguments for the work to be continued and furthered. In 1734, the year in which the first wave of spiritual awakening began in Northampton and the Connecticut Valley, Edwards was involved in the establishment of a new missionary venture, the Stockbridge Mission, where seventeen years later he would himself serve. In March of that year he attended a meeting in the home of his close friend Colonel John Stoddard, who was the acknowledged expert on Indian affairs in New England. Later the Boston Commissioners were contacted, a meeting was begun with representatives of the Housatonic Indians, and a mission was set up with John Sergeant as the first missionary. Edwards continued to keep up contacts with Ser-
geant and the mission, and in 1743 he and Colonel Stoddard were named as recipients for funds being collected for a school Sergeant was planning for Indian children.

In 1747 Job Strong, one of the church members in Northampton, was accepted as a missionary candidate by the Boston Commissioners on the recommendation of David Brainerd on his last visit to Boston shortly before his death. Strong was sent to David’s brother John, who had taken over responsibility for his dead brother’s work among the Indians, for a period of orientation and then back to Northampton for more theological study under the guidance of Edwards.5

Thus, Edwards’s interest in Brainerd’s missionary work began long before he edited the Brainerd journal for publication. His first contact with Brainerd came in 1743, when he supported the petition to the Yale authorities for the granting of Brainerd’s degree, and he continued his interest in succeeding years. The first report of Brainerd’s work was published at the end of 1744

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Edwards’s writings were influential on both sides of the Atlantic in the beginnings of the modern missionary movement.

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as an appendix to Ebenezer Pemberton’s sermon at Brainerd’s ordination. Edwards quoted this report six times in the published diary and had seen it when it was first published, if not before. In November 1745 Edwards was among the first to hear of the spiritual blessing on Brainerd’s work and wasted no time in passing on the news to a Scottish correspondent.6 He also saw part of the journal that Brainerd himself prepared for publication while it was still in the proof stage, and again passed on the news to Scotland. And he celebrated the news of the divine blessing on the Indian missionary work with his own congregation at Northampton.7

When the dying missionary asked Edwards to take care of his diaries and prepare them for publication, Edwards was already working on a major treatise, The Freedom of the Will, which he felt to be of prime importance because of the theological climate of New England. However, he laid this aside and gave himself to this new task, a measure, surely, of the importance he placed upon it.8

Lessons from Brainerd’s Life and Work

Throughout the published diaries Edwards provided notes explaining personal details and giving reasons for various movements recorded, especially those that had to do with the Indian mission, disclosing something of the strategy and planning behind the work. In his “Appendix Containing Some Reflections and Observations on the Preceding Memoirs of Mr. Brainerd,” he drew out lessons in Brainerd’s life and experience. Edwards obviously wanted to use Brainerd’s life as an object lesson in true spirituality, as Edwards had expounded it in various of his other writings. However, he also wanted to use it to portray the sort of men who should be chosen as missionaries in the future, as well as to give guidance on the actual conduct of missionary work.

As Edwards says at one point, “It may be of direction . . . as to the proper qualifications of missionaries.” Like Brainerd, candidates should be individuals with a clear conversion experience who evidence growth in holiness and who are free from the excesses of “enthusiasm.” Brainerd’s whole-hearted commitment to the work is used as an example to “us who are called to the work of ministry, and all that are candidates for that great work”; but especially “his example of laboring, praying, denying himself . . . may afford instruction to missionaries in particular.” Edwards continued, “He in his whole course acted as one who had indeed sold all for Christ and had entirely devoted himself to God, and made his glory his highest end, and was fully determined to spend his whole time and strength in his service.” One practical point Edwards wanted to “mention and propose to the consideration of such as have the care of providing and sending missionaries among savages; viz., whether it would not ordinarily be best to send two together?” He blames the fact of Brainerd’s “melancholy,” which troubled him so often and so deeply, on the fact of his being alone under such difficult conditions, citing Brainerd’s words to him on the subject while Brainerd lay dying in the Northampton parsonage.

Missionary Theology

During the final months of Brainerd’s life, which were spent in Edwards’s home, much of Edwards’s time was taken up with the preparation for the press of An Humble Attempt, in which he proposed a program of corporate prayer for revival and advancement of Christ’s kingdom. Brainerd eagerly seized on the idea of the “prayer concert” and even as he lay dying sent word to his Indian converts urging them to participate in it.

Humble Attempt contains a considerable amount of biblical exposition (some of it quite tortuous!), setting forth the theological framework in which Edwards viewed missionary work. Together with the thirty lecture-sermons he preached in 1739 (posthumously published in 1774 under the title History of the Work of Redemption), certain passages in Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England (1742), and a number of letters from the period, Edwards’s Humble Attempt allows us to reconstruct an outline of his theology of mission. However, we ultimately need to look at the whole of Edwards’s exposition of God’s “grand design” as we find it in some of his last works, including those he planned but did not live to complete.

“Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.” So says the Westminster Shorter Catechism, which Jonathan Edwards had been taught as a child and which he valued highly throughout his life. “God’s chief end is to glorify himself with a view to bringing man to enjoy him forever” may serve as a summary of Edwards’s understanding of “The End for Which God Created the World” (the title of one of his last works), which provides the background against which to understand his theology of mission.

God’s “inner glory,” his “fullness,” the “excellency” of the divine being consists in the mutual happiness, delight, and love of the persons of the Trinity. This, according to Edwards, is the essential meaning of the Johannine statement “God is love.” But the essence of love is to communicate, and thus “God is a communicating being.” “The great and universal end of God’s creating the world was to communicate Himself . . . to intelligent beings . . . God created this world for the shining forth of His excellency and for the flowing forth of His happiness.” Edwards spoke of God glorifying himself both “inwardly” and “outwardly”:

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God is glorified within Himself in these two ways: 1. By appearing or being manifested to Himself in His own perfect idea, or in His Son who is the brightness of His glory. 2. By enjoying and delighting in Himself, by flowing forth in infinite love and delight towards Himself, or in His Holy Spirit.

So God glorifies Himself towards the creatures also [in] two ways: 1. By appearing to them, being manifested to their understanding. 2. In communicating Himself to their hearts, and in their rejoicing, and delighting in, and enjoying, the manifestations which He makes of Himself. (emphasis added)²

This “glorious and abundant emanation of his infinite fullness of good ad extra” is “God’s last end” and “what moved him to create the world,” and the “remanation,” the “refulgence [being] reflected back to the luminary” means that “the whole is of God, and in God, and to God; and he is the beginning, and the middle, and the end.”¹² So the glory of God, defined in this way, is the chief end of all of God’s works.

The most preeminent of all God’s works is “the work of redemption, which is the chief work of providence towards the moral world . . . all God’s works of providence in the moral government of the world . . . are subordinate to the great purposes and end of this great work . . . . The work of redemption is that by which men . . . are restored to holiness and happiness. The work of redemption is a new creation . . . whereby men are brought into a new existence, or are made new creatures.” The work of redemption is thus the chief way in which “God’s chief end” is accomplished, and the work of redemption includes the preaching of the Gospel to all people as the means by which men and women are brought to become new creatures, and thus to the fulfillment of “God’s chief end” in creation.¹³ The work of missions is the way by which the Gospel is preached to all humankind, and therefore missionary work has an integral part to play in fulfilling God’s purposes for the whole of the cosmos. This role becomes plain as we consider Edwards’s other writings.

The first of these, History of the Work of Redemption, describes the whole course of history from the creation and fall to the new heavens and new earth as the outworking of this grand divine plan. This is achieved in three stages: the period of preparation from the fall to the incarnation of Christ; the midpoint of redemption, the incarnation—including the life, death, and resurrection of Christ—when redemption was “purchased”; and the application and outworking of redemption from the resurrection of Christ to the end of the world and the eternal state, which “is all taken up in bringing about the great effect or success of Christ’s purchase” (“General Introduction”).

The third period is introduced by the “Christ’s appointment of the Gospel ministry, and commissioning and sending forth his apostles to teach and baptize all nations” (Matt. 28:19-20) and “enduing the apostles and others with extraordinary and miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost.” In Protestant thinking from the Reformation onward, there was an ambivalence and hesitation concerning the validity of both of these events for the church beyond the days of the original apostles. The claims of the Roman Catholic Church for its own apostolic authority and its claims to multitudes of miracles in support of those claims provided one reason for the wariness of the Reformers and their successors. Edwards certainly followed the generally accepted view regarding miracles and spiritual gifts. He believed that they had ceased with the death of the last apostle and were not to be revived even in the millennium.¹⁴

However, on the subject of the permanent validity of the Great Commission, Edwards takes his own distinctive line.¹⁵ In History of the Work of Redemption, his words are rather ambiguous; he is trying to show that the churches “had something above what belonged to their ordinary character as ministers: they had extraordinary power of teaching and ruling that extended to all the churches, and not only all churches that then were but all that should be to the end of the world . . . . And so they were . . . made foundations of the Christian church [citing Eph. 2:20 and Rev. 21:14].”¹⁶ His meaning might be understood as supporting the normal Reformation position that the Great Commission is no longer applicable as a missionary command that the church still needs to obey. However, that this is not the case or, alternatively, as evidence for a change of mind at some later point, we may cite the entry in the “Blank Bible,” which he made some ten or more years later. Here he certainly believes in the continued relevance of the Great Commission; indeed, it will be particularly relevant in the final period of missionary work leading up to and culminating in the millennium. Edwards’s words are worth quoting at length:

All power is given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations. I have acquired a right to all mankind. Go therefore and bring [them] home to me. This shows that it was [Christ’s] aim to assert his right over mankind that he had acquired by the Labours he went through by eventually bringing all nations into his kingdom & therefore inasmuch as this has never been accomplished we may prognosticate that there is a day remaining in which it will be accomplished and thus that reward of his humiliation spoken of Philipp 2:9–10 of every knee bowing and every tongue confessing to [Christ] shall be accomplished by an universal conversion of the world to the [Christian] faith & a bringing all unto the visible kingdom of [Christ], an admission unto which baptism is a sign and seal of.¹⁷

The Great Commission remains yet to be completely fulfilled. Its permanent relevance is therefore clear.

The History of Christian Missions

History of the Work of Redemption also contains a considerable amount of material on the history of Christian mission up to Edwards’s own time. He summarizes the evidence of the Acts of the Apostles on the success of the preaching in the period up to A.D. 70 in bringing Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles to salvation, continuing in the period up to the time of Constantine in the spread of the Gospel through and beyond the Roman Empire, and moving on into the next two centuries with the Gospel being “further propagated amongst many barbarous heathen nations in the confines of the Roman empire” and beyond. Edwards mentions the “East Indies” and the ministry of Frumentius, the “Iberians,” the “barbarous people that dwelt in Arabia,” the Goths, the Persians, the Scythians, Burgundians, Irish, “some barbarous people in Scotland,” and others. He records the conversion of “Zathus, a heathen King reigning over the Colchians,” concluding with the general comment: “Several other barbarous
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nations are recorded to have renounced heathenism about this time, that I cannot stand to mention” (pp. 408–9).

Edwards is silent about any missionary activity during the period “from the rise of Antichrist to the Reformation,”19 being mainly concerned with the growth of papal power and the spread of Islam, and so he fails to mention the Celtic missionary movement of Columba, Aidan, and Cuthbert; the Roman missionizing of England by Augustine; the English missionaries to Europe such as Willibrord and Boniface; A-lo-pen, the Persian Nestorian missionary to China; the mission to Moravia of Cyril and Methodius; the mendicant orders of Franciscans and Dominicans; and in the Reformation period, the Jesuits.20

However, the period extending from the Reformation to Edwards’s own time is a much brighter time, when “God began gloriously to revive his church again, and advance the Kingdom of his Son…. and Antichrist…. was swiftly and suddenly brought down, and fell half way towards utter ruin, and never has been able to rise again to his former height” (p. 422).

For the 200 years since the Reformation, he includes among the successes the Gospel has had “the propagation of the Gospel among the heathen” in a number of places: in America with the Indians; in the dominions of Muscovy, including “the greater part of Great Tartary”; and “among the heathen in the East Indies,” especially in Malabar through the Pietist missionaries sponsored by the king of Denmark (pp. 433–36).

The Future Worldwide Missionary Thrust

Edwards was convinced that the next event in God’s eschatological timetable was a “glorious work of God’s Spirit by which Satan’s kingdom is to be overthrown” (p. 456 n), which would result in the revival of the spirit of true Christianity, the abolition of heresy, the overthrow of the papacy and the power of Islam, the conversion of the Jews, and the spread of the Gospel to the utmost parts of the world. All of this would happen, he believed, “very swiftly, yet gradually” (p. 458). Even if it began immediately, says Edwards, it would probably not be completed before the year 2000. Where it will begin, or whether it will begin in many places at the same time, is unknown, but the result will be that multitudes will turn from vice and wickedness and that “vital religion” will revive. Conversions will take place on a scale hitherto unknown.

The Spirit of God will equip people to be his instruments for carrying on this work, giving them knowledge and wisdom and “fervent zeal for the promoting of the Kingdom of Christ, and the salvation of souls, and propagating the gospel in the world” (p. 460). Through the preaching of the Gospel, “vast multitudes [shall be brought] savingly home to Christ” (p. 461). He continues:

That work of conversion shall go on in a wonderful manner, and spread more and more…. The gospel shall be preached to every tongue, and kindred, and nation, and people…. it will soon be gloriously successful to bring in multitudes from every nation. Some shall be converted, and be the means of the conversion of others…. And doubtless one nation shall be enlightened and converted after another, one false religion and false way of worship exploded after another. (pp. 461, 459)

It will not be without “violent and mighty opposition,” for “when the Spirit begins to be so gloriously poured forth, and the devil sees such multitudes flocking to Christ in one nation and another…. it will greatly alarm all hell” (p. 462).

All the forces of Antichrist, “Mahometanism,” and heathenism will be united in opposition to the spread of the Gospel through persecution and other kinds of opposition, but this will be overcome “by his word and Spirit” (p. 464). Jewish unbelief will come to an end,21 and the heathen nations will be “wonderfully enlightened with the glorious gospel” as “many shall go forth and carry the gospel unto them.”22

Contrary to what is often stated, there is no suggestion in Edwards’s mind that the millennium itself would begin in his lifetime; rather, beginning in the present time (1747), an amazing and unparalleled progress would be necessary for it to be completed by the year 2000:

Would it not be a great thing, to be accomplished in one half century, that religion, in the power and purity of it, should so prevail, as to gain the conquest over all those many things that stand in opposition to it among Protestants, and gain the upper hand through the Protestant world? And if in another [half century], it should go on so to prevail, as to get the victory over all the opposition and strength of the kingdom of Antichrist, so as to gain the ascendant in that which is now the popish world? And if in a third half century, it should prevail and subdue the greater part of the Mahometan world, and bring in the Jewish nation, in all their dispersions? And then in the next whole century, the whole heathen world should be enlightened and converted to the Christian faith, throughout all parts of Africa, Asia, America Terra Australis [South America], and be thoroughly settled in Christian faith and order, without any remainders of their old delusions and superstitions, and this attended with an utter extirpation of the remnant of the Church of Rome, and all the relics of Mahometanism, heresy, schism and enthusiasm, and a suppression of all remains of open vice and immorality, and every sort of visible enemy to true religion, through the whole earth, and bring to an end all the unhappy commotions, tumults, and calamities occasioned by such great changes, and all things so adjusted and settled through the world, that the world thenceforward should enjoy an holy rest or sabbatism.23

Imminent Expectation

At the same time, Edwards certainly hoped that the Great Awakening would be the first of a series of revivals that would gradually spread worldwide and so at least begin the process. Edwards’s letter in February 1740 to George Whitefield inviting him to visit Northampton is full of hope that this is indeed the case and that the current movement of the Spirit would, in fact, herald the hoped-for worldwide awakening. Edwards’s words are exuberant as he encourages the young preacher:

May you go on Rev. Sir! and may God be with you more and more abundantly, that the work of God may be carried on by a Blessing on your Labours still, with that Swift Progress that it has been hitherto, and rise to a greater height, and extend further and further, with an irresistible Power bearing down all opposition! and may the Gates of Hell never be able to prevail against you! and may God send forth more Labourers into his Harvest of a Like Spirit, until the Kingdom of Satan shall shake, and his proud Empire fall throughout the Earth and the Kingdom of Christ, that glorious Kingdom of Light, holiness, Peace and Love, shall be established from one end of the Earth unto the other!24

Writing in 1742, Edwards expresses the same hope: “Tis not unlike that this work of God’s Spirit that is so extraordinary and wonderful, is the dawning, or at least a prelude, of that glorious work of God, so often foretold in Scripture, which, in the progress and issue of it, shall renew the world of mankind.”25
And in 1747, in *Humble Attempt*, Edwards argues that there is no need to defer expectation of the "glorious times" by thinking that suffering and persecution must come first. By means of some rather tortuous exegesis of the Book of Revelation, he claims to show that the slaying of the two witnesses in chapter 11 has already taken place and that the pouring out of the sixth vial of Revelation 16 is probably already occurring. He further argues that an extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit of God is to accompany this sixth vial; so the beginning of a work of extraordinary awakening (i.e., the Great Awakening of the early 1740s (Stein's note)) has already attended the probable beginning of this vial; and has been continued in one place or other, for many years past: although it has been in some places mingled with much enthusiasm, after the manner of things in their first beginnings, unripe and mixed with much crudity. But it is to be hoped, a far more pure, extensive and glorious revival of religion is not far off, which will more properly be the beginning of that work which in its issue shall overthrow the Kingdom of Antichrist, and of Satan through the world.26

It is clear that, contrary to much of what has been written by modern writers, Edwards did not become disillusioned or embarrassed about his hopes for the Great Awakening. Neither did he make extravagant claims that he later had to retract or deny. For him the Great Awakening was at least a harbinger of a series of awakenings that would spread the Gospel throughout the world. It is interesting that when the Protestant missionary movement began in earnest forty years after his death, it coincided with what church historians describe as the Second Great Awakening, and subsequent missionary thrusts have also largely coincided with further periods of revival.27

**Evidences of Inaction?**

While these various indications of Edwards's missionary interest, theology, expectation, and prayer are undoubtedly in his writings, it may still be claimed that there is an absence of any clarion call to worldwide missionary action such as we find in William Carey's *Enquiry* and the personal willingness to go as a missionary that moved Carey to leave his homeland and travel thousands of miles to another continent and culture. Edwards, it is said, seems content to write, pray, and wait, but not to be more positive and active. Is this a fair comment?

A wide variety of factors would be involved in giving a complete answer to such a charge. The situation of Edwards in colonial New England in the first half of the eighteenth century with his own personal circumstances, upbringing, opportunities, and so forth was vastly different from that of William Carey in England fifty years later, and comparisons are problematic.

Edwards was a convinced Calvinist who believed that the sovereign God opened up the opportunities in his own good time. For him there was no possibility of "forcing God's hand" and no point in going ahead of divine leading. But Edwards was no quietist; his "eager catching at" signs of the divine working in his own days were not merely to entertain but to move him to prayer and action, and through him his contemporaries also.28 The caricature of Edwards as a fierce "hellfire preacher" obscures the intention of such preaching, which was to bring men and women to saving faith and so to safety in Christ from the terrors of hell. It might be fairer to portray him as a flaming evangelist, concerned for the salvation of his fellow men and women and using all means to save some (see 1 Cor. 9:22). He certainly gave himself unstintingly to the work of preaching, including widespread itinerant activity, personal counseling, and writing. (In addition to his writing for publication, his letter-writing ministry was considerable.) His health was never good, having several periods of serious illness beginning with one three-month episode in 1725, during which he nearly died and following which he seems to have had an annual recurrence. He was honest and realistic about his own limitations (see his letter to the Princeton trustees when they first wrote to him about the possibility of becoming president of the seminary),29 although he never refused what he felt to be the divine leading, as witness his response to the invitation to become a missionary to the Indians at Stockbridge at the age of forty-seven.

**Missionary to the Indians**

In June 1750 Edwards was dismissed from the pastorate of his church in Northampton, largely on account of the strictness of his demands for admission to church membership. Six months later he received an invitation from the Boston Commissioners of the New England Company to become a missionary to the Indians at Stockbridge following the death of the first missionary, John Sergeant. The invitation coincided with a call to pastor the white congregation there. He visited the mission for two months from January to March 1751 and preached at least fifteen times to the Indians, both the Housatonic, who were resident there, and the Mohawks, who were beginning to move there in large numbers. He also preached each Sunday to the white congregation. He had other possibilities open to him, including that of remaining in Northampton as pastor of a different church there. But those who opposed him in Northampton were impatient to get rid of him, and so after a meeting of local ministers to consider the town's grievances against him, he moved to Stockbridge in June 1751 and his family joined him in October.

Life at Stockbridge for Edwards was anything but easy. The troubles that had plagued him in his last years at Northampton continued with the Williams family in Stockbridge. There were periodic attacks by bands of marauding Indians, and on one occasion Edwards and his family members were the only whites who remained in the settlement, after all the others had fled to safety elsewhere. Illness continued to lay him low for months on end. He continued his writing, preparing books for publication, and filling more notebooks with Scripture insights and plans for further works. Amid all of this, he preached regularly to the Indians, catechized their children, visited the day school and boarding school, sorted out problems and complaints, fought for the rights of the Indians against avaricious whites who, contrary to the declared policy of the government, were depriving them of their land, wrote to the Boston Commissioners and to sponsors in England to get more support for the Indian work, and planned and worked out strategies for further missionary thrusts in other places! When Gideon Hawley went into Indian country a second time to develop a new initiative planned by Edwards and him

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**Edwards felt that world evangelization was unlikely to be completed before A.D. 2000.**

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together, Edwards sent his son Jonathan, Jr., to learn the Indian language and so be of more use in the Indian work.

Some, but not all, of Edwards's endeavors were frustrated. The opposition and land-grabbing activities of the Williams clan alienated the Indians, and the Mohawks eventually left Stockbridge disgusted and disillusioned. The French and Indian War forced Halley and Jonathan Edwards, Jr., to return to Stockbridge after a year away, and their work was all but destroyed. When the Princeton invitation came, Edwards did not seize on it as a legitimate excuse to get out of a difficult and uncongenial situation. He accepted, and then with tears, only when a group of ministerial friends whom he consulted urged him to accept. He was far more reluctant to leave his post as missionary than he had been to take it up. Two months later he was dead.

Among the many-sided activity of his comparatively short life, his missionary interest, involvement, and influence deserve recognition.

Notes

1. "Personal Narrative," in Jonathan Edwards: Representative Selections, ed. Clarence H. Faust and Thomas H. Johnson (New York: American Book Company, 1935), p. 64. This interest was not something that left him as he developed and matured. In "Personal Narrative," he describes his current feelings and viewpoint (about 1739): "My heart has been much on the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world. The histories of the past advancement of Christ's kingdom have been sweet to me. When I have read histories of past ages, the pleasantest thing in all my reading has been, to read of the kingdom of Christ being promoted . . . . And my mind has been much entertained and delighted with the scripture promises and prophecies which relate to the future glorious advancement of Christ's kingdom on earth" (p. 68). The advancement of Christ's kingdom was also the topic of many conversations he had with his friend John Smith, in whose mother's house Edwards stayed during his time in New York (p. 65). It is reflected in at least one of the sermons he preached in New York (The Works of Jonathan Edwards, vol. 10, Sermons and Discourses, 1720–1723, ed. Wilson Kimmich [New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1992], pp. 544–45).

2. Solomon Stoddard, An Answer to Some Cases of Conscience Respecting the Country (1722) and Question: Whether God Is Not Angry with the Country for Doing So Little Towards the Conversion of the Indians (1723).


4. Sergeant himself was a friend of the Edwards family and, following his graduation from Yale, had studied theology under Edwards's guidance. He had felt a call to missionary work among the Indians for a number of years but had shared it only with intimate friends, possibly including Edwards himself.

5. In addition to Sergeant and Strong, other students also spent time studying under Edwards, including Joseph Bellamy and Samuel Hopkins, both of whom were involved in the developing missionary movement in America later in the century. Similarly Gideon Halley, who went out from Stockbridge as a missionary, was influenced by Edwards and often returned from his missionary journeys to confer with him. "Missionary trainer" does not seem too grandiose a title to give to Edwards in the light of such relationships.

6. Brainerd was supported by the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (not to be confused with the Anglican SPCK).


8. In August 1748 Edwards wrote to John Erskine in Scotland, "I have for the present been diverted from the design I hinted to you, of publishing something against some of the Arminian Tenets, by something else that Divine Providence unexpectedly laid in my way, and seemed to render unavoidable, viz. publishing Mr. Brainerd's Life, of which the enclosed paper of proposals gives some account."


11. Ibid., p. 133.


17. "Blank Bible" on Matthew 28:18–20, in Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale Univ.

18. Robert Millar's work is his probable source for these historical details.

19. The "kingdom of the Antichrist" for Edwards, as for virtually all Protestants of the sixteenth century and the next two centuries, was the Church of Rome and the papacy. According to Edwards, the kingdom of Antichrist that Satan set up in the Western Roman Empire was matched by a second, which he set up in the Eastern Empire "in many respects like unto it, viz. his Mahometan Kingdom," which like his power in the West also grew gradually, beginning with Muhammad in the seventh century, and reaching its zenith in A.D. 1453 with the fall of Constantinople to the Turks.

20. These were all covered very fairly by Robert Millar, but Edwards omits them, probably for the reason given.

21. According to Edwards, "Nothing is more certainly foretold than this national conversion of the Jews in the 11th chapter of Romans. And also many passages of the Old Testament which cannot be interpreted in any other sense . . . . Though we do not know the time in which this conversion of the nation of Israel will come to pass . . . it will be before the glory of the Gentile part of the church shall be full accomplished . . . Rom. 11:12, 15" (pp. 469–70).

22. An extended citation is worthwhile at this point to show something of Edwards's vision for the conversion of the non-Christian world:
Civilizing the Highlands: the SSPCK

The first Protestant body to be established with missionary intent was the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (SSPCK), which received its royal charter in 1709. Functioning as an auxiliary of the established church, it operated chiefly through schools and schoolmasters known as missionaries. The society saw itself as helping the established church to achieve its goals more effectively in the face of many obstacles, including very large parishes. It was strongly anti-Catholic, and in the first phase of its activity it strenuously opposed the use of the Gaelic language. Indeed, one of its aims was to “wear out” that language
and to bring the Highlanders into line with wider British civilization. The schools of the SSPCK were located mainly in the eastern and southern Highlands. A later charter allowed the SSPCK to diversify the nature of its schools, and it introduced the concept of craft schools, teaching spinning and weaving, in addition to basic literacy.

The SSPCK had a wider global interest in mission; it supported the first missionaries who went to the North American Indians, among them David Brainerd. The SSPCK viewed the American Indians in much the same way as it viewed Highlanders, namely, as barbarians who needed to be "civilized" in terms of English-based civilization. Here we see the Highlands, as part of the field of world mission, contributing indirectly to the strategy for that wider field. In 1735 the SSPCK sent a Gaelic-speaking minister to Georgia in the Colonies, where he was to preach to Highland colonists and act as a missionary to the Indians—a very interesting indicator of the society's cultural perspectives. The educational influence of the SSPCK was carried to India by Alexander Duff (1806-78), whose policy in Calcutta may have been modeled on his own experience of SSPCK schools in his native Perthshire.

Gradually the SSPCK changed its policy toward Gaelic and began to use the language as a means of evangelization, at the same time as it encouraged a more accommodating approach to Amerindian languages. Thus, in the mid-eighteenth century, it sponsored the translation of the New Testament into Gaelic (published in 1767) and the Old Testament (completed in 1801). By the end of that century, a new climate, more favorable to the use of Gaelic as a means of instruction, was emerging. The first priority now became personal salvation, followed by civilization and English, rather than the other way around.

**The Evangelical Revival and Methodist Interest**

In moving the emphasis of missionary activity from civilization (in "English" terms) to salvation, the Evangelical Revival of the mid-eighteenth century was important. The revival deeply influenced Wales and England, and it had close links with the Great Awakening in what became the United States. The effect of the revival on Scotland was not immediate or dramatic, but it was certainly noticeable. The regular visits of John Wesley and George Whitefield to Scotland were a sure indication that new forces were at work. These forces were apparent in the Cambuslang Revival of 1742 and subsequent revival movements that affected both the Lowlands and the Highlands, especially those parts of the Highlands bordering on the Lowlands. In the Highland context, the Evangelical Revival had a secondary effect, encouraging another wave of interest in the spiritual needs of the region. In that dark field, popery, paganism, and weak, non-evangelical Presbyterianism were a perennial stimulus to evangelization.

One very specific link with the Evangelical Revival can be documented. The well-known Methodist missionary Thomas Coke visited Scotland about the end of 1785 and the beginning of 1786 and evidently had contact with the Gaelic-speaking areas. Coke, perceiving Highlanders as "little better that the rudest barbarians," designated the Highlands as the first of the mission fields for which he made his 1786 appeal, believing that Gaelic-speaking missionaries could be found who would put his plan into effect. Indeed, he had already found one such missionary.

This was Duncan McAllum, a native of Argyll, who initially wished to go to Africa as a missionary, but to whom John Wesley gave "an unlimited commission to visit the Highlands and adjacent Islands of Scotland." This roving commission was apparently not put into full effect. McAllum was assigned to the town of Ayr, and it was probably Coke's intention (and Wesley's) that he should begin by preaching to the Highlanders who had migrated to that town. It is highly likely that such migrants would have been from Argyll and the Clyde islands such as Arran and Bute. McAllum apparently later evangelized in Strathspey, but Coke's overall plan did not come to fruition.

In 1808 Coke revived the idea of appointing a Gaelic-speaking missionary, who was to be based in Inverness, and once more a suitable candidate, Hugh McKay, was designated. McKay's missionary status was withdrawn, however, so that he could fill a vacancy in Inverness itself. Thereafter Methodist interest in the Gaelic-speaking Highlands was abandoned, much to the regret of Coke, who believed that the plan had never been given a fair trial.

The Methodists' disappointment with the Highlands tells us something about the problems confronting potential missionary bodies in the Highlands. There was obviously a general feeling that the field was promising, but the lack of organization, personnel, and finance were major stumbling blocks. The Methodists were involved in "world mission," but their committee could not handle the Highlands, which required fairly specific administrative attention, and the Methodists would have required an individual "Highland Mission." As for personnel, it is apparent that the Methodists did not have sufficient missionaries for the task. They had to start somewhere, of course, but two men were not enough, especially in adverse circumstances. With regard to finance, much money was being invested by Methodists in the wider field, but their Highland focus was probably not sharp enough to encourage specific contributions. Clearly, these challenges had to be met by any society hoping to complement the SSPCK and improve upon its methods. The need was partially met through the emergence of a number of small societies of a strongly evangelical nature but which lacked the cohesiveness of the SSPCK.

**Dissenters and Highland Missions**

Highland missionary societies were formed starting about 1800. The appearance of these societies is a reflection of how deeply the desire to bring spiritual enlightenment to the Highlands was felt among the promoters of such mission. The key to the new enthusiasm lies in the surge of interest in foreign missionary activity in the wake of the Evangelical Revival in the 1790s, and especially William Carey's departure to India in 1793. This interest was especially strong among dissenting churches and dissenting bodies in England, although evangelicals in the Anglican Church were also involved. In Scotland too, the initiative lay with the dissenting bodies, principally Independents (Congregationalists) and Baptists, with some support on an individual basis from evangelicals within the established church. The Relief Church and the United Secession church were also interested in mission. All of these bodies—the Independents, the
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Baptists, the Relief Church, and the Secession Church—were active in the Highlands, but the Relief Church in 1797 was evidently the first body to mount a specific mission to the region. Some bodies met with greater success than others, and there was a considerable degree of regional variation. Independents and Baptists established themselves more firmly in the southern Highlands and Islands than in the northern parts. Their capacity to establish themselves depended on (among other things) whether the established parish church (i.e., the Church of Scotland) was accessible by the people and whether the minister discharged his duties faithfully. The bodies that met with the greatest success were those that had as yet no denominational identity. The denominational churches—the Relief and the United Secession in this case—failed to make any major impact largely because they were not as flexible as the Independents and Baptists in the matter of recruitment and training. The Independents and Baptists were much more willing to employ voluntary principles, to operate as small units, and to set up societies aimed directly at Highland mission and targeted on specific parts of the Highlands. We may now examine their response to the crucial considerations that were stumbling blocks to Thomas Coke and the Methodists, namely, organization, finance, and personnel.

The new missionary societies operating in the Highlands about 1800 usually adopted a very basic structure. They lacked the consistent planning and resources of the SSPCK. Power rested with a small group of men, or might even be concentrated in the hands of a single individual. In 1797 the brothers Robert and James Haldane, who had originally intended to go to India as missionaries, set up the Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home to promote itinerant evangelism in Scotland generally, but with a specific focus on the Highlands. The Haldanes, who had become Independents by 1798, trained and funded their own preachers and established a remarkable framework for evangelistic endeavor that was entirely self-supporting. Therein lay its strength and its weakness.

When the Haldanes became Baptists in 1808, their society collapsed and was not replaced by a directly comparable organization. Instead, the Haldanes promoted Baptist missionary work from their Tabernacle in Leith Walk, Edinburgh, and adhered, if anything, more strictly to the voluntary principle than they had done before 1808. A society had been replaced by a single church.

Among Baptists, missionary organization was even more rudimentary. The initiative rested very firmly with individual leaders and occasionally with individual Lowland congregations. In 1807–8 a society for Highland and rural mission was established by Christopher Anderson, an Edinburgh Baptist pastor. Anderson, a native of Edinburgh, originally intended to join William Carey as a missionary in India, but he had to abandon this plan because of poor health. Following training in England, he returned to Scotland in 1806 and gathered a small church in Edinburgh. This church was formally constituted in 1808 and met in Richmond Court, whence it moved to Rose Street. (It is still meeting as Charlotte Baptist Chapel.)

Anderson first collaborated with George Barclay, the pastor of a similar Baptist church in Kilwinning. Soon Anderson became the main driving force of the society, which began its work by employing a single missionary, Alexander McLeod, in Perthshire in 1808, and then a second missionary, Dugald Sinclair, in Argyll in 1810. Anderson supervised the work of the missionaries, edited and published their journals, and gathered money for their support. Money was provided by subscription (much of it from England) and by his Edinburgh church. When money was in short supply, Anderson made up the deficit from his own pocket. Eventually, however, mounting debts forced him to merge his work with that of the Haldanes in 1823, and George Barclay replaced him as secretary of the new organization.

Lack of broadly based financial support was one reason for the individualistic manner in which these societies came into operation. In the early stages they needed patrons like the Haldanes and, to a lesser extent, Anderson, because subscribers were hard to find. As personal resources diminished, a broader base of support had to be found, and there was a growing recognition that the broader the base, the safer the organization. The Independents (or Congregationalists) learned the lesson the hard way, after the Haldanes became Baptists in 1808, and they were more willing than Baptists to cooperate with other bodies in the formation of interdenominational missionary societies for the support of the work in the Highlands.

In 1817 a missionary society was formed at Paisley with a long title: The Society in Paisley and Its Vicinity for Gaelic Mission to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. This society had a strong Congregationalist interest, but it also supported missionaries from the Relief Church and the Antiiburghers. In 1820 the Highland Missionary Society was formed in Edinburgh, mainly to provide financial support for candidates from the Highlands who were being trained by the Presbyterian and Congregational churches. It gave particular assistance to members of the Relief and United Secession churches.

For Baptists, however, commitment to believer's baptism by immersion was a major obstacle in the way of cooperation with other bodies. In addition, there were different types of Baptists, and they did not see eye-to-eye with each other on matters of church polity. Christopher Anderson was what is termed an "English" Baptist, and he had little time for what were termed "Scotch" Baptists (the older stock, who believed in a plurality of teaching elders in a church, rather than the single pastor favored by the "English" style). The Scotch Baptists funded the Baptist Highland Mission, a society formed in 1816 to provide resources for Baptist missionaries stationed in Perthshire. Altogether, it was a rather untidy approach.

Unification of the disparate agencies did come, however, in the period between 1823 and 1827, when the Baptist Home Missionary Society for Scotland was formed. One of the advantages of this society was that it could gather funds in a way that the other small bodies had been unable to do. Pooling of resources was beneficial to the scope and effectiveness of Baptist missionary endeavor in the Highlands. In spite of such advantages, however, the road to unity was painful, and the vision of

The Gaelic schools became perhaps the most powerful of all missionary forces within the Highlands.
a united Highland mission embracing Baptists, Independents, and Presbyterians was an impossible ideal.

If Baptists found it hard to cooperate with one another, far less with Congregationalists, in their support of Highland missions, there was at least one policy on which all agreed—the use of native Gaelic missionaries. In the Highlands, Baptists (of all persuasions) and Congregationalists employed missionaries who were Gaelic-speaking laymen. In fact, this wave of activity is remarkable for its immediate use of native-born preachers. Although the origins of this movement lay outside the Highlands, it soon became indigenous, capitalizing on “internal recruitment” within three key localities where Baptist and Congregational churches were planted—Highland Perthshire, from Loch Tay to Rannoch; Strathspey; and the Inner Hebrides. For the period from 1797 to about 1850, over eighty Gaelic-speaking missionaries were active in the Highlands, the majority being Baptists and Congregationalists.

Another feature of the personnel used in this period was flexibility. The post-1790 Highland missionary movement was conscious that the SSPCK was unable to respond to all the opportunities in the Highlands largely because of lack of personnel. SSPCK catechists and teachers also operated within parishes. The new movement, linked strongly with dissenters who did not subscribe to the parish system, developed the concept of the lay missionary as a multipurpose individual, unrestricted by parish boundaries. Congregational and Baptist lay missionaries went on long preaching tours, traveling throughout the Highlands and Islands on foot and by boat. They established churches, and some were ordained thereafter as their pastors. They could also act as schoolmasters. Such flexibility helped to overcome some of the problems caused by a lack of workers, and it was effective in communicating the Gospel in out-of-the-way parts of the Highlands.

The Gaelic School Movement

The majority of Highland missionaries in the nineteenth century preached and taught through the medium of Gaelic. As their main aim was salvation, rather than civilization, the mother tongue was quick and effective in communicating with the people. This was a strategy quite different from that of the SSPCK in the earlier eighteenth century. Nevertheless, the SSPCK had contributed to the change by undertaking the translation of the Bible into Gaelic (1767–1801). The new missionary movement built on this achievement by developing Gaelic school societies, which taught Highlanders of all ages to read the Gaelic Bible. The first was the Edinburgh Society for the Support of Gaelic Schools, founded in November 1810 largely through the initiative of Christopher Anderson, who acted for many years as its secretary.

The Gaelic schools were perhaps the most powerful of all missionary forces within the Highlands. They were “circulating” schools, moving around the parishes, and they were tremendously effective in spreading Gaelic (and later English) literacy in the Highlands. The reading of the Bible generally throughout the Highlands encouraged the growth of a deep spirituality that frequently manifested itself in revivals and awakenings.

Perhaps the most significant feature of the Gaelic schools was that they were an interdenominational venture. They involved the cooperation of all the Protestant denominations and bodies active in the Highlands, and the established church was glad to encourage them, provided that the schoolmasters did not undermine the authority of the minister by preaching in the parish (which sometimes happened). Ironically, however, the most lasting result of the Gaelic schools, and indeed of the wider missionary impetus to which they belonged, was the creation of a body of evangelical people strongly sympathetic to, and ready to join, the Free Church of Scotland when it emerged from the established Church of Scotland in 1843.

National and International Perspectives

The importance of missionary work within the Highland area in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries cannot be doubted. The Christian faith was planted widely, though unevenly, by various missionary bodies in the Gaelic-speaking Highlands. The SSPCK laid the foundation of the movement, but later bodies modified the approach of the SSPCK, especially by promoting the mother tongue (Gaelic) for communication. The main result was the growth of a strongly indigenous Highland evangelicalism, closely linked to the Gaelic Bible. However, while originally aiming to support the established church, the movement contributed to the emergence of dissent within the Highlands after 1797. The Free Church brought order to this process and guaranteed that the Highlands would remain predominantly evangelical but Presbyterian, though some small Baptist and Congregational churches survive to the present.

Beyond the Highlands, Highland missionary endeavor had a gently pervasive influence. The SSPCK may be seen as a pioneer missionary body that contributed to foreign missionary endeavor, largely by involving itself first in the Highlands, and then indirectly in North America. The Highland missionary movement also led to an interest in the evangelization of other peoples, and some of the experience gained in the Highlands was put into effect elsewhere, from Ireland to South Africa.

Christopher Anderson, a significant contributor to Highland itinerant evangelism, was also active in Ireland. Building on his experience with Gaelic in the Highlands, he advocated a similar approach to the use of Irish as the language of mission in Ireland. John Campbell, a Congregationalist of Highland extraction, who had accompanied James Haldane on preaching expeditions in the Highlands, became pastor of Kingsland Chapel, London, and was later sent twice (1812–14, 1818–21) to South Africa by the London Missionary Society. There he did valuable work in relieving tensions between aggrieved tribesmen and earlier missionaries. Although Christopher Anderson did not travel to India or Africa, he was a staunch supporter of Carey’s Serampore mission, and his thinking on this enterprise may well have been guided by his experience in the Highlands.

Otherwise the Highland contribution to the wider nineteenth-century world of mission was determined very largely by emigration from the region. Movement of people led to calls for pastors and missionaries, comparable with that which took the SSPCK to Georgia in 1735. The response of the home country was seldom coordinated through a missionary body; home missionaries usually became “foreign” missionaries by necessity, on a second call from their transplanted congregations. Thus some Highland ministers and itinerant evangelists found their way to the Colonies, especially to Canada and Australia, and estab-
lished churches of emigrant Highlanders. Dugald Sinclair, formerly employed by Christopher Anderson as an itinerant missionary in Argyll, arrived in Lobo, Ontario, in 1831 and became one of the founding fathers of the Church of Christ (Disciples) in Canada. As emigration from the Highlands took effect in the course of the nineteenth century, the Highland pastors who remained consoled themselves by observing how their people were setting up new churches in foreign lands and thus continuing the momentum of the missionary movement that had established their Highland home churches.

**Selected Bibliography**


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**The Legacy of Mary Josephine Rogers**

**Barbara Hendricks, M.M.**

When Mary Josephine Rogers was a junior at Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts, she had a profound religious experience that would mark her life forever. On a warm June evening in 1904, as she walked from her residence toward the Students Building wondering what her future might be, the door was flung open and a crowd of students rushed out. Singing "Onward Christian Soldiers," they formed a circle around a group of six seniors who had just signed a promise to the College Foreign Mission Board and would soon go to China for seven years. Missionary activity was strong at Smith College, and everybody knew what the Student Volunteer pledge meant, but this was the first year that Smith was actually sending young women graduates to the foreign missions. That scene on Smith campus held for her; she would become the foundress of the first Catholic religious congregation of women established in the United States for the work of foreign missions. That scene on Smith campus remained long with Mollie Rogers; she wondered about Catholic missions and if there was a place for Catholic women like herself, in whom mission interest was taking a definite form of dedication. After graduation in June of 1905, she accepted a position at Smith as demonstrator in the Zoology Department—still pondering her future.

**Mission Awareness in a Catholic Family**

Mary Josephine Rogers was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on October 27, 1882. She was the first daughter of Mary Josephine Plummer and Abraham T. Rogers, who raised a large family of five boys and three girls. Her grandparents, Mary Dunn and Patrick Rogers, born in Ireland but raised in Canada, had immigrated to Massachusetts from Canada in 1842 soon after their marriage. They experienced the typical hostility to newly arrived Irish Catholics in that period and yet managed to become well integrated into this new cultural, social, and political world with remarkable assurance and amazing adaptability. Patrick Rogers soon built up a successful real estate business and served as a member of the Roxbury Common Council in 1858, 1859, 1863, and 1867. In 1870 he represented Old Ward 15 in the Boston Common Council. Mollie's father, Abraham, followed his father in the real estate business and also served in the Boston Common Council, representing Ward 22 from 1880 to 1882, when he was appointed assistant building inspector of Boston. On the other hand, the door was flung open and a crowd of students rushed out. Singing "Onward Christian Soldiers," they formed a circle around a group of six seniors who had just signed a promise to the College Foreign Mission Board and would soon go to China for seven years. Missionary activity was strong at Smith College, and everybody knew what the Student Volunteer pledge meant, but this was the first year that Smith was actually sending young women graduates to the foreign missions. That scene on Smith campus held for her; she would become the foundress of the first Catholic religious congregation of women established in the United States for the work of foreign missions. That scene on Smith campus remained long with Mollie Rogers; she wondered about Catholic missions and if there was a place for Catholic women like herself, in whom mission interest was taking a definite form of dedication. After graduation in June of 1905, she accepted a position at Smith as demonstrator in the Zoology Department—still pondering her future.

Indeed God did know what Mollie Rogers's future would hold for her; she would become the foundress of the first Catholic religious congregation of women established in the United States for the work of foreign missions. That scene on Smith campus remained long with Mollie Rogers; she wondered about Catholic missions and if there was a place for Catholic women like herself, in whom mission interest was taking a definite form of dedication. After graduation in June of 1905, she accepted a position at Smith as demonstrator in the Zoology Department—still pondering her future.

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side of the family, grandparents Bridget Kennedy and William Gardener Plummer, an eighth-generation Yankee who was a Congregationalist, mirrored the attempt to bridge the gap between Catholic immigrants and “old” American Protestants. Without the benefit of Catholic schools, Josephine and Abraham Rogers not only passed on the faith of their Irish ancestors but also communicated to their children a basic understanding of the need for foreign mission activity at a time when Catholics in the United States had little awareness of foreign missions. In later life Mollie Rogers would remember the Catholic mission publications from Europe to which the family subscribed and the impact these had on her dreams about foreign missions.

I cannot remember a time when I was not deeply interested in the people of other lands as well as my own America. . . . I was taught to pray for missionaries and the children they were trying to teach about God, and to share with them the little store of money that was mine to spend as I liked. . . . I even visualized myself as a missionary going about doing good and converting whole cities.

The Rogers children attended public schools in Roxbury and went on for higher education. All five boys would graduate from Harvard; when it was time for Mollie, she chose Smith College. Throughout her life, Mollie Rogers spoke of the significance of Smith College in her life’s work. She said that if it had not been for Smith, she would not have discovered her mission vocation. In her junior year Mollie was called “Catholic Missions.” In her senior year Mollie was the sustaining spirit for an organization of Catholics at Smith. She promoted the frequent reception of the Sacraments, generosity to Catholic missions, and involvement of the Catholic girls in Smith College’s “Christian Work” activities.

In the fall of 1906, as she began her work as zoology demonstrator at Smith, Mollie was approached by Professor Elizabeth Deering Hanscom to organize the Catholic students, who seldom participated in extracurricular activities. “Bible Study” was suggested, but Mollie decided on “Mission Studies,” which led her to seek the advice of Rev. James Anthony Walsh, director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in Boston. Their first meeting opened wide the door for her life’s work.

Coworker with James Anthony Walsh

Mollie’s letter to Father James A. Walsh described the goals and content of her projected class on missions and asked for help:

The particular motive of these classes is to inspire the girls to do actual work when they leave college. . . . The schedule planned is as follows: 1st—the Preparation of priests and nuns for the work; 2nd—Mission Orders and the Field of Work; 3rd—Nature of the work done, & 4th—Collection and distribution of Funds.

Will you tell me where I can get any information (in English, French or Latin) bearing on these lines of thought? . . . Who knows but that the little work we do here may be the beginning of greater efforts in later life.

Walsh responded immediately with a three-page letter, carefully addressing her concerns and warmly encouraging her work. He suggested that she add to her outline “the martyr spirit of our age,” and enclosed a copy of Life of Theophane Venard, a contemporary French missioner martyred in Indochina. Walsh began sending her a steady supply of materials for her mission classes. Mollie looked forward to her first meeting with him during Christmas holidays at home with her family in Jamaica Plain (now part of Boston).

Walsh had been ordained a priest of the Boston Archdiocese on May 20, 1892, and had served for ten years as an assistant in St. Patrick’s parish, Roxbury. Interested in foreign missions from his seminary days, he became archdiocesan director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in 1903. By 1906 he was already convinced that the time had come for U.S. Catholics to assume responsibility for the worldwide mission of the church and had formed an organization called the Catholic Foreign Mission Bureau with colleagues who shared his friendship and vision. Their immediate objective was to awaken the mission consciousness of Catholics in the United States through a mission magazine.

In the course of their first meeting, Walsh and Mollie talked for several hours about the interest they shared in foreign missions. He then showed her the galley proofs of the first issue of a new mission magazine called The Field Afar. Mollie’s eyes immediately focused on its statement of aim: “to deepen and widen in its readers the missionary spirit . . . to strengthen, especially in the archdiocese of Boston, all work for foreign missions.” As she left, Father Walsh said to her, “I think we are going to be good friends.” This event changed her life completely; Mollie recognized then that Father James Anthony Walsh was the one she had hoped to find—someone who shared her dream and would provide the context for her call to the foreign missions.

Back in Boston during the summer of 1907, Mollie became a daily collaborator with Walsh as she translated mission materials and edited and wrote for The Field Afar. In the spring of 1908 she left her position at Smith, set aside her plans for a master’s degree, and began teaching in Boston public schools. Now that she was living in Boston, she would devote all her free time to the mission education work at the Propagation of the Faith office.

Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America

In 1904 James A. Walsh had become acquainted with Thomas Frederick Price, a North Carolina priest who had been involved in home missions as a rural pastor since his ordination in 1886; for two years they kept up a correspondence because of their mutual interest in mission. Two years later, on September 10, they met at the Eucharistic Congress in Montreal and agreed to organize the first Catholic foreign mission seminary in the United States. A few days later, on September 15, Mollie Rogers made a formal resolve to devote herself to this work, not knowing what the future would hold but being totally committed to the new foundation for foreign missions. Once the project was approved by the Catholic bishops of the United States and authorized by Pope Pius X on June 29, 1911, Walsh and Price began the foundation at Hawthorne, New York. Here they were welcomed by the French Dominican priests, who found accommodations for them. Another welcoming figure of great compassion and a pio-
Mission Scholarship Grants
The Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, Connecticut, announces the 1997 grantees of the Research Enablement Program. Sixteen scholars representing Germany, New Zealand, Nigeria, People’s Republic of China, Russia, Tanzania, the United Kingdom, and the United States received awards for research projects in the study of the world Christian movement. The Research Enablement Program is funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and is administered by OMSC. The grants, which will be dispensed for work in the 1997-1998 academic year, total approximately $293,000.

Gerald H. Anderson, OMSC’s director who also serves as director of the REP and chair of the Review and Selection Committee, states, “The Committee is pleased that this year’s selections continue the now well-established REP tradition of bringing the study of the world Christian movement into the academic mainstream, especially in the disciplines of the humanities and social sciences.”

This year the REP received 121 applications. Twenty percent of the applicants were women, and 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 international research for doctoral dissertations and established scholars engaged in major writing projects dealing with the world Christian movement and its interaction with the public sphere, especially in the non-Western world. The grantees, listed by category, are as follows:

Postdoctoral Book Research and Writing
J. F. Ade Ajayi, University of Ibadan, Nigeria: “A Biography of Samuel Ajayi Crowther”
Raeburn T. Lange, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand: “The Emergence and Development of an Indigenous Christian Ministry and Priesthood in the Pacific Islands”
Min Ma, Huazhong Normal University, China: “Christian Missions and Christian Higher Education in Hunan Provinces of China, 1860-1952”

Dissertation Field Research
Chandra S. Mallampalli, University of Wisconsin, USA: “Religion and the Public Sphere, 1880-1950: Hindu Revival, Christian Missions and Cultural Politics in South India”
Derek Peterson, University of Minnesota, USA: “Struggles over Schooling: A Social History of Rural Schools in Colonial Kenya”
C. Matt Samson, State University of New York, Albany, USA: “Re-enchanting the World: Maya Identity and Protestantism in the Western Highlands of Guatemala”
Karen Seat, Temple University, USA: “The ‘Woman Question’ as a Site of Conflict: Missionary Schools for Women in Modern Japan, 1872-1899”
Andrei A. Znamenski, University of Toledo, USA: “Nineteenth-Century Indigenous Responses to Russian Orthodox Missionaries in Siberia and Alaska”

Scholarly Consultations
Graham B. Walker, Jr., Asia Baptist Theological Seminary, Philippines: “Concepts of ‘Evil’ and ‘Fault’ in Southeast Asian Worldviews”
Kevin Ward, Leeds University, UK: “A Mirror to Mission: Reflections from the World Church on the Bicentenary of the Church Mission Society”

Planning Grants
Kenneth R. Ross, University of Malawi, “Dictionary of Christianity in Malawi Project”

Announcing
The Overseas Ministries Study Center in New Haven, Connecticut, publisher of the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH, is pleased to announce the appointment
of Jonathan J. Bonk as Associate Director and Associate Editor, effective July 1, 1997. He will succeed James M. Phillips, who retires June 30, after fourteen years at OMSC. Born in Canada, Bonk was raised by missionary parents in Ethiopia. He has an M.A. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and a Ph.D. from the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. An ordained minister in the Evangelical Mennonite Church, he has been on the faculty of Providence College and Seminary in Otterburne, Manitoba, since 1972, where he established and chairs the department of Global Christian Studies. He served as famine relief coordinator in Ethiopia from 1974 to 1976, while on leave from his teaching post. He is the author of The Theory and Practice of Missionary Identification, 1860-1920 (1989) and Money and Missions: Affluence as a Western Missionary Problem (1991) and is presently completing a book to be titled Rendering unto Caesar: Mission-State Encounters, 1792-1992, for publication by Mercer University Press. He was president of the Association of Professors of Mission for 1993-94, and he is currently the first vice-president of the American Society of Missiology. We look forward to his contribution in the pages of this journal in the years ahead. More will be said about the contribution of James Phillips to the Bulletin in the July issue.

The library at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, has opened a new reading room dedicated to the consultation of the library's rich holdings of archives, manuscripts, and rare books. The library is now the major center for missionary archives in the United Kingdom, with 750,000 documents on mission work in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific, 17,000 photographs, and 20,000 published works. Rosemary Seton, the archivist, may be contacted at: tel. 0171-323-6112, fax 0171-323-6220, E-mail RS8@soas.ac.uk

The “Jesus” film, distributed internationally by Campus Crusade for Christ and used by 453 mission agencies as part of their ministry, has been viewed by 850 million people in nearly 400 language versions in 219 nations. It is the most translated film in motion picture history.

The synod of the Russian Orthodox Church has named 1997 as the “Year of St. Innocent.” St. Innocent was arguably the church’s most outstanding missionary, and 1997 marks the 200th anniversary of his birth.

The annual meeting of the American Society of Missiology will be held June 20-22, 1997, at Techyn (near Chicago), Illinois. The theme is “Marginalization and Mission.” Angelyn Dries, O.S.F., of Cardinal Stritch College, is president. The Association of Professors of Mission will meet June 19-20 at the same place in conjunction with the ASM. For further information and registration for both meetings, contact George R. Hunsberger, Western Theological Seminary, 86 East 12th Street, Holland, Michigan 49423.

Personalia

Paul Jenkins, Archivist of the Basel Mission and Lecturer in African History at the University of Basel, Switzerland, was awarded the Academic Prize (Wissenschaftspreis) for 1996 by the city of Basel. He was recognized for his nine years of service at the University of Ghana, for creating a focus of international and interdisciplinary interest in the Basel Mission Archive, and for his contribution in teaching African history at the University of Basel.

Congratulations and best wishes to André V. Seumois, O.M.I., who will celebrate his eightieth birthday in Rome on April 29, 1997. Father Seumois has had a distinguished career as a missiologist on the faculty of Ottawa University and at the Pontifical Urban University in Rome, where he was dean of the faculty of missiology from 1974 to 1977. He also served as a consultant of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and as peritus at the Second Vatican Council.

Died. Horst Rzepkowski, S.V.D., 61, German missiologist, on November 25, 1996, in Sankt Augustin, Germany. After receiving his doctorate in missiology from the Gregorian University in Rome in 1970, he worked at the S.V.D. Missiological Institute in Sankt Augustin, where he was director from 1975 to 1979. For many years he was editor of the S.V.D. journal Verbum, and at the time of his death he was editor of Mission Studies, the journal of the International Association of Mission Studies. His Lexikon der Mission: Geschichte, Theologie, Ethnologie, a major reference work, was published in 1992.

in the foundation of her own community; she told her sisters that without the guidance and gift of Mother Alphonsa, “the work of our particular branch would not have gone on that year.” Mollie realized that another beginning would probably not have been made.

The “Teresians” of Maryknoll

Mollie Rogers was twenty-nine years old when she arrived at Hawthorne to join the secretaries on September 9, 1912. Before the entire group of Maryknollers moved to their permanent home, a large farm on Sunset Hill in Ossining, New York, overlooking the Hudson, the women’s community numbered seven. After consulting the women, Walsh appointed Mollie their director “under his own guidance.” Mollie’s note of September 16 to the secretaries reveals her compassionate love in service to the little group gathered for mission. “I want you to know how wholly I belong to you in every hour of the day and night, to serve you, to love you, to watch over you and with you, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for of myself I can do nothing. Through Father Walsh and you, I offer to this work, the service of my entire being.”

Throughout her life she would gladly accept every opportunity for service held out to her by Father Walsh or needed by the community: to take charge or to cook, to wrap magazines or to write a story. The years from 1912 to 1918 seemed to fly by. The number of candidates steadily increased each year, and soon the three farm houses were overflowing; the “secretaries” had settled in a large old Dutch colonial house that Walsh christened Saint Teresa’s Lodge, in memory of the day the women had moved from Hawthorne, on October 15, 1912. They were soon known as “Teresians.”

Rome seemed to think that American women were too soft for the hardships of missionary life.

The Teresians. Walsh urged them to see in Teresa of Ávila the model for their life; Mollie found that Teresa’s life and teachings made her a perfect guide for the women because of the spiritual heights she attained in the midst of an intensely active life.

Saint Teresa . . . was the model on which we were to pattern our religious life . . . Our life was a busy, distracted one—each day too short to see its tasks completed. We soon learned that a missioner must be a contemplative in action; that our hearts must be on fire with love of God and souls. Meditation, faithfulness to times of prayer and trying to be constantly mindful of God’s presence in our souls were the foundation of this missionary life we had chosen to follow.

During these early years Father Walsh did everything possible to gain canonical recognition for the Teresians as Religious Sisters, but Rome seemed unwilling to grant missionary status to American women. Many thought that American women were too soft to meet the hardships of missionary life. Mollie, however, had strong confidence that women had a place in foreign missions.

Maryknoll opened its arms to many visitors: relatives, friends, guests, and foreign missionaries. People were attracted by the charm of the family spirit reflected in The Field Afar, and visitors began to take note of what they found and called it the Maryknoll spirit. Two decades later in 1930, after two long visits to the missions in Asia, Mollie Rogers wrote about this spirit:

What is the Maryknoll spirit we ask ourselves again? I only know that I like to have people see in us real simplicity, that gentleness of which Our Lord spoke when he saw Nathaniel approach him, Behold a man without guile, no subterfuge, no hypocrisy. I like to feel that people see reflected in our eyes the charity of Christ . . . We are seeking souls. We expect to go out and live amongst people who will be suspicious of us, who will respect us only when we have proven our virtue, our sincerity and our usefulness to them. . . . For this we need all our individuality, all our generosity, all our graciousness and sweetness and all our powers of gentle persuasiveness.

Foreign Missions at Last

In 1917 Walsh made an exploratory trip to the Orient in order to locate a mission territory in China for the first group of men to be ordained in 1918. Bishop Jean-Baptiste Budes de Guebriant of the Paris Foreign Mission Society and vicar apostolic of Canton welcomed Maryknoll to Yeungkong and Loting in the province of Kuangtung. On September 8, 1918, the first group of four Maryknoll priests left for Yeungkong led by Father Thomas Frederick Price, cofounder. Price died of a severe case of appendicitis during the first year, but his holiness and zeal inspired the three young priests who became heads of new mission areas eventually entrusted to Maryknoll. They contributed remarkably to the development of the mission witness and ministries of the 425 Maryknollers (252 men, 173 women) in China from 1918 to 1951.

After eight years of patient waiting, on February 14, 1920, the Teresians received word from Archbishop Patrick Hayes of New York that they were now formally approved by Rome as the Congregation of the Foreign Mission Sisters of Saint Dominic. The first constitutions stated their special purpose: “the conversion of pagans in heathen lands or Asiatics in Christian Countries.” The Field Afar announced the news that “the Maryknoll Sisters” had received formal ecclesiastical approval, news that brought many more responses from women interested in foreign mission. Mollie, who was now called Mother Mary Joseph, lost no time in assigning eight sisters to work among the Japanese immigrants on the West Coast in Los Angeles and Seattle; the following year six sisters sailed for South China to begin missions in Hong Kong and Yeungkong. By Christmas of 1921 there were 76 Maryknoll sisters at the Maryknoll center, all dreaming of a future in foreign mission but working hard to staff the offices of The Field Afar magazine and to provide all the other services needed for the seminary and the sisters’ community.

By 1923 Maryknoll priests/brothers were sending their sixth group to China, the sisters their third. Mother Mary Joseph led the 1923 contingent in her first trip to the Orient: seven sisters, three priests, and one brother. This five-month visit to the early Maryknoll missions gave her invaluable background on mission in China in a chaotic time of social upheaval. She traveled extensively by every possible means—steamers, trains, river boats, junks, sampans, sedan-chairs, andrickshaws—from Hong Kong north through Kuangtung to Shanghai, Nanking, and Peking and on into Manchuria and Korea. What Maryknollers loved most about her was that she shared their life just as it was, listened carefully to all their experiences, laughed and cried with them, and gave them the courage to go on. (Walsh called her Mother of the Knoll because of her compassionate and dynamic role in Maryknoll.)
During this visit, Mother kept a detailed diary of 149 pages and wrote many letters to those back home at the Maryknoll center. Maryknollers in South China wrote inspiring accounts of her apostolic leadership, her easy adaptability to the volatile and friendly relationships with the Chinese she met. Father Francis X. Ford, Maryknoll’s first seminarian, who later became bishop of the Kaying Vicariate and died a martyr in a Communist prison in 1951, wrote to James A. Walsh as follows about Mother’s first visit to China:

Mother Mary Joseph saw China from the inside of the kitchens, the interior of the family quarters, and smiled her way into the hearts of the womenfolk. She saw family life as we cannot see it. . . . I always thought it was the foreign face and clothes that frightened children, but I look and dress more Chinese than the Reverend Mother did, and yet they ran to her and lost their bashfulness. Her whole trip emphasized the hold our Sisters will have on Chinese women and the utter need of such influence to gain these women’s hearts.

Father Ford shared his views with Mother Mary Joseph and discovered that she too envisioned a life of apostolic work for the sisters. Traditionally the work of missionary sisters in China had been in schools, orphanages, houses for old folks and blind girls, and some dispensary work. Such was the model in 1921 when the sisters arrived. Ford discussed with Mother his hope of having the sisters go in pairs to live among the people in the villages for weeks at a time, dedicated to the work of the direct apostolate. Three weeks later, Ford wrote another letter home to James A. Walsh regarding a new role for women missionaries in China.

I have asked Mother Mary Joseph for permission to take two of the Sisters on trips into the country villages. Mother said this kind of work is what she has envisioned the Sisters doing here in China. Although it may seem a bit novel, it is surely necessary, and I can see the time when the Sisters will take charge of the women folk just as we do the men and boys. Then—we shall simply jump along in conversions.

In August of 1929 Mother drafted a mission policy to be discussed by Maryknoll superiors of mission areas in Asia; it reflects her apostolic quality of leadership and demonstrates how she recognized apparent failures as challenges to be faced.

The Sisters’ work in the missions needs for its satisfactory development a definite mission method on the part of the Sisters and a working plan based on their relation with priests and bishop. We shall try to consider them in the order named, remembering that for their attainment, training and experience are required in the same measure in which they are required for the priests. . . . [Our] organization has progressed in such a way that it might be said to have developed out of the needs which arose rather than by prearranged policies and ideals. It was one thing to train Sisters for specific mission requirements, it was quite another to meet the increasing demands of a busy Maryknoll Center which within a few years acquired national ramifications and ever increasing departments of organization.

She went on to say that she was well aware of some criticisms made of the sisters. She admits that there are problems; the sisters are still students and not yet graduate missionaries. She feels that mission beginnings are an exceedingly trying time, and “recriminations may, after all, be nothing more than an evidence of family spirit.” This proposed policy is a masterpiece of honesty, humility, and courageous diplomacy. She ends by saying, “For the rest, we are committed to a common objective and our desire is to attain it, as we have begun, with sincere cooperation.” Her exhortation to both Maryknoll men and Maryknoll women is clear, “The difficulties are formidable, but they are such as might have been anticipated. They call for readjustment not withdrawal.” She describes the two biggest problems: “(1) our efforts have not been sufficiently directed to catechetical work and direct evangelization, and (2) the method of financing has proved too burdensome for the Ordinary.” Speaking of her own vision of what is needed especially in China, Korea, Manchuria, and Japan, she writes, “Except in rare cases, the Sisters shall be encouraged to undertake direct catechetical and evangelical work and for that purpose will expect to go from station to station for visitations comparable to those of the priests.”

This new role for women in China would require strong individuality in each sister, something she had encouraged from the beginning. It would demand a change in lifestyle for the sisters: living in groups of two, traveling to remote villages with no opportunity for daily Mass or the support of a larger Christian community, depending on the village folk for hospitality and needs. Mother Mary Joseph was shaping a new model for women religious, one that was totally geared to mission. She knew that their preparation should be equivalent to that of the priests.

At the close of the 1920s, there were 129 Maryknoll sisters working overseas: in South China (from 1921), Korea (1924), Manchuria (1925), Philippines (1926), and the Hawaiian Islands (1927). In 1937 the first group was sent to Japan. Recognizing the need for good communication to bridge the distances, in 1921 Mother began the custom of sending several letter/conferences each year to every community of sisters. These reveal her clear vision of mission as witness to the coming of God’s reign, to the centrality of Christ in mission and ministries, and to compassionate love. Her theology of mission was rooted in the incarnation. Written between 1921 and 1955, these conferences kept the sisters aware of “Maryknoll family” happenings, emphasized the foundations of Christian faith, focused on their missionary purpose, and evoked their unity of spirit.

During the 1920s, Mother Mary Joseph was in journeys often: in 1923–24 to Asia, in 1926–27 to Asia/Hawaii, in 1929–30 to Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. In 1933 she went to Rome for the episcopal ordination of Walsh. The 1930s were filled with great expectations for her, despite the era of the Great Depression; she built a large motherhouse to replace dilapidated farmhouses no longer large enough for the sisters. In 1932 she established a cloistered branch of Maryknoll Sisters who would spend their lives in prayer and penance as a spiritual “powerhouse” for Maryknollers and other missionaries.

In 1935 Mother Mary Joseph canceled her plans for visiting the sisters in Asia because of Walsh’s ill health. His death on April 14, 1936, brought great sorrow and a sense of loss, yet she listed it as one of the most important events of her life. Although it marked the end of thirty years of collaboration with him in the
building of Maryknoll, she believed that Walsh, in the commun-
ion of saints, would continue his guidance and support. As the
last of the three founders, she lived on for nearly twenty years
intent on passing on Maryknoll’s spiritual heritage. By 1940 there
were 528 professed sisters and 88 in the formation program: 241
were in mission in China, Korea, Manchuria, Japan, and the
Hawaiian Islands, and over 30 were at work in small communi-
ties in the United States (in Seattle, Los Angeles, Los Altos,
Monrovia, San Juan Bautista, and Scranton). The rest were pro-
viding the services needed at Maryknoll, New York, for its
development as a dynamic center for the emerging missionary
consciousness of Catholics in the United States.

World War II and New Beginnings
In 1940 Mother Mary Joseph set sail for Hong Kong on the SS
Coolidge. She visited the sisters in Hawaii and then, at Yokohama
and Kobe, managed brief on-board visits with ten of the sisters in
Japan. At Shanghai she had a chance meeting with a few of her
sisters. Arriving at Hong Kong in time to celebrate her fifty-
eighth birthday on October 27, she learned that travel to the in-
terior was restricted. Three sisters from Kaying, after a harrow-
ing twelve-day trip through Japanese lines, managed to reach
Hong Kong and brought news of the escalating war. However,
the trip was worthwhile; she weighed the situation of Japan’s
relentless expansion, discussed tentative plans for the imme-
diate future, and shared her great-hearted love and hope with the
missioners. She traveled to the Philippines for a brief visit with
the sisters there, observed the development of their educational
and medical works, and then sailed back to Hong Kong in time
for Christmas. Before leaving Hong Kong, she wrote to those
back at Maryknoll, “Parting was hard especially in these days of

In the interior of South China a few sisters managed to evade the
Japanese army and somehow survive the war.

war and uncertainty, but with faith in God’s loving watchfulness
we said our last good-byes, the Sisters [to] go into retreat and we
to face the journey home with whatever it may hold.”

Returning to the United States in early 1941, Mother faced a
difficult decision: should her sisters remain in Asia? She followed
the general policy of the church and the recommendation of
Maryknollers present in Asia—the sisters would stay. With the
bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States
immediately declared war on Japan, and suddenly a wall of
silence surrounded the Asian missions. Vatican, Red Cross, and
U.S. State Department channels provided bits of news, but it
would be a year and a half before she would know the details of
house arrest and the exchange of prisoners when the first group
of sisters was repatriated on the SS Gripsholm. Those under house
arrest made a long, dangerous two-month trip by Japanese
freighter to Portuguese East Africa, where they exchanged places
with Japanese prisoners on the SS Gripsholm. After crossing the
Atlantic, they sailed up the Hudson on August 25, 1942. Mother
Mary Joseph was at the dock to welcome them home; she stayed
with them for three days as their release was processed. In the

interior of South China a few sisters managed to evade the
Japanese army and somehow survive the war.22

Fifty-three Maryknoll sisters in Manila were under house
arrest in Assumption College for two and a half years, from
January 1942 to July 1944. With several thousand other enemy
aliens, they were then interned at the Los Banos internment
camp, where, for seven months, they endured privation, anxiety,
and, ultimately, near starvation. No word of these sisters reached
Maryknoll for nearly three years. On February 23, 1945, the entire
camp was liberated by the U.S. military, aided by Filipino
guerrillas.23

Throughout the war years Mother Mary Joseph remained
calm and joyful, relying on God’s providence as the cornerstone
of her spirituality. Her vibrant hope kept her from grieving over
the devastation of every mission that her sisters had helped to
build in Asia, including communities of Christians, catechetical
centers, clinics, schools, hospitals, social programs, and the novi-
tiates for native sisters—all the work of two decades.

Four months after the United States had declared war on
Japan, Maryknoll responded to a call for mission in Latin America.
Maryknoll priests and brothers were sent to Bolivia in April of
1942; Mother Mary Joseph assigned sisters there the following
year. In 1943 she also responded to calls for mission in Nicaragua
and Panama, helping in the sisters’ preparation for this new field
of mission among the poor and neglected. Unable to make
visitations to Latin America because of poor health at the time,
she kept up a steady correspondence with the sisters, encourag-
ing their medical, educational, catechetical, and social works.24

In the early 1940s the annual groups of candidates increased
in numbers. In September 1945 Mother Mary Joseph was de-
lighted by the largest group yet—one hundred young women,
many already trained as doctors, nurses, teachers, and social
workers. After World War II, Maryknollers returned to their
mission areas in Asia with high hopes and enormous challenges
in rebuilding their works. The large groups of women entering
Maryknoll now enabled more sisters to go overseas each year. In
February of 1946 the Maryknoll sisters celebrated their twenty-
fifth anniversary as a religious community. Mother reflected on
the destruction of the war, the strengths of the community, and
the challenges ahead: “Today we are a strong, vigorous religious
body with far-flung missions. We see much of our work built up
through years of toil and hardship and at great cost, now appar-
etly in ruin. God alone knows why this is so, as he alone knows
why we are now tilling the soil in new mission fields.”

There had been much suffering and terrible privation in the
lives of all of her sisters in Asia during the war. Three in the
Philippines came to her mind. Sister Hyacinth Kunkler had
disappeared, probably meeting death in the mountains of Baguio,
Fleeing the Japanese forces. Sisters Mary Trinita Logue and
Brigida Kiley had undergone long hours and days of interroga-
tion and incredible torture in the Fort Santiago prison. Mother
understood that suffering was an essential part of missionary
life, yet she had never imagined the trials and horror her sisters
would endure.26

In July of 1946 the Maryknoll sisters held their fourth Gen-
eral Chapter, for the fourth time reelecting Mother Mary Joseph
as mother general. As foundress, she had been allowed to go
beyond two terms of office at the previous General Chapter, but
now ecclesiastical authorities refused the formal request made
by the community for an extension of another term. It was a blow
to the sisters—Mother had been the leader since 1912—and for
Mother herself it was a sorrowful experience. At sixty-four years
of age, she was still full of life, enthusiastic, and filled with
wisdom. Her words at the end of the morning meditation at the motherhouse on the first Sunday of Advent in 1946 were those of a valiant woman, loyal to the church, even in the face of great disappointment.

Now there is a gift we are each to present to the Christ Child this year. Yesterday the Cardinal sent for me to speak about the postulation [the request for a fourth term]. He said he knows it will not be granted. . . . He advised me, very kindly, and with consideration of all our interest, to refuse the election . . . . This, of course, I will do, for an opinion of this kind should be law to us, who are subject to authority. While this act will take from my hands the government of the Congregation, it will also free me for things I have long wished to do and which should be of lasting help and benefit to us all.27

One month later, at the Elective Chapter for the new mother general, Mother Mary Joseph shared her reflections with her sisters on the thirty-four years of their life as Maryknoll sisters. She gave thanks and praise to God for all that had happened in the growth of the community and its mission. She would continue to give all her energy and wisdom to the community as mother foundress, second only to the new superior, Mother Mary Columba Tarpey, until her final illness. The mission work of Mother Mary Joseph Rogers was widely known and given high praise throughout the Catholic Church in the United States and in countries where Maryknollers worked. Honorary degrees of doctor of laws were conferred on Mother Mary Joseph at Regis College in Boston in June 1945, and at Trinity College, Washington, D.C., in 1949. In June 1950 she was once again “Mollie Rogers” on the campus of her alma mater, Smith College, where she was awarded the degree doctor of humane letters—it was the forty-fifth anniversary of her own graduating class of 1905.

In her “retired” years, Mother Mary Joseph continued to send her inspiring letter/conferences to her sisters. She remained the center of community life through the retreats she directed, her Maryknoll history classes, the warmth of her correspondence, and her gracious availability to the community and guests at the motherhouse. She suffered a severe stroke in 1952 but within a year resumed her gifted life of community-building from a wheelchair.

On October 5, 1955, Mother Mary Joseph was taken to St. Vincent’s Hospital, Manhattan, in a weakened condition; she died there on October 9. That year there were 1,027 Maryknoll sisters who mourned her loss and celebrated her life; they were present in mission in Asia, the central Pacific Islands, Latin America, and Africa as well as in the United States. Her legacy, well documented in her numerous writings, lives on in the community she founded and in the hearts of her sisters. Her words express it well:

The dominant factor in our lives is love—love of God, and love of neighbor as we love ourselves for love of God. . . . Love, work, prayer and suffering will sustain us in the future as they have in the past. All who are here now, all who will come after us, will have no other tools than these with which to build. . . . God has yet a great work for us to do; countless souls await our ministries, our teachings. . . . Do we love enough, do we work enough, do we pray enough, do we suffer enough? Maryknoll’s future depends on our answer.28

Mother Mary Joseph’s challenge to her sisters: “Do we love enough, do we work enough, do we pray enough?”

Notes

1. Mary J. Rogers, “The Student Volunteers,” talk to the League of the Sacred Heart, November 1917, Mary Mother Joseph Rogers Papers, Box 12, Folder 1, Mission Archives, Maryknoll, N.Y. (hereafter cited as MMJR Papers).

2. See “Notes on Mother Mary Joseph Rogers’ Home—childhood—girlhood” and “Rogers Family History,” MMJR Papers, Box 1, Folders 7, 8, 9.

3. Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, “Mission Interest,” draft for an article written in Seattle (surmised date, 1940), MMJR Papers, Box 12, Folder 7.


10. Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, correspondence with Mother Alphonsa Lathrop Hawthorne, 1912–23, letter to “My dear Mother,” August 28, 1912, MMJR Papers, Box 8, Folder 1.

11. Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, “Talk to the Community,” January 6, 1929, conferences/talks to Maryknoll Sisters, MMJR Papers, Box 10, Folder 2.


18. Ford to Walsh, March 1924, in Wiest, Maryknoll in China, p. 102, and in Grondin, Sisters Carry the Gospel, p. 17.


20. Mother Mary Joseph Rogers, letter/conferences of Mother Joseph (to Maryknoll Sisters), covering the years 1921–55. These are found in the MMJR Papers, Box 3, Folders 1–14; Box 10, Folders 1–8; Box 11, Folders 1–9; and Box 12, Folders 1–7.

23. Ibid., p. 243.
25. Ibid., p. 251.

Bibliography

The writings of Mary Josephine Rogers (Mother Mary Joseph Rogers), published articles as well as unpublished manuscripts, are contained in the Mother Mary Joseph Rogers Papers, Mission Archives, Maryknoll, New York. This collection contains documents relating to her personal and family history, including correspondence, conferences, meditations, retreat talks, Maryknoll history outlines, mission diaries and mission policies, books compiled by Mother herself, material concerning her last illness, and a large collection of memorabilia. There are recordings of some of her conferences to the sisters.

Articles by Mary Josephine Rogers

1907 Letter to Editor. The Field Afar, October, p. 12.
1927 “America’s Contribution to the Personnel of the Missions.” Our Sunday Visitor, October.
1927 “American Womanhood’s Contribution to the Missions.” Our Sunday Visitor, November.
1931 “Our Mother’s House.” The Field Afar, June, pp. 76–78.
1946 “His Guiding Genius.” The Field Afar, April, pp. 10–12.

Books About Mary Josephine Rogers


Dissertations


The Legacy of John J. Considine, M.M.

Angelyn Dries, O.S.F.

John Joseph Considine entered the newly founded Catholic Foreign Mission Society in 1915. His contribution to missionology, however, was not to be as an overseas missionary but as a missiographer, writer, organizer, and educator. The advice Considine later gave to Bishop James E. Walsh, encouraging him to write a book on the church in Asia, bespoke John’s own approach to the relationship between theory and practice in mission matters: “While the book must be ideological, it should speak principally in terms of human beings. It should be deep enough to satisfy those who are in the know and at the same time should be extremely readable.” In various leadership positions and throughout his literary output, John Joseph Considine spanned theoretical and operative foundations of missionology.

Considine was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts, on October 9, 1897, the eldest son of John W. Considine and Alice M. Murphy. He had six brothers and one sister. His journalistic talents found expression in his diary, a column in the Holy Family High School paper, and the local newspaper. His writing was augmented by avid reading, a trait that continued throughout his life. He confessed to taking biographer Katherine Burton as his writing mentor. His diaries from high school and college years portray him as an intense young man charting his personal and spiritual growth. He constantly struggled, sometimes to the detriment of his health, to temper his zeal through balancing writing, reading, prayer, and action. He entered the Catholic Foreign Mission Society in 1915 at the Venard College Seminary, Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania. He particularly expressed regard for two of his teachers there, Frederick Dietz, M.M., and James E. Walsh, M.M. He then spent the next few years of his formation in Ossining, New York, at the Maryknoll Seminary.

In 1920 Considine was elected to the executive board of the Catholic Students Mission Crusade, the first of many leadership positions he would hold throughout his life. Here he began to recognize the benefits of research and writing about mission experience in order to have Americans “wrapped up in the missions.” He began the first of several efforts over his life to develop the missiology section of the Maryknoll library. Ordained a priest in 1923, he received a licentiate in sacred theology from the Catholic University in Washington, D.C., in 1924. In Washington, he had the opportunity of discussions with the German missiologist Frederick Schwager, S.V.D.

Angelyn Dries, O.S.F., is Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Cardinal Stritch College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She is completing a history of U. S. Catholic agencies committed to overseas missions.
Several themes that emerged in his work over the years were present in incipient form in his Catholic University thesis on Raymond Lull, the thirteenth-century Franciscan mystic and missionary to the Muslims. Among the missionary traits Considine had identified in Lull were the value of the written word in evangelization, lifelong intellectual preparation, a willingness to learn languages and to study the "temper" and customs of people, a reasoned approach to persuade the nonbeliever of the reasonableness of Catholicism, and the need to be "saturated with the spirit of Christ."4

The young priest was then assigned to Rome. Considine found these next ten years expansive and formative. He acquired proficiency in several languages. At work in the Propaganda Fide office as secretary to Archbishop Marchetti, he met hundreds of missionaries from around the world and became knowledgeable about Protestant missions as well. Though missionaries came to his office seeking financial help, these men and women also provided narratives and statistics about their mission life. This material was used in the compilation of a mission atlas, Missiones Catholicae, and for later stories that Considine wrote about the missions. These narratives demonstrate John's competence in synthesizing and humanizing masses of data in a comprehensible and engaging manner.

He came into contact with current German mission research methods through extended contact with Dr. Robert Streit, O.M.I. (1875–1930), and developed an appreciation for a scientific approach to mission, with an emphasis on ethnography, linguistics, and anthropology. Considine translated into English Streit's work Catholic Missions in Figures and Symbols (1927), a compilation of Protestant and Catholic mission statistics Considine had helped to gather. He met Father Paulo Manna (1872–1952), founder of the Missionary Union of Clergy, and Father Vincent Lebbe (1877–1940), advocate of Catholic Chinese journalism and adaptation of missionaries to Chinese culture. Such contacts and experience gave him a wide and authoritative perspective on the extent of world Christianity.

Considine organized the Maryknoll mission exhibit for the Missionary World Fair held on the grounds of the Vatican in 1925–26 and gave tours to visiting Americans who came to the exposition. His Vatican Mission Exposition: A Window on the World truly understand the reality of local mission life. These experiences he later narrated in Across a World (1942).

In 1934 he returned to the United States, serving until 1946 as a member of the General Council of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers. At the same time, he was professor of contemporary world affairs at the Maryknoll Seminary (until 1960) and director of publications for Maryknoll. His colleagues and fellow priests spoke of him as congenial, wise, refined, and affable, a man ahead of his time. On the lighter side, he enjoyed taking the train into New York City to see a film or a play and occasionally stayed up into the early morning hours reading mystery novels.

An examination of his writings, speeches, and administrative involvements indicates at least three areas of significant impact he had among American Catholics: education, theological foundations for mission, and the relationship of the U.S. Catholic Church toward Latin America.

**Educating the Church for Mission**

In the 1940s and 1950s, Considine worked closely with the Mission Education Committee of the National Catholic Education Association, presenting these educators with a view of world Christianity. He spoke at local teacher conferences and commencements and published numerous articles aimed at those teaching in the large Catholic school system in the United States.

These presentations were the fruit of his reading Protestant and Catholic mission authors (among them Joseph Schmidlin, J. H. Oldham, and the many who appeared in the International Review of Missions), his training as a missiographer in Rome, his visits to the missions around the world, and his unique way of relating facts, human experience, and theology. He critiqued geography and social studies texts as being too parochial and romantic in their focus, "descriptive, not analytic, static, not dynamic."5 He charged that such narrow perspectives prohibited a knowledge of other cultures as they are and as they see themselves.

Another educational area Considine addressed was the formation of seminarians and other persons going to overseas missions, many of them "with casual, unbalanced, haphazard knowledge of missiological affairs, both theoretical and practical, that rank and file untrained missionaries generally possess."6 Beside his concern for a first-rate mission library and training at Maryknoll, he collaborated in the 1950s and early 1960s with anthropologist J. Franklin Ewing, S.J., to establish the Fordham Mission Institute, a program of summer courses for missionaries. He spent October 1957 interviewing directors of the leading mission formation centers in Europe and summarized the strengths and weaknesses of each program in order to provide the best possible formation plan for U.S. Catholic missionaries going overseas. He maintained contact with major superiors of those going abroad through meetings of the Mission Secretariat, an organization he helped found in 1950 under the auspices of the National Catholic Welfare Council in Washington, D.C.

**Theoretical Foundations for Mission**

While Considine never claimed to be a professional theologian, in the tradition of many Protestant and Catholic American theologians, he was interested in bridging theory and practice. Several presentations in the 1940s, including two major articles—"Education to World Christianity" and "The Teacher and World Christianity"—and two books—World Christianity and Across a World—carry Considine's educational and theological themes of this period.
During the height of the nationalism of World War II, Considine criticized those who could not see beyond what he considered the narrow confines of the American Protestant/Catholic Western Hemisphere. "Patriotism is a great Christian virtue and the nation an essential unit for the strength and well-being of society. . . . But the present sad ignorance of and disdain for so many people who live beyond our nation's confines is contrary to true Catholic principles." His analysis of the war and the postwar period indicated four world orders to be in contention: Communism, Nazism, modern power politics, and the universalism of Christianity. If the fourth item (the only world order that respected the rights of the individual and provided a social ethic based on equality) was to be successful, then ecumenism was necessary between Protestants and Catholics. Participation by Americans in World War II raised the question, What kind of world do we want? The war gave new meaning to the Gospel mandate "Go to all nations." In this context, Considine outlined a theology of world Christianity that involved both doctrinal and programmatic dimensions: Trinitarian foundations as the source for mission, knowledge of the church's worldwide sociological and missionary efforts, and "an intelligent acquaintance with the peoples of the earth to whom all Christians are bound in unity and catholicity of spirit."10

Considine employed a traditional Catholic theological framework for his development of mission theology but developed significantly the missionary aspect of the Trinity. The major Christian theological tenets—the nature of God, creation, the fall, the incarnation, universal redemption—were all linked to this Trinitarian foundation. The role of the missionary became related as well to the Trinity and to the entire mystical body of Christ:

A missioner is not a mere advertiser or publicity agent. His activities are in the order of grace and for this reason the entire body of the church can and does co-operate . . . . The missioner is usually the immediate instrument of approach; but the application of the purchase price of the sufferings of Christ depends upon the prayer and expiation both of the missioner and of the family of Christians at home. Here is the perfect combination for the conversion of the world.11

These concepts were never abstract for him, for he constantly linked them with narratives of people he met or with statistics from cumulative experience.

He envisioned this approach to mission education and race relations as closely allied, because knowledge of other cultures would lead one to see the intrinsic value each group possessed. People would thereby experience the basic unity of the entire human race. Racial prejudice and hatred were thus out of keeping with world Christianity. His was one of the few public American voices raised for justice in human relations in the late 1950s. This theme, present in his earlier writings, was more precisely spelled out in Fundamental Catholic Teaching on the Human Race (1960).

Considine worked with still another theological motif, the relation between contemplation and action. This theme, noted in his early diary jottings, had been expressed in his Lull thesis as "saturation with the spirit of Christ." As chaplain for the Maryknoll Sisters Cloister from 1949 until 1956, he provided monthly "mission talks," often with the same ideas he presented in his books and articles. Quite frequently he stayed at the cloister for the whole day, noting, "I do three days work in one there."12

Always affirming the value of contemplative prayer for mission, Considine's short treatise God So Loved the World (1950) outlined the mutual role of the Maryknoll cloistered sisters and the missionaries overseas. "Hard work alone will not bring results in the order of grace. A quality must characterize the work that will come only through spiritual channels." However, the "true contemplative must be a missionary contemplative, since however absorbed he or she may be in personal sanctification and in worship of God, the contemplative can never forget that 'God so loved the WORLD as to give His only-begotten Son.'"13

Relationship with Latin America

A further development in Considine's thought came to fruition after Richard Cardinal Cushing invited him to direct the Latin America Bureau of the National Catholic Welfare Conference in 1960.14 Considine was a good choice for the position. He had already given a significant talk to the National Council of Catholic Women subcommittee on inter-American relations ("Spiritual Bonds Between the Americas") in 1946. Using narrative and amassed factual information from his trip to the South, his Call for Forty Thousand (1946) described the mission situation of most of the countries of Latin America and challenged the northern church to send 40,000 priests to meet the missionary needs of the Southern Hemisphere. He helped organize and participated in a 1954 Lima conference on the direction of the work of the Maryknoll Fathers in Latin America.15

Moving from Ossining, New York, to the Latin American Bureau office in Washington, Considine again utilized his "genius for analysis and planning."16 During his term as director, he coordinated the many and varied activities of the U. S. Catholic Church toward Latin America and promoted the papal program to "rehabilitate" the church in Latin America.17 This design included a substantial increase for the role of lay missionaries. By 1965 nearly 400 laypersons served in twelve southern countries. But an important part of the plan, as Considine envisioned it, was to have religious congregations send 10 percent of their personnel to the Southern Hemisphere. These numbers were never realized, but within one year of the bureau's foundation, the number of sisters, priests, and brothers working overseas increased by 278. In addition, eighty-six clergy from a number of U. S. dioceses were sent to Latin America that year. Furthermore, South American women religious were enrolled in Catholic colleges throughout the United States, and seminarians were provided scholarships for education in the North.

Considine approached Fordham University to open a study center for a comprehensive, modern language training program for those going south. This Center for Intercultural Formation, incorporated on March 3, 1961, was directed by a New York priest, Ivan Illich, who housed the Spanish-speaking unit in Cuernavaca, Mexico. The Portuguese-speaking unit opened in Petropolis, Brazil.

Considine also cooperated with Latin American bishops to form a continental training center to prepare major catechetical leaders. Continued personal contact between the bishops of
North and South America, begun initially at the Second Vatican Council, was an important factor in directing the considerable finances and efforts of the U.S. Catholics toward hemispheric understanding among Catholics. Under Considine's leadership at the bureau, governmental groups such as the Alliance for Progress, the Peace Corps, and the Department of Labor gained a greater appreciation of the role of the Catholic Church in Latin America. He served on the Council of Foreign Relations and was an adviser to the Peace Corps from 1961 to 1966.

Several projects overseen by the Latin American Bureau dealt with religiosocial and socioeconomic programs. Considine brought people together to consider more carefully the relationship between "civilization," "culture," and evangelization. Two such gatherings for study and discussion of these issues were the Easter-week gathering at Maryknoll in 1960 and the Catholic Inter-American Cooperation Program (CICOP) conferences. At the first of the CICOP conferences, held in January 1964, Catholic lay and clergy leaders from North and South America and six Protestant observers convened in Chicago for mutual understanding and assistance in the problems of Latin America. Earlier, Considine had noted, "The act of faith and the subsequent practice of faith suppose a certain antecedent minimum culture. . . . [M]en cannot be ground down by hunger, by killing fatigue, by groveling ignorance, by fear, or by subjection." This position specifically placed socioeconomic development as a foundation for evangelization. Considine began using the term "development" in 1960, a concept that became part of official Catholic vocabulary in Pope Paul VI's 1967 encyclical Populorum progressio (On the development of peoples).

In 1968 Considine returned to Maryknoll, where he died on May 4, 1983. He was a man of considerable achievement and influence among Catholics in the Western Hemisphere, and he was well known by many Protestants. His ideas on world Christianity, first outlined in 1945, still hold merit some fifty years later.

Notes

1. Among the persons with whom John suggested that the written word was to be his vehicle for missionary work was Francis Xavier Ford, M.M., then a pastor in Yeungkong, China. See the Ford correspondence to Considine from February through August 1922, Considine Correspondence, Box 2, Folder 9. (Unless noted otherwise, Considine manuscript materials are from the John J. Considine Papers, Maryknoll Missionary Archives, Maryknoll, N.Y.) Ford had recommended that John take an assignment overseas, writing to him, "You really don't know yourself until you come on the missions" (Ford to Considine, February 16, 1924, Considine Correspondence, Box 2, Folder 4).

2. Considine to Bishop Walsh, July 5, 1938, Considine Correspondence, Box 2, Folder 2.


6. Considine, "The Teacher and World Christianity" (1944), p. 14, Considine Writings, Box 8, Folder 7.

7. Memo to Council from Fr. Considine, February 3, 1956, Considine Correspondence, Box 2, Folder 4.


9. Considine, World Christianity (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing, 1945). This is Considine's most theological work.


11. Considine, World Christianity, p. 46.


13. Considine, God So Loved the World (pages are unnumbered).

14. In the late 1930s the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW) had a subcommittee on inter-American affairs. This group handled correspondence from women in Latin America and hosted them while they were in this country. Because of differences in church/state relationships and in attitudes toward women in Latin America, the NCCW saw the importance of maintaining contact with their Latin American counterparts. After 1939 the group had three objectives: to provide scholarships to Latin Americans for North American universities, to produce translations and publications on inter-American collaboration, and to provide informative radio, press, and film resources. (For the goals and direction of this subcommittee, see Catholic Action 23, no. 2 [February 1941]: 29-30.)

The Bureau of International Affairs and Foreign Visitors Office, connected with the NCCW and National Council of Catholic Men, also provided an experiential background for the foundation in November 1959 of the Bureau of Latin America Affairs. The bureau was the outcome of the Inter-American Episcopal Conference held November 2-4, 1959. By that same year, over 1,100 American priests had worked in Latin America.


18. Proceedings of this conference were edited by John Considine and published as The Church in the New Latin America (1964).


Bibliography

Considine's papers, correspondence and diaries are well organized at the Maryknoll Mission Archives, Ossining, New York. The finding aids provide easy access to the material in the fifteen boxes in this collection. Of particular value are his diaries, which he kept from high school throughout his life. Geographic and subject notes also aid the scholar seeking information about particular countries to which Considine traveled.

April 1997

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Major Works by Considine


1940 When the Sorghum Was High. New York: Longmans.


1942 March into Tomorrow. New York: Field Afar Press.

Book Reviews

Europe: Was It Ever Really Christian? The Interaction Between Gospel and Culture.


Anton Wessels is professor of missiology and science of religion at the Free University of Amsterdam and president of the Interuniversity Institute for Missiological and Ecumenical Research in Utrecht. His latest essay is a contextual contribution to the ecumenical discussion on Gospel and culture, and to the missiological debate about the re-evangelization of Europe. With encyclopedic erudition, Wessels exposes the pagan heritage of concepts, myths, and rituals in Europe. Three chapters are devoted in turn to the Greco-Roman, the Celtic (mainly Irish), and the Germanic (I would say Nordic) context of ancient and medieval mission. Mission to Europe in the Middle Ages never included a tabula rasa policy, in spite of the isolated example of the sacred oak felled by Boniface in 724 A.D. Myth, as instrument of knowledge, is essential to a really living religion and, consequently, to the transmission of the Gospel (p. 179). Pagan myths and rituals could often, as in the past, be continued, brought to a higher level by the Christian church. Interestingly, Wessels uses here the controversial concept of Aufhebung (abolition, with subsequent retrieval on a higher level), but without reference to Karl Barth. Inspired by these ideas, Wessels deals in his last chapter with some aspects of present-day European culture, mainly the environmental crisis and the shift from the written word to the audiovisual medias. A less cerebral, more emotional religion could be helpful. Here, this reviewer would have expected a debate with the already available emotional religions in Europe, including Christian Pentecostalism. The book ends rather abruptly and needs a follow-up volume.

Marc Spindler is Professor Emeritus of Missiology and Ecumenics at the Universities of Leiden and Utrecht, Netherlands.

Following Christ in Mission: A Foundational Course in Missiology.


This book responds to the long-standing need for an English-language handbook for introductory missiology courses from the perspective of Catholic confessional theology.

Part 1, after a short introduction to the discipline and the meaning of the term "mission," sets out the theological foundations of mission: Trinitarian, Christological and soteriological, pneumatological and ecclesiological. Part 2 considers the paths of mission: proclamation, interreligious dialogue, inculturation, liberation, and human promotion. The missionaries' own spirituality and their relation to the Virgin Mary, the church, and other faith communities are also discussed in part 2. Part 3 provides quick overviews of mission history on all continents, especially during the modern period. Finally, part 4 presents the outline of a theology of religions, including the challenges of the new religious movements to Christian mission. Each chapter has as author a well-known missiologist, chosen from faculties around the world, and the book concludes with study aids and a general bibliography.

Despite its being an anthology, the book retains a basic unity based on its theological presupposition that missiology, like mission itself, begins with reflection upon God's generosity before considering our need for salvation. Christ's mission therefore moves inexorably toward universality, and the book focuses clearly on mission ad gentes. In this, it expresses the vision of Cardinal Jozef Tomko, prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, who initiated the project, and of its chief editor, Prof. Sebastian Karotempel, S.D.B., professor of missiology at Rome's Urbaniana University.
Especially in the chapters on mission history, the book’s overview approach becomes distractingly sketchy. In the theological chapters, the Eucharistic foundation of mission and the church’s self-understanding as a communion called to share the gifts of Christ could have been more developed. Despite a few weaknesses inherent to the genre, this well-planned book should be useful both in private study and as a supplementary classroom text.

—Francis E. George, O.M.I.

Francis E. George, O.M.I., was vicar-general of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate from 1974 to 1986 and is now the Archbishop of Portland in Oregon.

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Dr. Scott Appleby

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Frank Fletcher, M.S.C.

June 22-27, 1997
Seeking Wholeness
Marie J. Giblin, Ph.D.

July 7-11, 1997
Acting Ethically in a Multi-Cultural World
Dr. Christine Gudorf


The vision is that of the Jesuit accommodation of the Gospel to the enduring Asian cultures of Japan and China. Admittedly, this vision provided one of the great moments of theological challenge in the entire history of the Christian proclamation. The book spans the period between 1542 (the arrival of Francis Xavier in Asia) and 1742 (the Ex quo singulari, Benedict XIV’s constitution). In it we meet Francis Xavier, Alessandro Valignano, Matteo Ricci, Nicolò Longobardo, Adam Schall von Bell, Nicolas Trigault, Ferdinand Verbiest, and others. No one sensibly can speak on mission and proclamation today without being instructed by this Jesuit experiment. A few observations:

Xavier’s realization that the Gospel can be communicated only through local languages is the very foundation of accommodation. The Jesuit mission took the simultaneity between proclamation and translation seriously. I am impressed by the historical unfolding of the meaning of this simultaneity as I study the book.

Valignano held that “both Japanese and Chinese culture contained elements of truth and morality upon which Christian faith could build” (p. xiii; cf. pp. 42, 65–66, 204–5). This Jesuit perception, though tainted by European superiority, points to the central issue of “Christ and Culture.” Rome, distanced from the sounds of everyday Japanese and Chinese languages, remained unsure about the Christian potential of Japanese and Chinese culture. This distance finally resulted in Ex quo singulari. Ricci entered Beijing in 1601. Nearly a century later, in 1692 the Kangxi emperor issued the edict of toleration of Christianity in China. Professor Ross, senior lecturer in the history of missions at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, rightly suggests that this edict is comparable to the Edict of Milan of A.D. 313 issued by Constantine. Christianity as religio licita in China was, however, short lived. “It was ultimately the Church’s denial of the validity of the way of Valignano and Ricci that led to Kangxi and China’s rejection of Christianity” (p. 176).

Accommodation of the gospel is a fundamental challenge to theology at all times and in all places. This book has been required reading for my students, who have been enriched greatly by its offering.

—Kosuke Koyama

Kosuke Koyama is Professor Emeritus, Union Theological Seminary, New York.

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Senior Mission Scholars

OMSC welcomes into residence for the fall 1997 semester Dr. Peter Kuzmic, President, Evangelical Seminary, Osijek, Croatia, and Professor of Missions, Gordon-Conwell Seminary, Boston. His seminar will deal with the theme of Christian mission in Eastern Europe. Also in residence for the fall is Dr. Stephen Bevans, S.V.D., Professor of Doctrinal Theology, Catholic Theological Union, Chicago; his missionary experience was in the Philippines in the 1970s. He is coeditor with James Scherer of the series New Directions in Mission and Evangelization.

Dale Bruner and Graham Kings will be OMSC’s Senior Mission Scholars in the spring of 1998. Dr. Bruner, Professor of Religious Studies (retired), Whitworth College, Spokane, is a former Presbyterian missionary in the Philippines. He will share with OMSC participants issues of mission as presented in the Gospel of John. Canon Graham Kings, a former Anglican missionary in Kenya, is the Henry Martyn Lecturer in Missiology in the Cambridge Theological Federation, Affiliated Lecturer in the University of Cambridge, and Director of the Henry Martyn Library, Cambridge, England. In addition to providing leadership in OMSC’s Study Program, the Senior Mission Scholars are available to OMSC residents for counsel regarding their own mission research interests.

Announcing 1997–1998
A book addressing questions of religion and state is a welcome addition to the literature on Christian-Muslim dialogue. This volume, edited by the executive secretary of the WCC’s Office on Interreligious, Relations, comprises seventeen papers presented by a group of Muslim and Christian international scholars who participated in two recent WCC-sponsored Christian-Muslim colloquia on religion, law, and society (December 1992 and November 1993). Excellently introduced by the editor, the book opens with a typological discussion of religion-state relationships in Islam and Christianity and proceeds to focus on contemporary understandings of shari‘ah, or Islamic law, within the perspectives of modernity, religious pluralism, secularism, and human rights.

The uneven quality of the chapters and the unavoidable repetitions in a composite work are compensated by several outstanding contributions. Highlights are found in the chapters authored respectively by Professor Walid Saif from the University of Jordan and Dr. Bert Breiner, co-secretary for interfaith relations at the National Council of the Churches of Christ, U.S.A. Each offers a lucid introduction to Islamic legal concepts and terms, making them intelligible to non-specialists, and showing how Islamic law’s inner mechanism of jihād, legal reasoning, enables it to function flexibly in situations of religious pluralism if Muslim legal authorities so choose. Saif argues strongly that they should and appeals for the rights of religious minorities in Islamic countries to be addressed as part of a wider search for human rights in a Muslim-Christian dialogue in which Christian partners do not absolutize Western cultural patterns. Breiner is unique among Christian contributors in seeking to identify positive values in Islamic law and in proposing a conceptual approach to religious pluralism in which Christian and Muslim affirmations of transcendent should challenge socially divisive forms of religious fundamentalism more effectively than secular theorists have proven capable of doing.

The provocative nature of these and other contributions points to the book’s major shortcoming: where is the dialogue? To have included at least summaries of the “Christian-Muslim discussion” would have added immeasurably to the value of this book in understanding the dynamics of Christian-Muslim dialogue.

—David A. Kerr

David Kerr is Professor of Christianity in the Non-Western World in the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh, where he also directs the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World. He was formerly professor of Islamic studies and Christian-Muslim relations at Hartford Seminary, Hartford, Connecticut.

The book paraphrases selected texts authored by African theologians, both Protestant and Catholic. Although the book was published in 1995, most of the works cited were published in the 1970s. Significant, published theological thinking of the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, receives no mention. Thus the title is misleading and promises too much. The reader expects African (Christian) theology today, while the book actually contains comments on texts of yesterday. The author could have dealt with the theology of reconstruction, now an urgent topic in South Africa and among younger African theologians.

Reinventing Christianity: African Theology Today.


John Parratt rightly believes: “African theology today…faces theological questions that are equally the concern of the whole church: the approach to the interpretation of scripture; the categories in which the theologian should work; the relationship of the Christian faith to non-Christian religions, to all human history, and to the dehumanization that is part of our world today. But above all, it faces the question that lies at the heart of all Christian thinking since the incarnation, namely who Christ really is for us today” (p. 212).
theologians throughout the continent. It should also have dealt with the challenge the African churches face after the cold war, and with the future of the church in the coming century.

Some African theologians that the book excludes are Lamin Sanneh, Modupe Oduoye, J. N. K. Mugambi, Ka Mana, Henry Okullu, Archbishop Milingo, Immanuel Obeng, Cyril Okorocha, Z. Nthamburi, and T. Adeyemo. The book is interesting, but with these omissions among others, it can hardly be considered a comprehensive introduction to African theology today.

—J. N. K. Mugambi

J. N. K. Mugambi is Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Nairobi, and a senior consultant in Development and Research, All Africa Conference of Churches.


William Cameron Townsend, founder of Wycliffe Bible Translators, continues to be one of the most illustrious and influential missionaries of the twentieth century. Seventeen years into this century, when other mission agencies and thinkers were promoting assimilation and acculturation, Townsend's indefatigable spirit and innovative mind led him to champion the cause of indigenous peoples and their right to read and understand the Scriptures in their mother tongues.

In Wycliffe in the Making: The Memoirs of W. Cameron Townsend, 1920–33, veteran Wycliffe chronicler Hugh Steven resumes the narrative thread he began in his well-regarded 1984 volume, A Thousand Trails: The Personal Journal of William Cameron Townsend, 1917–1919. Steven, who currently serves as director of special projects for Wycliffe Bible Translators, has, with his wife, Norma, served WBT in a variety of roles over the past forty years, and they have collaborated on more than twenty-five books and countless articles related to Wycliffe history and development.

Here again Steven is a resourceful weaver and a judicious editor of the nearly three thousand letters, diaries, public writings, and other documents he amassed; has done his usual thorough and engrossing job of contextualizing Townsend's exploits and statements, gleaning insight and inspiration from the first thirteen years of linguistic mission work in Guatemala, Mexico, and Saudi Arabia.

What a reader would most want from such a work, Steven delivers: illumination through the subject's own words of his motivations and thought processes; most important, Steven vividly demonstrates the power of Townsend's legendary relational skills in dealing with disparate personalities among fellow missionaries and among the governmental and religious leaders of the nations he was seeking to serve.

Those who know the basic outlines of the Townsend saga are probably best served by this latest biohistorical narrative drawn from his archives, but even those only vaguely familiar with it will be...
challenged and intrigued by his ingenuity and faithful resolve. The work is helpfully
indexed and easily readable and deserves
wide circulation.
—Bruce L. Edwards, Jr.

Bruce L. Edwards, Jr., is Professor of English
and Director of Graduate Studies at Bowling Green
State University (Ohio).

Joseph Rabinowitz and the
Messianic Movement: The Herzl of
Jewish Christianity.


A Russian enlightenment Jew, Joseph
Rabinowitz (1837–99) traveled to Palestine in 1882 to find out if immigration to
Palestine was the answer to Russian Jewry’s problems. He returned with the
conviction that Jesus was the answer. In
Palestine he had found his “brother Jesus.”

A few years later he established an indepen­
dent Messianic congregation with a clear
Christological confession. He was
convincing that this did not make him a
former Jew, and he did not abolish cir­
cumcision or the Sabbath. This was un­
heard of at that time and created a lot of
tension in churches and mission organiza­
tions.

The questions he struggled with then
are very similar to the issues the modern
Messianic movement confronts today. This
is precisely what makes this biography on
Rabinowitz so relevant for anyone con­
cerned with Messianic Judaism today—
“provided of course” as the author says,
“that one is prepared to learn from his­
ory” (p. ix).

At the end of the nineteenth century
anyone concerned with Jesus and Israel
knew about Rabinowitz and the Israelites
of the New Covenant, as he called his
movement. When he died, however, no­
body rose to continue his work. Sadly, his
former supporters lost interest. Yet he is
always mentioned whenever the history
of modern Hebrew Christianity is told.

This recent portrayal of Rabinowitz
differs from previous biographies on him.
Not only is it longer, but the account is
thoroughly documented and based on
consultation with original sources. This
makes it free of stereotype expressions
that so often characterize works on vital
historic personalities.

More important is the vivid picture
of this “Herzl of Jewish Christianity,” as
Rabinowitz has been called. Rabinowitz
managed to place the questions of Jewish
identity and its relationship to Jewish tra­
dition on the agenda of not only Jewish
believers themselves but also the church
and its mission. The lessons therein learned
are essential today for anyone involved in
Jewish mission in particular and mission
in general.

The author, Kai Kjær-Hansen, is the
international co-ordinator of the Lausanne
Consultation on Jewish Evangelism and
the general editor of the journal Mishkan,
published in Jerusalem. He has written
several books and numerous articles on
the Messianic movement. He earned his
doctorate at Lund University, Sweden,
writing a dissertation entitled “Studies in
the Name of Jesus.”

The story of Rabinowitz’s life is told
from the time before his encounter with
the Gospel and concludes with his death
in 1899 and what became of the Messianic
movement in Kishinev after that. The dif­
f erent stages and struggles of the move­
ment are presented frankly, showing both
the disagreement between Rabinowitz and

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To the East and South: Missionaries as Photographers, 1890–1930.


Missionary societies that are rediscovering the long history of their use of photography are faced with several difficult questions. One concerns access. How can an international public study their stocks of historical photographs without making the pilgrimage to cities like Basel—or Helsinki—where the originals are held?

In this pioneering work the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM) demonstrates one response to this challenge. To the East and South presents excellent large reproductions of a selection of the 150 best early FELM photographs from their fields in Ovamboland (Namibia) and Hunan Province (China).

It is extremely difficult to generalize about photographs; many of them can speak eloquently to different people in quite different ways. Suffice it here to note that the FELM photographers, while offering fascinating glimpses of the development of the Christian community, did not restrict their photography to this theme. Students of beadwork as body decoration in Ovamboland, for example, will be interested in portraits of people in traditional costume (pp. 16, 28–31, 34, 36–37, etc.). The photographs from China are more diffuse but still individually powerful. One shows two life-size paper horses being sacrificed, so the caption tells us, to the ancestral spirits in Jiosan in January 1914 (p. 115).

Almost everything one needs as schol-
Mestizo Christianity: Theology from a Latino Perspective.


"Mestizo" stands for the mixture of races and cultures that characterizes the Hispanic or Latino people in the United States, including Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Cubans, Central Americans, Andean peoples, and the populations of the borderlands of the Southwest. Mestizo Christianity concerns the experience of God in Jesus Christ from within this reality of mestizaje. Now this Christian experience is being articulated in a Hispanic/Latino theology—both Protestant and Roman Catholic—that seeks to understand mestizaje in light of God's purpose for humankind.

Some of the contributors, especially Virgil Elizondo ("Mestizaje as a Locus of Theological Reflection") and Justo L. González ("Hispanics in the New Reformation"), have already made a name for themselves. But this book is a very good witness to the creativity of other first-generation U.S. Hispanic theologians who are also included: Fernando F. Segovia ("Two Places and No Place on Which to Stand"), Samuel Soliva-román ("The Need for a North American Hispanic Theology"), Arturo J. Bafiuelas ("U.S. Hispanic Theology: An Initial Assessment"), Roberto S. Goizueta ("The Significance of U.S. Hispanic Experience for Theological Method"), Sixto J. García ("Sources and Loci of Hispanic Theology"), Harold Recinos ("Mission: A Latino Pastoral Theology"), Orlando O. Espín ("Tradition and Popular Religion"), Ada María Isasi-Díaz ("Mujerista Theology's Method"), María Pilar Aquino Vargas ("Directions and Foundations of Hispanic/Latino Theology"), Elidin Villafañe ("An Evangelical Call to a Social Spirituality"), and Allan Figueroa Deck ("The Spirituality of United States Hispanics").

By collecting in this book fourteen representative writings selected out of this growing theological production, Bafiuelas—a third-generation Chicano who directs and teaches at the Tepeyac Institute in El Paso, Texas—has done a valuable service to people living on the border of cultures, who are oftentimes regarded as strangers in their own country. It would, however, be a great mistake to think that they alone are to benefit from Bafiuelas's work. This theology written from the margins of U.S. society has much to say to people who, though belonging to the dominant culture, recognize that "what is marginal to the world is central to God" (Elizondo, p. 19).

—C. René Padilla

C. René Padilla, a contributing editor, is the Editor of two quarterly magazines in Spanish (Iglesia y Misión and Boletín Teológico), the President of the Kairos Foundation, and the Publications Secretary of the Latin American Theological Fraternity. He lives in Buenos Aires, Argentina.
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has dared what few would do in this age of “political correctness”: he evaluates the world religions according to specific standards. “Religions and ideologies,” he says, “should be critiqued . . . in light of their contributions to the issues affecting the modern global community . . . responsible religion [will] create responsible ethics for responsible global living” (pp. 23-24).

The attempt is admirable, although the standards are problematic. Shenk’s unstated presuppositions include three beliefs: (1) the reality of the “here and now”; (2) there are things that are wrong, and humans have the ability to transform the world; and (3) “peace and tranquility between all peoples” is the ultimate goal of ethics. But Hindus and Buddhists deny the reality of the “here and now”; separatist Christians, Hasidic Jews, and Sufi Muslims reject the idea that cultures can be transformed; and advocacy of “peace and tranquility between all peoples” becomes problematic when measured against Jesus’ declaration that he did not come to bring peace but a sword, and Islamic teachings regarding jihad.

For Shenk, “conversion to another faith system is not the only option that . . . a person may take when the realities of our modern global village reveal inadequacies in one’s faith moorings” (p. 47); people can instead “reinterpret their faith system.” But in such a reinterpretation, Hindus and Buddhists would give up their beliefs in maya and nonprogressive history, reject the caste system, and repudiate the quest for ego-negation, while Muslims would exchange their communally oriented approach to human rights for an individual approach. Such transformations would so alter these religions that adoption of what remains would be indistinguishable from conversion to another faith.

Shenk highlights the contrasts between religions and is candid in his observation that interreligious dialogue “demonstrates that these differences are fundamental” (p. 292). He also makes clear the difference between “secularization” and “secularism”—a distinction that is key in developing a realistic approach to sociopolitical issues. This discussion by itself makes this work a worthwhile contribution.

—Larry A. Poston

Larry A. Poston is Professor of Religion at Nyack College, Nyack, New York. He served with the Greater Europe Mission at the Nordic Bible Institute in Saffle, Sweden, from 1980 to 1984.
This is the introductory volume in a new series entitled Missionsgeschichtliches Archiv, which the Berlin Society for Mission History is sponsoring. Contained in it are thirty-two of the papers presented at the founding conference of the organization, which took place in Berlin in October 1994 and brought together scholars from Europe, Great Britain, North America, Africa, and Asia.

The first part of the book is dedicated to the presentations made at the plenary sessions. These include a thoughtful assessment of development and change in the history of missions by Werner Ustorf (Birmingham), a discussion of the place of missions in the broader framework of church history by Kurt-Victor Selge (Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences), a helpful survey of the place of mission history in the larger context of African church history by Wilson B. Niwagila (Lutheran Theological College, Makumira, Tanzania), and an analysis of missions in the history of European imperialism and colonial rule by Imanuel Geiss (Bremen).

The other essays are arranged under four rubrics: the potential of mission sources for interdisciplinary research, the development of national churches in the context of regional and national histories, interaction between European missionar­ies and indigenous societies, and research methodologies in the history of missions. Among the most noteworthy are a program piece by Niels-Peter Moritzen (Erlangen) calling for new and broader ways of studying mission history, Christoffer H. Grundmann’s (Hamburg) discussion of how medical missions were the prime force in advancing medical education in Asia and Africa, Gerhard Tiedemann’s (SOAS, London) insightful analysis of the place of Christian missions in Shandong in China’s revolutionary and national development, and a study of the German missionary anthropologist Albert Kropf by Gunther Pakendorf (Cape Town). The book is an auspicious beginning for the new organization, and we look forward to further manifestations of its work in the future.

—Richard V. Pierard

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Dissertation Notices

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“Freedom from Legalism and Freedom for Community: A Hermeneutical Case Study on Reading Galatians in a Tegucigalpa Barrio.”

Felde, Marcus Paul Bach.
“Song and Stance: Local Theology for the Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea.”
Ph.D. Chicago: Divinity School of the Univ. of Chicago, 1995.

Ma, Julie Jungja.
“Ministry of the Assemblies of God Among the Kankana-ey Tribe in the Northern Philippines: A History of a Theological Encounter.”
Ph.D. Pasadena, Calif.: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1996.

Mekonnen, Alemayehu.
“Effects of Culture Change on Leadership in the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.”
Ph.D. Pasadena, Calif.: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1996.

Fattel-Gray, Anne.
“Racism in Australia Critically Appraised from an Aboriginal Historico-Theological Viewpoint.”
Ph.D. Sydney, Australia: Univ. of Sydney, 1994.

Pesantubbe, Michelene.
“Culture and Revitalization and Indigenization of Churches Among the Choctaw of Oklahoma.”
Ph.D. Berkeley: Univ. of California, 1994.

Hans Kasdorf is Professor Emeritus of Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, California, and currently is teaching missiology at the Freie Theologische Akademie in Giessen, Germany.
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