Readers of the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN look forward to the January issue each year for the “Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission,” by David B. Barrett. One of the categories reported, since 1986, is “Average Christian Martyrs per year.” In the early 1990s the figure dropped from more than 300,000 martyrs per year to about half that number, reflecting the collapse of Communism in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

In this issue of the BULLETIN, Canadian researcher Paul Marshall examines the issue of the persecution of Christians from the perspective of human rights. The author of the 1997 volume Their Blood Cries Out, Marshall first presented this material last July to a U.S. State Department advisory committee. Marshall states, “In the last five years, the persecution of Christians has taken place in approximately forty countries. . . . My best estimate [is that] some 200,000,000 Christians in the world are members of persecuted groups. . . . An additional 400,000,000 live in situations of nontrivial discrimination and legal repression.” Marshall’s thesis is that Christians are suffering “what is probably the largest and widest manifestation of religious persecution in the world today.”

Marshall urges Christians and governments to confront all religious persecution, whether of Christians or others. Governments are the major perpetrators, reminding us of the Apostle’s prayer request “for kings and all who are in high positions,” that the Gospel may prosper (1Tim. 2:1–4).

Norman A. Horner (1913–1997)

Former associate editor of the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN Norman A. Horner died on August 6, 1997, in Louisville, Kentucky. He was 83. After serving as a Presbyterian missionary in Cameroon, West Africa (1939–49), he was professor of missions (1950–68) and simultaneously dean of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (1956–68), and then missionary in the Middle East, with residence in Beirut, Lebanon (1968–76). He was associate director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center and associate editor of this journal from 1976 to 1982. In addition to his articles and reviews published in our pages, Dr. Horner is remembered for his books Cross and Crucifix in Mission: A Comparison of Protestant and Roman Catholic Missionary Strategy (1965), Protestant Crosscurrents in Mission (editor, 1968), Rediscovering Christianity Where It Began: A Survey of Contemporary Churches in the Middle East and Ethiopia (1974), A Guide to Christian Churches in the Middle East (1989), and Mission Legacies (co-editor, 1994). He will be remembered not only as an outstanding scholar, author, and teacher, but as a gracious human being and winsome witness for Jesus Christ.
Persecution of Christians in the Contemporary World

Paul Marshall

The following essay is adapted from a presentation made to the Advisory Committee to the U.S. Secretary of State on Religious Freedom Abroad, July 2, 1997. Paul Marshall is Senior Fellow in Political Theory at the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto. He is also Adjunct Professor of Philosophy at the Free University of Amsterdam, Netherlands; Adjunct Professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California; and Academic Advisor on Religious Freedom to the World Evangelical Fellowship. He has testified on religious persecution before the Helsinki Commission of the U.S. Congress and lectured on human rights at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, China, and in other countries around the world. His most recent book is a survey of religious persecution worldwide, Their Blood Cries Out (Dallas: Word Books, 1997). His writings have been translated into Russian, German, Dutch, Spanish, Japanese, Malay, Korean, Indonesian, and Chinese.

The persecution of Christians today is worldwide, massive, and underreported. Although it has received some increased attention recently, knowledge and concern about persecution of Christians is limited to relatively narrow circles. It is still not a feature on our news pages; the coverage has been on the editorial opinion pages and has focused on people in Washington concerned about this persecution rather than on the persecution itself. Even in the context of the recent coverage in the United States in regard to the Most Favored Nation status of China, there was comparatively little attention to what is actually going on in China. While we have received news of the courageous Chinese political dissident Wei Jingsheng, the news of the arrests and torture of China's leading Protestant house church leaders, with several million followers, has been passed by.

In what follows, I will focus only on situations where a person's religion is a significant component of the persecution he or she suffers. Hence I do not cover situations such as, for example, Rwanda, whose genocide was ethnically based; or Iraq, where Saddam Hussein persecutes all without regard to creed; or Central America or Peru, where the focus is on political opposition to government or guerrillas per se. It must, of course, be added that there are few cases where religion is the only factor giving rise to persecution: religion is usually intertwined with ethnic, political, territorial, and economic concerns. I demarcate religious persecution by asking whether some or all of the oppression and discrimination that people suffer would occur if they were of a different religion.

It is important at the outset to say who Christians are, since unless they convert, and in North America there sometimes seems to be an implicit assumption that Christians are white European males. On the contrary, the Christian church is not predominantly a European or American phenomenon. From its beginnings, Christianity spread into Africa and Asia. It was in Africa before Europe, India before England, and China before America. Currently, more Christians are engaged in Sunday worship in China than in all of western Europe combined. The same is true in Nigeria and Brazil, and probably also India and the country with the world's largest Muslim population, Indonesia. Two-thirds of the world's Christians, as recorded by government census, live outside the West. When one focuses more narrowly on Christians who are active in their churches on a regular basis, the ratio is closer to 80 percent; that is, 80 percent of the world's active Christians live in non-Western countries. It is these who are most likely to suffer persecution in today's world.

In addressing the persecution of Christians, we are focusing on what is probably the largest and widest manifestation of religious persecution in the world today. The sites of this persecution are many and varied, but we can group the main trends in four categories.

The Islamic Countries

Muslims in North America and elsewhere have a legitimate concern that raising the question of Islamic persecution of Christians can contribute to already present anti-Muslim and anti-Arab prejudice. They are also properly concerned that the widespread persecution of Muslims should not be neglected or slighted. I wish to avoid contributing to either of these dangers. That is why I explicitly point out, in my book Their Blood Cries Out, more than fifty instances of Islamic tolerance of Christians and of cases where Muslims themselves are persecuted by Islamic regimes. As a matter of fact, most of the Islamic regimes and groups that I cite for persecution of Christians also persecute moderate Muslims and Muslim minorities.

But while Islam in its history often has shown greater tolerance than its Christian counterparts, there are now intensifying attacks on religious minorities, mostly Christians, throughout the Islamic belt from Morocco on the Atlantic eastward through to the southern Philippines, and this situation desperately requires systematic attention. This wave of persecution is not limited to, but has worsened because of, the activities of radical Islamicists. The persecution is of three overlapping types.

Direct state persecution. This takes place in countries such as Saudi Arabia, where any non-Islamic or dissident Islamic religious expression is forbidden. Christian meetings are outlawed, and worship services held anywhere other than in the embassies of certain powerful countries will be cracked down on by the mutawa, or religious police, and their members imprisoned. Any Saudi who seeks to leave Islam faces the real prospect of death. In countries such as Mauritania, the Comoros, and Sudan, this

Christians have been denied food and water unless they convert, and children are kidnapped to be raised as Muslims.

not only is a threat from vigilantes but is part of the legal code itself.

In Sudan, a major component of the complex civil war is an effort by the Khartoum regime to impose its form of Islam on the largely Christian and animist South and on the Beja Muslims in the East. Over a million and a half are dead. Shari'a law is imposed, Christians in refugee camps have been denied food and water unless they convert, children are kidnapped to be raised as
Muslims, and there is widespread enslavement of children from the South. There are probably several tens of thousands of slaves in the Sudan. There are slave markets, and sometimes the effort is made to sell child slaves back to their parents in order to get better prices.

In other countries, such as Iran and Pakistan, the threat comes from vigilantes or mob violence with greater or lesser complicity by the government. In Iran there are strong indications that government death squads have abetted the torture and assassination of Protestant leaders in recent years.

Communal violence. Minorities in the Islamic world are often victimized not by the agents of government per se but by mob violence, often prompted by radical Islamicist leaders. This is true in Egypt, where the Coptic Church is increasingly subject to church burnings and local massacres. Such events are widespread in Nigeria, Liberia, Ghana, and the Philippines. In Pakistan this year, one Christian town, Shantinagar, was virtually razed to the ground; Ahmadiya Muslims suffer similar treatment. In Indonesia, which has long been a place of toleration between Muslims, Christians, and other minorities, there has been an epidemic of church burnings. In some cases, as in Pakistan and Indonesia, the government and major Muslim groups have sharply opposed such attacks. In others, such as Egypt, local (not national) authorities have been complicit or quiescent.

Attacks by radical Islamic terrorists. In Algeria, Islamist guerrillas opposed to the government have targeted, among others, moderate Muslims and Christians, especially priests, monks, and nuns. Bishops have been assassinated. This is also true in the Philippines, Pakistan, Turkey, and Egypt.

Communist Countries

Communism still embraces nearly a quarter of the world’s population—in China, Vietnam, North Korea, Laos, and Cuba. While the situation in Cuba has eased somewhat in the last couple of years, the situation in the other countries has worsened. In these countries there may be relative freedom to worship in the state-controlled religious bodies, but any religious expression outside these bodies is ruthlessly suppressed. In Vietnam the government continues its crackdown on Buddhists and Christians, especially among tribal peoples. In China, Tibetan Buddhists and Uighur Muslims are persecuted, and priests and bishops of the Roman Catholic Church have been imprisoned in the past year in an intensifying crackdown, while several hundred leaders of the Protestant underground church have been jailed, and many have been tortured.

The pattern in these countries is that any religious believer who refuses to submit to official control in regard to the state’s choice of religious leaders, seminarians, pastors, priests, bishops, sermon topics, religious organizations, and membership lists will suffer discrimination, harassment, persecution, perhaps including imprisonment, torture, and death.

Religious/Ethnic Nationalism

Christians, like other minority groups, suffer because of combined religious/ethnic nationalism, sometimes at the hands of the state, more commonly by communal violence. Violence and discrimination against minority religious groups is present in Mongolia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, India, Bhutan, Kampuchea, and in the central Asian republics that were formerly part of the Soviet Union, especially Uzbekistan. It is a growing phenomenon in
Myanmar (Burma); there the military regime, lacking popular support and legitimacy, is trying to wrap itself in a cloak of Buddhism as part of its war against tribal minorities, especially the Rohingya Muslims in the west and the Karen and other tribes in the eastern part of the country, where Christians constitute a large proportion of the minorities.

Persecution of Christians by Christians

This fourth category is less a distinct area of religious persecution than it is a collection of persecutions worldwide. I mention it separately, however, to emphasize the idea that persecution is not done simply by "other" religions. In Ethiopia, Protestants and Muslims have been attacked and sometimes killed by mobs urged on by local clergy of the Coptic Church. In the Mexican state of Chiapas, Protestant tribespeople have been driven off their land and killed by local renegade "Catholic" leaders. In most other cases, the phenomenon is more one of discrimination. This is an increasing pattern in Russia, where repressive religion laws also have the effect of abetting violence against religious minorities, including Jews, Protestants, Catholics, and dissident Orthodox groups.

Discrimination

Apart from outright persecution, there is also widespread, non-trivial discrimination and oppressive legal control. For example, India has "affirmative action" laws to ease the plight of the dalits, or untouchables. Dalits among Hindus, Sikhs, and Buddhists are aided by such laws, but Christian untouchables (a majority of the 28 million Christians in India) are explicitly excluded. Similarly, in Malaysia the "affirmative action" program for bumiputras (ethnic Malays) explicitly excludes non-Muslims, the majority of whom are Christians (others are Hindus, Buddhists, and minority Muslim groups). Sometimes this discrimination can border on the absurd. In Egypt, the permission of the state president is required before a church can be built or even repaired. One church, having failed to obtain such permission after a year of trying, went ahead and repaired its toilet. For this "offense" they were fined heavily, and the repaired toilet was demolished.

The categories of state persecution, communal persecution, terrorist persecution, legal control, and discrimination can shade into one another, in that countries manifesting communal violence are often ones in which there is systemic discrimination, such as in Egypt, Pakistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka, and India.

In the last five years, the persecution of Christians has taken place in approximately forty countries, and legal repression and discrimination in an additional thirty countries. Reliable estimates of the number of religious believers in various countries are hard to achieve, and in any case they are subject to wide variation depending on definition. My best estimate of the overall situation is that, in total, some 200,000,000 Christians in the world are members of persecuted groups in countries where religious persecution includes imprisonment, beatings, torture, mob violence, and death. An additional 400,000,000 live in situations of nontrivial discrimination and legal repression. And this persecution is increasing, notably in China, Vietnam, Uzbekistan, and parts of the Islamic world, especially Pakistan, Egypt, and Indonesia.

Definition of Terms

Christian

The word "Christian" can be used in a variety of ways. Most of the meanings shade into one another, but we can usefully distinguish four or five common meanings. One is what can be called "census Christians." These are people who, in answer to a question of what their religion is, would say "Christian." It says nothing at all about what they actually believe or whether they participate in any real way in the life of a Christian community; it may function as a virtual cultural term. The second can be called "member Christians." These are people who claim membership in a particular Christian church. It does not necessarily imply that they have ever actually shown up in such a church. It probably means that they want to be baptized, married, and buried by one. The third category can be called "practicing Christians." These are people who participate in the life of the church, attend worship services, and maintain the basic forms and rituals of the Christian faith. The fourth may be called "believers" or "committed believers." These are people for whom their Christian faith is a central aspect of their life and who are committed as much as possible to living out their faith and communicating it to others.

We may not always take pains to distinguish these groupings, since they can shade imperceptibly into one another, and people may be one or the other at different times in their lives. Nevertheless, we should be aware of the different meanings, especially as persecution is often different for different groups. It is usually people in the fourth category who suffer the most intense persecution and who belong to underground or "house" churches in China and other places of repression. The members of the third group are often given more lenient treatment as long as they keep quiet, but they still suffer significant disabilities. It is usually only the most rigid regimes, such as in Saudi Arabia, that make specific efforts to target the first and second groups.

It may be useful to note a fifth category, people who believe as Christians but for fear of persecution keep that belief entirely to themselves, hidden even from family and friends. David Barrett has labeled such believers "crypto-Christians." We know of such people in the history of Japan, China, India, and Saudi Arabia. Such people do not suffer direct attack, but this is simply because external threat has driven their religious life totally inward, itself an intense form of persecution.

Religious persecution

The term "religious persecution" requires careful definition. The fact that people suffer is not in and of itself a sign of persecution, since, after all, people suffer in war, famine, and the other myriad forms of human misery. Nor is the fact that believers are persecuted itself a sign of religious persecution, since Christians may be persecuted alongside and in the same way as others who do not share their faith. What I mean by
Taking Effective Action

Clearly, the U.S. government's ability to respond to these situations depends on the degree to which governments are themselves the persecutors, or else are complicit or acquiescent, and therefore responsible, in this persecution. This is most clearly the case with the Communist powers and in several Islamic countries. Given the diversity of situations, our response needs to be equally varied and proportionate.

I urge Christians everywhere, as well as governments concerned about the situation, to take the following steps in the effort to deal with persecution.

1. Apply universal standards. We must deal with religious persecution in terms of universal standards. While I have concentrated on the situation of Christians, we need to address religious persecution more generally. Guidelines for such standards exist in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the 1981 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.

2. Raise knowledge and awareness. We need to make fellow Christians, and especially foreign-policy professionals, aware of the seriousness and extent of persecution of Christians and other religious minorities. As Stephen Carter has noted, there is still a widespread tendency among U.S. elites to trivialize religion. More to the point, religion has been treated as almost irrelevant to the dynamics of societies, something that has adversely affected U.S. policy in countries as diverse as Iran, Poland, Vietnam, and the Philippines. Knowledge of religion, and especially of religious persecution, should be part of foreign-policy training within the State Department and in institutions that educate foreign affairs personnel.

3. Use appropriate sources of information. In addition to the better known human rights groups, there are many religious groups that monitor situations of persecution. Usually the best sources of news are fellow religionists because they have continual and trustful contacts. In some cases these organizations have a focus on prayer and providing support rather than news per se and so have fewer checks on their reports, but most produce highly reliable information. (A compilation of religious organizations involved in gathering information on this issue appears in Their Blood Cries Out.)

4. Appoint religious attaches. Larger U.S. embassies should have a religious attaché just as they now have cultural or economic attaches. The role of such attachés would be to maintain contact with religious groups who want such contact. In smaller embassies, other staff should have this as part of their responsibility.

5. Make public pronouncements. There should be public acknowledgment of today's widespread and mounting persecution and the adoption of policies condemning religious persecution, whether it results from official policy or from unchecked communal or terrorist activity. This acknowledgment should include a major policy address by the president or the secretary of state initiating a new public-diplomacy commitment to condemn persecution openly wherever it occurs and going beyond the current reliance on private diplomacy and case-by-case appeals to curb such persecution. Without this public step, it is unlikely that U.S. media and opinion formers will take religious persecution as an important matter in its own right.

religious persecution is persecution that stems, at least in part, from the fact that the targeted people are believers of a particular religion. A possible demarcation point of religious persecution is to ask whether, if the persons had other religious beliefs, they would they still be treated in the same way. If the answer is yes, we probably should not call it specifically religious persecution, though not for a second should we forget that it is real persecution and that it is real people who suffer it. Examples of this might be the sufferings of Quechua Christians under both the Shining Path guerrillas and the brutal Peruvian military responses, or the death of hundreds of thousands of Tutsi Christians in the genocide in Rwanda, or the murder of nuns and priests engaged in human rights work in Central America.

Use of the term “religious persecution” does not necessarily imply that the religious identity of the persecuted is the only reason for their persecution. Since religious freedom involves the freedom to live out one's religion, it is also a question of what people's faith leads them to be and to do, so that their actions rather than their identity can become the object of others’ rage. Nor does the fact of religious persecution imply that religion is the only factor involved in the persecution. There may also be ethnic tensions, territorial claims, economic advantages, and myriad other forms of human perversity involved. But it does mean that identity and religious commitment is one of the real factors.

Acts of religious persecution certainly include, as a minimum, genocide. According to the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, genocide includes "any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) killing members of the group; (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group." (For an able discussion of these meanings, see David Rieff, “An Age of Genocide," New Republic, January 29, 1996, pp. 27-36.) On occasion, I use the term “persecution” as a general expression to cover the whole range of denial of rights, including instances that are severe but are somewhat less serious than genocide.

Harassment; discrimination

By “harassment” I mean a situation where people, although perhaps not systematically imprisoned or denied the basic possibility of following their faith, nevertheless suffer from legal impediments and are interfered with by the authorities or others and face arbitrary arrest and possible physical assault. By “discrimination,” I mean a situation where people, although perhaps being guaranteed basic freedom of worship and other forms of religious freedom, nevertheless suffer consistent civil and economic disadvantage under the law for exercising such freedoms.

—Paul Marshall
6. Particular steps for government officials. Instructions should be issued to the U.S. delegate to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to regularly and forcefully raise the issue of religious persecution at all appropriate commission sessions. At U.S. embassies consular officials should be informed of the mounting evidence of religious persecution, and they should be instructed to provide diligent assistance when the victims of religious persecution seek refugee status. Human rights officers should be instructed to distinguish between the treatment of different religious groups and, especially, subgroups within countries; they should no longer assume that all groups within one religion receive similar treatment by their government. The annual reports published by the U.S. Human Rights Bureau should include explicit findings of religious persecution whenever they occur. The role of embassy human rights officers should be clarified and upgraded, particularly in countries where religious persecution is ongoing and pervasive; we should have assurance that such officers are carefully monitoring religious liberty violations on an ongoing and prioritized basis.

Nonhumanitarian assistance should be terminated to countries that fail to take vigorous action to end religious persecution. Resumption of assistance should be permitted only after a written finding is made that the countries have taken all reasonable steps to end such persecution and arrangements are made to ensure that religious persecution is not resumed. Whenever senior officials are engaged in trade or other international negotiations with officials of countries that engage in religious persecution, they should vigorously object to such religious persecution and link negotiations with the need for constructive change. The attorney general should issue an acknowledgment of mounting religious persecution, and officers of the Immigration and Naturalization Service should be directed to process the claims of escapees from such persecution with priority and diligence.

Religious Repression in Light of Historical Reality

Many persecutors try to justify their actions by claiming to defend a tradition against “foreign” or novel ideas. But even apart from the fact that this is no justification for denying human rights, such a claim ignores the nature, geography, and history of most religions. Religious beliefs spread and change. Over half of Europe was under Islamic rulers for centuries. We may have forgotten this fact, but to the grief of many, the Serbs have not, nor have the Russians. Should we claim that the retreat of Islam from Europe or Christianity from the Middle East in the last five hundred years is a historical mistake? Should we go back to the status quo of, say, the year 1400?

Changes in religion can be illustrated by Mongolia. According to tradition, Mahayana Buddhism was introduced into Mongolia over two thousand years ago by Buddhists traveling along the Silk Road. Other religions, including Manichean Christianity, Nestorian Christianity, and Islam, traveled the same route and also left their mark on the country. The present form of “Yellow Hat” Tibetan Buddhism did not arrive until the thirteenth century, when Kublai Khan, then emperor of China, named a Buddhist lama from Beijing as the head of the faith for Tibet, Mongolia, and China. Today the monasteries function in the Tibetan language, look to the Dalai Lama as a spiritual authority, and in the 1990s, have had the ambassador from India as a leading spiritual source. In short, the current leading religious forces have their seat of authority outside the country and are only the most recent of the successive religions that have had influence. This is not intended as any slight on their legitimacy; it is simply a fact about their history. Nevertheless, Mongolian governments in the 1990s have sought to prevent further changes and have given legal preeminence to Buddhism. A 1993 law asserts the “predominant position of the Buddhist religion,” forbids the “propagation of religion from outside,” and bans “religious activities alien to the religions and customs of the Mongolian people.”

We can sympathize with Buddhist attempts to defend their beliefs, and Mongolian Buddhists have every freedom to argue against newer beliefs and to seek to refute them. However, the attempt to repress other beliefs is illegitimate. First, it treats a peoples’ religious beliefs as if they had simply been dominant from time immemorial. In fact, however, many countries and regions of the world now have different beliefs from those of previous centuries, or even previous decades. Second, it ignores the fact that typically the currently predominant religion displaced a previous religion. Third, most religions in most of the world have their point of origin “outside.”

Religions are fluid, and they spread. Any attempt by repressive means to freeze present demographics flies not only in the face of justice but in the face of history and of faith itself. Religions, like political and other ideas, interact, evolve, and change. We cannot seize a point in time as representing the just religious distribution, so that attempts to change it are “intrusions.” We should treat repression of the spread of religion as we should repression of any other belief. Liberal North Americans should consider how they react when conservatives complain, for example, that the traditional Judeo-Christian basis of the country is being undercut. While they would acknowledge the right of conservatives to seek the maintenance of valued traditions, they would surely say that any conservative attempt to ban anything “untraditional,” or to imprison anybody who argues otherwise, is a violation of human rights. We should react the same way when Hindus in India, Buddhists in Nepal, Muslims in Egypt, or Copts in Ethiopia attempt to do the same.

Even claims about “outsiders,” illegitimate as they are, do not usually apply. Christianity has native adherents in almost every country and territory on the globe. There is an almost comic quality in claims that Christianity is being spread only by foreigners. This claim is made even in India, where the indigenous Christian population outnumbers all foreign workers by a factor of some 12,000 to 1.

The idea that Christian ideas are being “imposed” on people is also faintly ludicrous, since in the situations we are discussing, Christians are usually minorities, are often poor, and invariably are the victims of coercion, not its practitioners. It is also noteworthy that most of the regimes that repress “foreign religions” are those governments that repress anything that might weaken their grasp on power.
Nationalism as a Factor in Religious Persecution

In writing *Their Blood Cries Out*, I debated a long time whether to include persecution in the name of nationalism as a discrete category. I decided not to do so, since such a category would take up nearly all of the countries that I discuss. Situations of persecution often involve a government or a community claiming it is defending a nation or a traditional culture from “foreign religious influence.” This is true for countries as varied as Mexico, Egypt, India, and Vietnam. For example, the government of Egypt has treated Islam as part of its national character. Radical Hindus view Hinduism as the essence of Indian culture. Mongolians see Christianity as a threat to national traditions.

One particular problem arises with the countries of eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Many of these countries manifest a chauvinism that tries to screen out foreign influences. The governments are often simply holdovers, at least in personnel, from the old Communist days. Government functionaries, such as, for example, some of the leaders of the Bosnian Serbs, use nationalism and religion as a rallying cry to shore up their faltering legitimacy and to instill national loyalty. The Bosnian Serb example is a particularly striking case, since former Communists such as Milosovic in Serbia and Radovan Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic, who were thoroughlygoing Communist cadres, now wrap themselves in the cloak of the Orthodox Church, though without any obvious manifestation of piety. Obviously, there would be an artificial quality to categorizing persecution of religious minorities under these circumstances as “Orthodox” instances of persecution. The problem is further exacerbated when we consider Albania, which until recently combined an authoritarian post-Communist government with attempts to use nationalism and Islam in order to reject Western, Greek, and Orthodox influences. In any case, it should be understood that in the discussion of causes of persecution religious categories are intertwined with forms of reactionary nationalism.

---Paul Marshall

A Simple Matter of Human Rights

Beyond all these considerations is the fact that the people being persecuted are simply exercising their human rights as outlined in any genuine democratic constitution and as defined in international human rights law. These are fundamental human freedoms. There is no law or valid norm that forbids people from believing that their beliefs are true and from trying to share those beliefs with others. This is precisely what human rights activists, journalists, intellectuals, environmentalists, democrats, and feminists of all stripes do—committedly, persistently, and continually. This is the core of free speech, free expression, and free association.

Notes

1. A major story in the June 9, 1997, issue of *Newsweek* casts doubt on the whole matter and, using figures from the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, stated that there are only 2.4 million Christians in China. Even the Chinese government, however, gives figures five times this large for the legal church alone. A story in the *Wall Street Journal* of June 26, 1997, is headlined “China Shows New Tolerance for Religion.” Apart from A. M. Rosenthal’s columns in the *New York Times*, the prestige media neglect the issue. The developing media spin seems to be that this is a “Christian Right” issue—something that would be a surprise to Senators Arlen Specter and Joseph Lieberman.

2. While it is one of the worst human rights violators in the world, there is no indication that Iraq singles out its Christian population for treatment any worse than it inflicts on the population in general. Indeed, there have been signs that Saddam Hussein has given favorable treatment to Christian Iraqis. This does not seem to stem from any warmth toward Christianity or any desire for religious freedom but from an attempt to counterbalance and undercut the country’s Shi’ite population.

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3. For statistical information, see David B. Barrett, *World Christian Encyclopedia* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1982); see also Barrett’s “Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission,” below on pp. 24–25. Barrett distinguishes “Christians, all kinds,” “affiliated church members,” “church attenders,” and “Great Commission Christians.” These groups roughly parallel the categories I have used in this essay, namely “census Christians,” “member Christians,” “practicing Christians,” and “committed believers.” According to Barrett’s breakdown by continents of “affiliated church members,” 60 percent of Christians live in the non-Western world. If one were to speak only of the Christians in western Europe, North America, and Australasia, they would be about 25–30 percent of total “affiliated” Christians.

But we must add a further consideration. The category of “member,” or “affiliated,” Christians inflates the proportion of Christians in the West as compared with the picture produced when one focuses more precisely on “active” Christians. “Affiliated” Christians include those for whom membership is a formal matter, perhaps simply denoting baptism as a child. While there are such people in many countries, including the Middle East, Latin America, Africa, and Asia, they form a conspicuously large proportion of the European population, where the number of “active Christians” is sometimes less than 5 percent of the “member Christians.” But in the rest of the world, where being Christian can create problems, there is less likelihood that anyone who claims a Christian commitment would do so in a purely formal way. If it meant little to them, they would more likely abandon it than face discrimination. This implies that church attendance and active Christian commitment involve a higher proportion of non-Western “member Christians.” Consequently, it is likely that the Western world contains a fifth or less of the world’s “active Christians.” In any case, Christianity may be the largest religion in the non-Western world, having slightly more adherents in that part of the world than Islam, and it is far beyond Hinduism and Buddhism, the next largest categories.

4. In the *World Christian Encyclopedia* Barrett gives, for the year 1980, the figure of 605 million Christians “living under political restrictions on religious liberty” and 225 million Christians “experiencing severe state interference in religion, obstruction or harassment.” These would correspond roughly to what I have called “discrimination” and “persecution” respectively. The current numbers would be similar, reflecting both the decrease of persecution with the collapse of many Communist countries and the corresponding expansion of the church and rise of increased persecution in the rest of the world.

5. Other recognized standards include the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights, which states in Article 9, “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.” The 1969 American Convention on Human Rights says in Article 12: “[1. Everyone has the right to freedom of conscience and of religion. This includes freedom to maintain or to change one’s religion or beliefs, and freedom to profess or disseminate one’s religion or beliefs either individually or together with others, in public or in private. 2. No one shall be subject to coercive practices that might impair his freedom to maintain or to change his religion or beliefs. . . . 3. Parents or guardians, as the case might be, have the right to provide for the religious and moral education of their children or wards that is in accord with their own convictions.”


9. Ibid., p. 5.

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**William Carey, Modern Missions, and the Moravian Influence**

**David A. Schattschneider**

In his exuberant biography of William Carey, George Smith refers to Carey as “the Founder and Father of Modern Missions” and places him at the end of a list of English worthies beginning with Chaucer (the father of English verse) and just after Newton (the father of English science). Historians of the Moravians have occasionally been tempted to a similar exuberance. J. E. Hutton, in his otherwise generally reliable account of Moravian mission work, issues this introductory invitation to his readers: “Let us haste at once to the fountainhead, and follow the romantic story of the eighteenth-century pioneers.” His pioneers were largely Moravians, although he also included Carey.

The claims of fatherhood and pioneer status put forth by these early twentieth-century historians have been tempered by more recent scholars. Stephen Neill in his *History of Christianity in India, 1707–1858*, after reviewing the events of Carey’s early career, notes, “English writers have tended to exaggerate the importance of these events. This was not the beginning of modern missions, not even the beginning of Protestant missions . . . [it meant that] the immense forces of Anglo-Saxon Christianity would now be released for missionary service; this was significance enough.” As Christopher Smith has recently claimed, “A scholarly quest for the ‘historical Carey’ is long overdue. In spite of the fact that scores of biographies have been written about him, layers of popular mythology still remain to be cut through before the actual contours of his career as a pre-Victorian mission leader will be uncovered.”

The contribution of the Moravians, beginning half a century before Carey, was to produce a shift of emphasis of missionistry awareness within Protestantism. As Kenneth Scott Latourette suggests, “Here was a new phenomenon in the expansion of Christianity, an entire community, of families as well as of the
unmarried, devoted to the propagation of the faith. In its singleness of aim it resembled some of the monastic orders of earlier centuries . . . a fellowship of Christians, of laity and clergy, of men and women, marrying and rearing families . . . but with the spread of the Christian message as a major objective, not of a minority of the membership, but of the group as a whole."

The Evangelical Network

Rather than continue to debate who was first to do what, a more productive approach is one suggested by Susan O'Brien in her 1986 article "A Transatlantic Community of Saints: The Great Awakening and the First Evangelical Network, 1735–1775." According to O'Brien's analysis, participants in revivals in America, England, and Scotland were all connected with each other through the exchange of personal letters, the public reading of letters, the publishing of newspapers and magazines, and the organizing of coordinated prayer days. O'Brien's concern is that historians move beyond studies of only local or national revivals to what she terms "the history of connection, interconnection, and direct assistance between evangelicals in different countries and across generations."

The idea of an evangelical network, with its suggestion of points of contact among otherwise separate movements, is useful in "amining Carey and the Moravians. In their contacts they brought together strands of the English Evangelical Revival and German Pietism, providing points of contact between these two movements so essential to the beginnings of Protestant missions.

The life of William Carey is so well known that only the briefest summary is necessary here. Born in the village of Pauerspury, Northamptonshire, in 1761, Carey lived in England for thirty-two years and traveled little. In 1793, after a five-month voyage, he arrived in India, where he lived the remaining forty years of his life. Never returning home, he died in Serampore in 1834. Despite only a very modest formal education, Carey was driven by a thirst for knowledge throughout his life. His uncle was a gardener, and Carey developed a lifelong interest in botany. He taught himself first the classical languages, then several modern European languages. He eventually undertook Bible translations in twenty-five Indian languages and dialects and served as a professor of Indian languages for thirty years at Fort William College in Calcutta.

His first employment was as an apprentice shoemaker. But in 1779 this nominal Anglican experienced an evangelical conversion and four years later joined the Baptists. His remaining time in England was spent cobb ing, teaching school, and serving as pastor of small Baptist congregations. His first years in India, until 1800, were difficult. In addition to preaching, he worked as superintendent of an indigo factory and translated the New Testament into Bengali.

In 1800, with the arrival of additional missionaries and the establishment of mission headquarters in Serampore, the Baptist work was set upon a firm foundation. Despite some later setbacks, by the time of Carey's death the Baptist mission was well established.

Three events, all occurring just before Carey left England, are of extreme importance in his story. Thoroughly convinced of the need for foreign missionary work, and after study of what both Roman Catholics and Protestants had already done, Carey published a small book in 1792. The contents are summarized in its full title: *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens, in which the Religious State of the Different Nations of the World, the Success of Former Undertakings, and the Practicability of Further Undertakings, are Considered.* In May 1792 Carey was the preacher for a meeting of Baptist ministers at Nottingham. His sermon was a stirring challenge to accept Christ's commission to preach the Gospel to all nations. At their next meeting, in October in Kettering, the ministers responded by creating the Particular Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Heathen. It was this society that accepted Carey's offer of himself as a missionary and that sponsored him in his work in India.

Moravians in England

Although I have not yet been able to verify that Carey ever actually met a Moravian, members of this group had been active in England since the late 1720s. But their history reaches much further back than that. The Unity of the Brethren—or the Moravians, as they became popularly known— traced their origins to the religious groups that arose in fifteenth-century Bohemia and Moravia in the wake of the upheavals caused by the trial and death of the reformer John Hus. The Unity emerged as a distinct entity in 1457 and enjoyed a separate identity until the beginning of the seventeenth century, though it was heavily influenced first by the Lutheran Reformation and then by Calvinist ideas. A flourishing branch of the Unity was also established in Poland.

With the beginning of the Thirty Years' War in 1618 came repression and an underground existence for the Brethren in Bohemia and Moravia, with occasional nourishment from Lutherans in neighboring Germany. In 1722 Brethren refugees began to cross the border permanently and settle on the land of the Saxon Pietist Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf. From this point on, the story of the Moravians is perhaps better known.

Under Zinzendorf's all-inclusive leadership, the Moravians developed a strongly Christocentric pietist theology and a unique community structure to carry out their various activities. Settlement congregations were organized as self-contained, self-supporting towns that were expected to be centers of outreach. Within the settlements people lived in groups according to age, sex, and marital status in the so-called choir system. Evangelical outreach took two forms: the diaspora and foreign missions. In the diaspora, Moravian workers would organize pietistic renewal groups within existing congregations of established state churches. Foreign missionary outreach began in 1732 with the sending of two men to work among black slaves on the island of St. Thomas in the West Indies.

As we focus now on points of contact in the network of relationships between Carey and the Moravians, we may note first a similarity rather than an influence. Roman Catholic commentators, most notably Robert Francis Cardinal Bellarmine, in his controversial writings published from 1586 to 1593, had insisted that a vital missionary outreach was one sign of the true church. The Catholics had such a program, and the Protestants of the post-Reformation era did not. Without additional comment,
we simply remember that Zinzendorf, in his reactions to orthodox Lutherans, and Carey, in his debates with hyper-Calvinistic Baptists, both played a significant role in awakening this awareness within large segments of the Protestant world. This awareness was also stirred in John Wesley through his initial contacts with Moravians in a 1735 missionary venture to Georgia and his “heart-warming experience” among them in London in 1738.

Geography may also have played a role in the relationship between Carey and the Moravians. In the earlier years of the eighteenth century the Moravians had been much involved in the Evangelical Revival as it moved through England. They had established settlement congregations at Fairfield, near Manchester, at Ockbrook in Derbyshire, and at Fulneck in Yorkshire. By 1741 they had gathered a society in Nottingham and by 1769 had congregations in Northampton and preaching stations in neighboring towns including Towcester. A glance at the map will show that these were all towns in Carey’s neighborhood.

Carey’s References to Moravians

Carey’s first written mention of the Moravians occurs in his 1792 Enquiry. He begins by arguing that Christ’s command to preach to all is still valid and that only the impossibility of doing it would excuse us. But it is not impossible to do. “Have not the popish missionaries surmounted all those difficulties which we have generally thought to be insurmountable? Have not the missionaries of the Unitas Fratrum, or Moravian Brethren, encountered the scorching heat of Abyssinia, and the frozen climes of Greenland, and Labrador, their difficult languages, and savage manners?” He concludes by noting that English traders have already proved how it is possible to get around in the world.

Next comes a survey of the efforts to expand the church, beginning with Pentecost and continuing up to his own time. “But none of the moderns have equaled the Moravian Brethren in this good work; they have sent missions to Greenland, Labrador, and several of the West-Indian Islands, which have been blessed for good. They have likewise sent to Abyssinia, in Africa, but what success they have had I cannot tell.”

Section 3 is his “Survey of the Present State of the World.” There are twenty-three pages of lists, giving in parallel columns the name of the country, its length and breadth in miles, number of inhabitants, and religion. Greenland is listed, though its length and breadth are “undiscovered.” It has 7,000 inhabitants who are either “pagans” or “Moravian Christians.”

The final sections of the book attempt to dispose of the practical arguments against undertaking missions and to suggest very specific things that can be done to aid the cause. To counter the objection that one might be killed in mission service, Carey wrote, “No wonder if the imprudence of sailors should prompt them to offend the simple savage, and the offence be resented; but Elliot, Brainerd, and the Moravian missionaries have been very seldom molested.”

By 1800, eight years after Carey’s publication, the Moravians were still at work in most of the places he mentioned as well as in several other locations, with 161 missionaries in service. The mission in Abyssinia (Ethiopia), about which Carey apparently lacked the latest information, had been begun in 1752 and was abandoned in 1782.

But where did Carey get the information about the Moravians that he used? Reports of the October 1792 meeting of Baptist ministers in Kettering give evidence of another instance of Moravian influence. This group would eventually agree to form the Baptist Missionary Society, but first Carey still had some convincing to do. What he actually said has been variously reported. Hutton writes that Carey “flung down on the parlour table some numbers of a missionary magazine entitled Periodical Accounts, and . . . exclaimed: ‘See what these Moravians have done!’” S. Pearce Carey, William’s grandson and biographer, suggests a longer speech: “See . . . what Moravians are daring, and some of them British like ourselves, and many only artisan and poor! Can’t we Baptists at least attempt something in feeably to the same Lord?” (To complicate matters with regard to these reports, Mary Drewery, in her recent biography of Carey, suggests that maybe he was not at the meeting at all, since “his name does not appear among the list of subscribers to the projected Mission. If he was there,” she continues, “no doubt he would have pointed to the successful work of the Moravians in Africa and the West Indies.”)

The full title of the magazine referred to by Hutton is Periodical Accounts Relating to the Missions of the Church of the United Brethren Established Among the Heathen. It first appeared in 1790 under the editorship of the well-known British Moravian Christian Ignatius LaTrobe. It was published by the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel, a Moravian society organized in 1741. Both the society and the magazine had been started to acquaint British evangelicals with Moravian work and to solicit their financial support. The first number in volume 1 contained a twelve-page history of Moravian missions and survey of the contemporary scene as well as a statistical summary of the enterprise. Subsequent numbers printed lengthy reports, letters, diary extracts, and short news items about the expanding Moravian mission work around the world. The first volume contained eighteen parts issued from 1790 to 1796. The introduction to volume 2, which began appearing in 1797, notes with appreciation the financial contributions received from friends, including “the Baptist Society for the propagation of the Gospel.”

Mission Community After the Moravian Model

When Carey and the other missionaries (six families in all) established themselves in the Danish colonial port of Serampore in 1800, the Moravian influence was once again evident in Carey’s plan. The group was organized into an intentional community at Carey’s direction. Though each family had modest quarters, meals were taken together, everyone’s earnings were put into a common treasury, decisions were decided by majority vote, and responsibilities ranging from housekeeping duties to leading devotional exercises were rotated on a monthly basis. A weekly meeting, on Saturday evening, was held to allow any member of this extended family to air grievances that might have arisen against another during the week. This arrangement, though not eliminating all interpersonal frictions, would effectively serve the needs of the original missionary group.

The missionaries informed the Baptist Mission Society in 1800, “We have therefore on mature deliberation determined to
Not your usual summer vacation

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purchase a house. Accordingly, we have purchased a large one with nearly 2 Acres of Land for 6,000 rupees, the Hall of which is large enough for a commodious Chapel. Here with very little additional Expense, there will be Room for all our Families and from hence may the Gospel [illegible] pervade all India!” Soon afterward Carey described this arrangement to a friend in another letter. “I have also laid down a Plan for the future management of the Temporal Concerns of the Mission which I strongly recommend as the most Eligible way that I can think of and similar to that of the Moravians.”

From the beginnings of their activity the Moravians had favored communal living arrangements for their missionaries. These arrangements had been described in detail by Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg, their leader after the death of Zinzendorf in 1760. By 1788 several of Spangenberg’s German writings about the missions had appeared in English translation, including his Instructions for the Members of the Unitas Fratrum, who Minister in the Gospel Among the Heathen. Chapter 7 is entitled, “Relations of the Missionaries to Each Other—Joint Housekeeping and Trades—Household Churches—Conferences.”

Here was the description of missionary life that Carey adapted for his situation.

A final point of contact in this network was realized by Carey only after he and his friends began their work in Serampore. They were establishing themselves on the very site where there had previously been a Moravian mission. In the early decades of Moravian activity the Brethren established many mission stations, and if there was no response after a few years, the effort was closed out and the personnel assigned elsewhere. This was the practical result of Zinzendorf’s view of the Holy Spirit as the only real missionary. If there was no response, it meant the Spirit had not yet prepared the people to hear the message of the human missionaries, and so they were free to move on.

Karl Friedrich Schmidt, a preacher, and Johannes Grassman, a physician, were sent by the Moravians and arrived in Serampore in 1777. They learned the Bengali language and began a translation of the Bible. But since they had to earn their own living, they had little time for traditional missionary activities. The caste system kept them from coming into close contact with the Indians. Although under the flag of Protestant Denmark, there were very few Protestants in town, and the Moravian presence was opposed by Roman Catholic and Armenian Orthodox citizens. In 1792, after fifteen years, the Moravian mission was abandoned.

Perhaps, though, this Moravian effort was not entirely without consequence. In December 1800, Carey baptized his first Indian convert, Krishna Pal, a Hindu carpenter. Pal had first heard about Christianity from Grassman while doing carpentry work for him.

**Conclusion**

William Carey and the Moravians thus worked as part of a single network. They all labored at crucial turning points in the development of Protestant missions, and their stories qualify as great moments in missionary history. Additional points of contact include geographic proximity in both England and India, a variety of connections as revealed in documentary evidence, and, finally, the personal history of an early Indian Christian.

I leave the last word to William Carey, as expressed in a letter to a friend. “I rejoice much at the missionary spirit which has lately gone forth: surely it is a prelude to a universal spread of the Gospel! Your account of the German Moravian Brethren’s affectionate regards towards me is very pleasing. I am not much moved by what men in general say of me; yet I cannot be insensible to the regards of men eminent for godliness.”

**Notes**

7. There are many accounts of these events. A recent summary is in Neill, History of Christianity in India, pp. 186–88.
10. Ibid., p. 37.
11. Ibid., pp. 38, 41.
12. Ibid., p. 71.
18. Periodical Accounts 1, no. 1, pp. 5–16.
19. Ibid. 2, no. 1, p. v.
22. W. Carey to Stedman, May 17, 1801, BMS Archives.
26. W. Carey to Sutcliffe, January 16, 1798, BMS Archives.
Shaking the Foundations: World War I, the Western Allies, and German Protestant Missions

Richard V. Pierard

The Protestant missionary movement had flourished for two centuries when the catastrophe of World War I created the greatest crisis it had ever experienced. The German segment of the undertaking was left in shambles, and everywhere it was seen that the countries of the West did not live by the Gospel of their missionaries. Furthermore, since the missionary community provided the primary stimulus for a global Christian fellowship that crossed denominational and national boundaries, World War I also constituted a fundamental threat to the fledgling ecumenical movement.

The background can be summarized quickly. In the seventeenth century some work had taken place among the North American Indians; in addition, the Dutch East India Company and a few free-lance missionaries had engaged in minor efforts. However, serious Protestant endeavor did not begin until the eighteenth century when the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was founded in Britain in 1701 and the first German missionaries departed in 1705 for the Danish commercial enclave of Tranquebar, South India.

Over the next two centuries the undertaking steadily increased in size, and on the eve of the Great War thousands of Protestant missionaries were laboring in most parts of the world. During the course of the nineteenth century dozens of mission societies were founded in Europe and North America, many of which were interdenominational in character, while others were closely linked with or served as the missionary arm of specific denominations. Although the differences among the sending churches were great, these did not seem so significant on the mission fields, since workers pursued the common goal of communicating the Christian message to peoples who adhered to other faiths.

World War I had an enormous impact on this international Christian expansion. For one thing, the German segment of the undertaking was largely ruined. Before the war 1,417 Germans comprised 6.7 percent of the total Protestant missionary force from Europe, Britain, and North America.1 More serious than the material destruction of the German mission stations and removal of their workers was the spiritual damage to the entire Protestant missionary movement. The conflict revealed that the ultimate loyalty of those who proclaimed the Gospel was not to Christ and his church but to national states and their ideology, which became a substitute for the Christian faith. The war also shattered the postmillennial, “kingdom of God” optimism of the Anglo-American missionary leaders. Although many of them continued to foster Christian cooperation in the postwar years and laid the groundwork that resulted in the formation of the World Council of Churches, the center of gravity shifted to the conservative, pietistic, evangelical groups that pursued a more individualistic approach to mission. Since most of these missionaries who went out after the war were premillennialists, they had little interest either in promoting unity and cooperation or in extending Christian culture to all parts of the world as had their predecessors, who thereby had hoped to prepare the way for Christ’s return.

Missions and Ecumenism

The modern-day ecumenical movement originated out of the missionary enterprise. The initial step in inter-mission cooperation was the formation of the London Secretaries’ Association in 1819, which began as an informal meeting of the secretaries of the four British mission societies headquartered in London. It eventually came to involve many others and in 1912 was transformed into the Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain and Ireland. Other factors contributing to ecumenical awareness were the missionary conferences in Britain held under the auspices of the Evangelical Alliance beginning in the 1850s, meetings of Scandinavian Lutherans (the first was in 1863), the quadrennial Continental Missions Conferences that met in Bremen starting in 1866 and that inspired the creation of the Standing Committee (Ausschuss) of the German Protestant Missionary Societies in 1885, the General Dutch Missionary Conference (1887), the U. S. Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions (1886), and the Foreign Missions Conference of North America (1893).

Another important source of ecumenical awareness was the cooperative missionary conferences that occurred on the fields themselves. In India this started in the 1820s with local consultations, and by the 1850s regional conferences began to take place both in North and in South India. During the late nineteenth century similar field conferences met in Japan, China, South Africa, and Mexico. Further manifestations of the movement for cooperation in spreading the Gospel were the Centenary Conference on foreign missions in London in 1888 and the Ecumenical Missionary Conference in New York in 1900; all of these efforts culminated in the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in June 1910.

At the conclusion of the Edinburgh meeting a Continuation Committee was formed to carry forth the work that began there and to pave the way for the establishment of a permanent international missionary committee or council.2 On the various mission fields these efforts resulted in comity agreements that allocated “unoccupied” areas to the various societies and thereby reduced competition, while other cooperative ventures were launched in education, literature work, missionary journalism, and research and statistical data gathering. After Edinburgh, some Christian leaders in China, Japan, and India even began moving in the direction of organic church unity.

However, an important theoretical difference existed between the Germans and British, which caused serious missiological difficulties. Following the lead of the eminent

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missiologist Gustav Warneck (1834–1910), most Germans rejected what they saw as an uncritical linking of missionary advance with the progress of Western civilization. They also regarded the slogan of the Anglo-American student movement, “the evangelization of the world in this generation,” as romantic Schwärmerei (enthusiasm) designed to hasten the second coming of Christ, and they insisted that too much activism, individualism, and idealism prevailed in the Anglo-American approach. The German alternative was to promote a de-Westernization of Christianity and the utilization of native or folk ties to build an indigenous church. The church must not be a foreign structure of individuals removed from their environment but a Volkskirche (people’s church) that elevated all the basic social structures into the new work of the Holy Spirit. German thinkers said that a church, instead of functioning as an imported institution modeled on Western ideas, must root itself in the customs and structures of the people, and these would determine how it developed. In building a congregation, the national character and indigenous social and cultural institutions would be as important as the ministry of the Word of God and the sacraments.

The tensions were evident as early as 1888, when Warneck proposed an international missionary committee that would plan regular conferences, publish a scholarly journal, and arbitrate differences between missions, and in this way the “pious expression” of unity would be “outwardly recognizable in our practical relations with each other.” This idea, which was ignored at the time but later was more or less put into effect with the formation of the International Missionary Council, reflected very clearly his uneasiness about the direction in which Anglo-American missions were going and his feeling that they lacked contextual understanding. In fact, he refused to attend the 1900 gathering in New York but sent a paper to it criticizing the allegedly “American” interpretation of missionary work.

However, German mission leaders did play an active role in the Edinburgh conference, and Warneck’s successor as the doyen of German missiologists, Julius Richter of Berlin, was vice-chairman of its thirty-five-member Continuation Committee. Three other German-speaking mission leaders (Gottlob Hausleiter, former head of the Rhenish Mission and Warneck’s successor as professor of missiology at Halle; Paul Hennig, director of the Moravian [Hermnuit] Mission; and Friedrich Würz, director of the Basel Mission) joined him on the Continuation Committee, and an additional nine Germans were appointed to various special committees when the body met at Lake Mohonk, New York, in 1912.

**Destruction of German Mission Work**

The powder keg of Europe exploded after the assassination of the Austro-Hungarian crown prince on June 28, 1914, and the great powers were quickly sucked into the greatest military conflict hitherto seen in history. The Germans hoped that their overseas holdings would not be involved, as the Berlin Act of 1885 implied that countries holding territories in the central strip of Africa running between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans could proclaim the neutrality of these in the event of a European war. However, on August 5, the day after they entered the war, the British decided to launch military operations against the German territories. Britain’s command of the seas made the colonies a natural target, but the actions they took were allegedly to protect its seapower. The claim was that the German underwater cables and coaling stations, the cruisers that roamed the Indian Ocean, and the radiotelegraph stations in Togo and Southwest Africa menaced Britain’s possessions and naval strength. Moreover, the Australians, New Zealanders, and British South Africans maintained that the German territories were threats to their own security; in fact, they were tempting opportunities for expansion. New Zealand forces occupied Samoa on August 30, 1914, and the Australians captured New Guinea and the neighboring Melanesian islands two weeks later. The Japanese also saw the

**German missionaries—unlike Anglo-American counterparts—did not link missionary advance with the progress of Western civilization.**

possibilities for national aggrandizement. They besieged the German naval base at Kiaochow (China) in a campaign lasting ten weeks, and in October they seized the German-owned islands (Marianas, Carolines, and Marshalls) in Micronesia.

The Allied takeover of the German African possessions was more difficult. Because the British perceived German Southwest Africa (present-day Namibia) as jeopardizing their colonial hegemony in the region, they encouraged the Union of South Africa’s government to undertake military action against the colony. Although an Afrikaner rebellion delayed the Union’s military action, the colony was finally occupied in July 1915. French as well as British forces engaged in the conquest of Togo and Cameroon, the former falling with little resistance, while hostilities in the latter lasted until early 1916. The two powers tentatively partitioned the colonies, pending a final decision at the peace conference. The struggle in German East Africa was the most arduous and dramatic. The colonial militia, led by the resourceful Colonel Paul von Lettow Vorbeck, tied down a large number of British and colonial troops. Although the conquest was virtually complete by the summer of 1916, he continued a guerrilla-style hit-and-run campaign for the duration of the war. The picture was complicated by the Belgian military adventure in Rwanda and Burundi, which not only captured this distant corner of German East Africa but also endangered British control of the colony’s central portion.

As soon as the Allies subdued the colonial possessions, they began rounding up the missionaries who served under the German boards. Able-bodied men were often interned, ostensibly to ensure that they did not end up in their country’s army back in Europe, while women and children were usually repatriated. In Togo, where the North German Mission had a flourishing work among the Ewe, all their workers were expelled except Ernst Bürgi, a veteran missionary of Swiss nationality who had been on the field since 1880. In Cameroon, all the Basel Society missionaries except an Australian citizen, R. Rohde, were removed, and similar treatment was meted out to the German Baptists. However, the British occupation authorities in West Cameroon allowed Carl J. Bender, who was a U.S. citizen, to remain in charge of the Baptist mission until 1919. The Paris Evangelical Missionary Society assumed part of the Basel operation in 1917, and the American Presbyterians, who were already working in the colony, helped to fill the gap. The largest number of German missionaries were laboring in East Africa. Here six Protestant societies
were active—the Moravian, Berlin, Leipzig, Breklum (Schleswig-Holstein), Neukirchen, and Bethel—and the German Seventh-day Adventists also had a small work. The Leipzig Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society, which ministered among the Chagga people in the Kilimanjaro foothills, had a staff of twenty-nine missionaries, all of whom were soon behind British lines. Several males of military-service age were conscripted into the German militia and ended up in prisoner-of-war camps, but a few older men were allowed to continue their work until 1920, when they were sent back to Germany. Although no financial support was received from the homeland, Lutherans in the United States did send some help. The Bethel Mission’s work in Rwanda was eliminated in 1916, when Belgian forces moved into the area and the missionaries were expelled. Its other field in Usambara remained more or less operational, but many of its workers had been drafted into the German forces, and in 1917 the British interned all males under the age of forty-five. The Breklum and Neukirchen stations in Burundi were also abandoned at this time.10

In the southern highlands of German East Africa, the Lutheran Berlin Missionary Society and the Moravians had thriving educational works. When British forces occupied the region in 1916, they rounded up the missionaries and transported them to Blantyre in Nyasaland. Later, the men were separated and sent to detention camps on the coast and eventually in Egypt, and the women and children were taken to South Africa. The Berlin Mission work in Dar es Salaam and the region west of the capital Blantyre in Nyasaland. Later, the men were separated and sent to detention camps on the coast and eventually in Egypt, and the women and children were taken to South Africa.11

The situation in Southwest Africa was somewhat different. The Rhenish Mission Society was the only board working here, and after the German surrender in 1915 the South African authorities allowed most of the missionaries to resume their labors. Because the new rulers were fearful of an uprising by the indigenous Herero such as had occurred in 1903–6, it believed that the mission could help them to keep things under control. Only two senior missionaries (Olpp and Vedder), whose influence the regime apparently feared, were forced to leave and go home, but they returned in 1921.

The missions in the Pacific fared somewhat better. The Rhenish and Neuendettelsau Missions both had major works in New Guinea, and the missionaries were allowed to stay. Considerable financial support was provided by Lutherans in Australia and the United States, and church growth actually occurred during the war. The Japanese permitted the modest operations of the Liebenzell Mission in the Caroline Islands and the Berlin Mission in the Kiaochow enclave to continue.

With some exceptions, German Protestant missions in the possessions of the Allied powers were ill treated. None were allowed in any of the French territories, and Portugal expelled the four Rhenish missionaries working in Angola in 1917 but authorized the Finnish Missionary Society to take charge of their work. The Japanese did not disturb the small contingent of workers from the General Evangelical Protestant Missionary Society (the one liberal German mission, renamed East Asian Mission in 1929), while the Chinese government left the Basel, Berlin, and Rhenish stations in the south and the Liebenzell effort in Hunan Province intact until 1919 when most of the missionaries were deported.

In the Gold Coast (modern-day Ghana), the Basel Mission, through its many schools and the trading company that marketed its cocoa production, conducted the most significant Christian enterprise in the territory. For a time the colonial government was able to protect the society’s personnel from an internment order (although the small contingent of North German missionaries serving there was forced to leave) while negotiations took place to convert it into a purely Swiss enterprise. When these fell through in December 1917, London ordered the expulsion of all the Basel missionaries, but arrangements were made with the United Free Church of Scotland to carry on the endeavor. German missionaries working in the British territories of Kenya, Upper Egypt, Hong Kong, and North Borneo were also removed.

Especially noteworthy were the actions in India, the largest of all the German fields. The Gossner Mission in the Ganges region, the Breklum Mission in the Vizagapatam district, the Hermannsburg and Leipzig works in South India, and the Basel enterprise on the southwestern coast were all substantial operations. A total of over four hundred men and women were serving on 114 stations. Soon after the war began the government of India ordered the detention of all civilians (including missionaries) of German nationality. They were transported to internment camps at Ahmednagar, Bellary, and Belgaum; the men of military age were segregated from the older ones and placed in a “prisoner of war” compound, and family units were often separated. In 1916 the Golconda, a small and antiquated steamer, made two harrowing voyages to Europe repatriating women, children, and old men. Only fifty-two German-speaking missionaries who held Swiss, British, or other non-German passports were allowed to remain in India. American, Swedish, and Danish Lutherans and some British mission societies provided financial help and workers to enable some of these ministries to continue functioning.

In the Union of South Africa, where the Berlin and Hermannsburg societies had their major fields and the Moravian and Rhenish boards were also involved, the picture was more ambiguous. Although some missionaries were interned, particularly those living near the coast, and the others placed under restrictions as to movement and activities, for most of them it was business as usual. Local officials, many of whom were Afrikaners, essentially protected the German missions from extremists who wanted to eliminate them.

German missions fared best in the neutral countries. For example, in China pressure began to mount only after the country joined the ranks of the Allies in 1917. In the Dutch East Indies the German operations were undisturbed, and the Neukirchen stations in Java and the Rhenish work on the islands of Sumatra and Nias experienced substantial growth. In the Ottoman Empire, Germany’s ally, the social service enterprises—orphansages, hospitals, and schools—for a time operated unhindered, but the Armenian massacres and the advance of British forces in the Middle East eventually forced several of them to close.

**End of Ecumenical Solidarity**

The fond hope of ecumenical cooperation in spreading the Christian Gospel was shattered by the outbreak of war. Although there had been much talk about the “supranationality of missions,” that is, the idea that missionary work was the task of the entire church and was not to be linked with any specific nation or country, the Allies simply ignored this concept as they proceeded to conquer Germany’s colonies. As mentioned above, both there and in their own possessions they confiscated mission properties and interned or expelled missionaries of German or Austro-Hungarian nationality. At the same time, Christian lead-
Christian leaders on both sides of the English Channel hurled charges about responsibility for the war.

The statement spoke of a “methodical web of lies” that had been spun to place the blame for the outbreak of the war upon the German people and government and insisted that the record must be set straight. The Germans were a peaceful people who had to protect themselves from being crushed by “Asiatic barbarism,” that is, the Russian attack, which had already “violated” their neutrality. Also, Germans living abroad—women, children, the wounded, and even physicians—“were suffering unnameable horrors, cruelties, and shamelessness such as not had been seen in many a heathen and Mohammedan war.” It then denounced military actions in the German African colonies, which was “ruining thriving mission fields,” and the alliance with “heathen Japan”; expressed regret about the failure of international Christian cooperation; and rejected any responsibility on the part of Germany for the outbreak of the war.

When the Westminster Gazette published this manifesto on September 9, an outpouring of righteous indignation took place in British church and mission circles. The archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson, drafted a long reply defending his country’s position on the war; it was signed by forty-two British church leaders and theologians and published on September 23. The German group answered this on November 20 with “A Further Word to Evangelical Christians Abroad.” It rebutted the charges contained in the statement by citing British and other Allied documents that demonstrated England had taken the moves that made war inevitable. It expressed the hope that British Christians would intervene to prevent their government from continuing the war, registered indignation at the way the German troops were being labeled as “Huns and Barbarians,” and prayed “for a purified and renewed Christianity, one that will enable all to live in peace, the healing of the wounds of war, and the resumption of our task to reach all of mankind with the Gospel.”

The files of the Continuation Committee and the German mission agencies are full of letters, tracts, and articles clipped from magazines and newspapers that blamed the other side for launching the war, and the bitterness in the church circles of both camps only deepened with the passage of time. However, the secretary of the Continuation Committee, J. H. Oldham, tried desperately to keep the lines of communication open between Christians on both sides of the battlefields. He published articles and tracts that affirmed his belief in one another’s good faith and called for the cooling of passions, the maintenance of the missionary enterprise, and the recognition that God will work out his purposes in the end. He kept up a steady correspondence with Richter, Axenfeld, and others through the intermediary of Friedrich Würz of Basel, in which he regularly referred to the war as a “terrible calamity,” called for “penitence and contrition” on both sides, insisted that the “international fellowship” should remain unbroken because “we are already one in Christ,” and declared “warm affection for our friends in Germany.”

A major player in the effort to hold the ecumenical missionary effort together was the American John R. Mott, chairman of the Continuation Committee. Because Mott had so many other irons in the fire due to his leadership roles in the Young Men’s Christian Association and the World’s Student Christian Federation, Oldham actually carried most of the Continuation Committee’s work load. However, as a citizen of a neutral country, Mott was able to visit Germany on YMCA business in October 1914 and June 1916, and while there he had long and frank discussions with the missionary leaders. The Germans made it clear they were quite unhappy with him for not using his close personal relationship with President Woodrow Wilson to seek an end to the American arms sales to the Allies and for not publicly pressing the British government to stop dismantling German missions and deporting their personnel. Although the Germans sharply criticized Mott, a few of them did acknowledge that he was doing his best to hold the ecumenical enterprise together. Moreover, by late 1916 and early 1917 some people in the neutral countries and even Britain had begun to call for the restoration of the principle of the supranationality of missions.

But the United States’ entry into the war made Mott’s position virtually untenable, and he lost whatever credibility he had with the German missions leaders when he agreed to take part in a special diplomatic mission to Republican Russia in May–June 1917 at the request of President Wilson. After receiving a garbled account of a speech Mott made on the trip that was printed in a German-language newspaper in China and a copy of an address by Continuation Committee member J. N. Ogilvie in which Ogilvie called German missions “a hissing and a shame,” the German members of the international body and its subsidiary sections issued a declaration (Erklärung) on July 29, 1917, expressing their grievances. By this device they shifted the responsibility to the Continuation Committee for what had transpired and made it clear that it would have to either reestablish the principles that were necessary to maintain international community or accept the blame for the resignation of its German members.

The declaration opened by relating violations of neutrality on Mott’s part, the Ogilvie speech, and actions taken by the British against German missions. It then condemned the forced closure of the German missions as illegal and a violation of missionary respect and friendship and expressed regret that “those with whom we felt so closely bound in faith and common work could have so denied the Christian ideals on which this community rested.” The signatories said that they no longer recognized Mott as chairman and Ogilvie as a member of the Continuation Committee and would not regard statements and actions by them as binding. The declaration concluded by real-
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failing the principle that these men had “so seriously violated,” namely, “the supranationality of Christian missions and the church of Christ in general.”  

Limiting the Damage

As far as the Germans were concerned, this meant the end of the ecumenical missionary movement. Certainly the Continuation Committee had ceased to function, and from the standpoint of the missionary societies in Britain as well, it no longer existed. The executive committees of the British and American umbrella organizations (Conference of British Missionary Societies and Foreign Missions Conference of North America) agreed that a new, albeit temporary, body was needed, and on April 14, 1918, the Emergency Committee of Co-operating Missions was formed, with Mott as chair and Oldham as one of the secretaries. Two of its objectives were to consider means to provide for war-impaired missions and to assist in solving problems faced by all the societies in the transition from war to peace. It had hoped to influence the deliberations at the Paris Peace Conference, which opened in January 1919, but the decision had already been made to confiscate all foreign properties belonging to German citizens and use the proceeds from the sale of these to satisfy German debts to nationals of the Allied governments. This action would have meant the total destruction of the German missionary endeavor.  

However, not all was lost. Mott, Oldham, and others who had connections in high places worked quietly behind the scenes to persuade the delegates at Paris to add a provision protecting mission assets. The result was the inclusion of Article 438 in the Treaty of Versailles, whose key section read:

Where Christian religious missions were being maintained by German societies or persons in territory belonging to them, or of which the government is entrusted to them in accordance with the present Treaty, the property which these missions or missionary societies possessed, including that of trading societies whose profits were devoted to the support of missions, shall continue to be devoted to missionary purposes. [The Allies] will hand over such property to a board of trustees . . . composed of persons holding the faith [denomination] of the Mission whose property is involved.  

The American and British mission leaders also induced the statesmen at Paris to include guarantees for religious and missionary freedom in the regulations governing the League of Nations mandates. These actions enabled the eventual restoration of much of the German mission operations, once the passions of war had subsided.  

The story of the virtual elimination of the remaining German overseas work after the end of the war and then its resumption within a few years is a long and complicated one. Space limitations preclude anything more than the most cursory survey of what transpired. One provision of Article 438 banned missionary work by German nationals both in the former colonies, which now were placed under League of Nations “mandates” and administered by various Allied governments, and in the Allies’ own overseas territories. In the early 1920s the last workers were deported from the Tanganyika Mandate (as German East Africa was now renamed) and the Caroline Islands, and some were required to leave their posts in New Guinea and Southwest Africa, but this was only for a brief period. The properties were taken over by other societies, at least for the time being, although the Rhenish Mission holdings were not disturbed in the South-west African mandate. In Tanganyika the Scottish Livingstonia Mission managed the Moravian stations, the Anglican Universities’ Mission to Central Africa the Berlin work, the American Augustana Lutherans the Leipzig field, and the Church Missionary Society the Bethel operation. At the behest of the British government, the United Free Church of Scotland served as the trustee for the Basel enterprise in the Gold Coast and the Bremen (North German) work in the British mandate in Togo. The United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia did likewise with the Rhenish and Neuendettelsau works in New Guinea, while the Berlin Mission turned over its field in Kiaochow to the United Lutheran Church of America in 1923, and its missionaries then served under the American board. Similar arrangements were also made in India.  

Thanks to the efforts of Oldham and other missionary advocates, the British government in 1924 lifted the ban on mission work by German nationals in its possessions. The Japanese then allowed the Liebenzell workers to return to the Carolines in 1925. Although the Australians had set a time limit on how long German missionaries could stay in New Guinea, they dropped this restriction in 1926. Gradually the societies received their property back as well, and by 1933 matters had virtually returned to normal, with the exception of the French mandate in Togo and Cameroon and the Rwanda and Burundi mandates held by Belgium. In these areas the Germans were never permitted to come back. However, by now the size of the German missionary force had shrunk appreciably, and the same was true with funding.

Then with the establishment of the National Socialist regime, one that on both racial and economic grounds had no use for foreign missions, such tight controls were imposed on the use of foreign exchange that German missions once again faced a crisis. That they could survive this and the subsequent Second World War was a tribute to the fortitude of the German missionaries and the strength of the ecumenical movement, which provided a support system through its “orphaned missions” program that enabled the endeavor to resume after 1945. Now it would be in the context of partnership with the maturing churches in the former mission fields, and the result was a more dynamic indigenous church in these liberated areas than had ever existed before.

Conclusion

It is clear that the missionary endeavor was the primary influence in the development of the twentieth-century ecumenical movement. What is disturbing, however, is how fragile these ties of faith could be when subjected to the stresses of war. Although proclaiming that the Christian Gospel is an enterprise that ought to transcend every barrier of nationality, race, and class, World War I made it painfully clear that the reality was something very different. Christian leaders on both sides of the conflict allowed national passions to gain the upper hand, and they forgot how
the faith is truly global in its character and claim on humanity. The tragedy is that secular nationalism took precedence over the spiritual claim of Christ, and the mission endeavor suffered mightily because of this.

The bright side of this tragic story is that many Christians continued to uphold the ecumenical vision in spite of their own compromises with nationalism (this was the case with Oldham and Mott as well as with Richter), and thus the ecumenical ideal survived and even flourished. With the rapid growth of churches in the so-called Third World, the hope of a genuinely global Christianity seems more than ever in the realm of possibility. However, the power of secular ideologies like nationalism, materialism, and racism remains as strong as ever, and the experience of World War I should serve as a warning to Christians everywhere how easy it is to succumb to their allurements. The result of doing so will only end in disaster for all concerned, as the historical record just examined makes patently clear.

Notes
5. International Missionary Council (IMC)–Continuation Committee (CC), World Council of Churches Archives (WCC), Geneva.
The Legacy of Melvin L. Hodges

Gary B. McGee

Just a few months before Melvin Hodges died in early 1988, I chatted with him at a Christmas banquet. Knowing of his numerous publications, I lightheartedly asked him if he enjoyed writing. To my surprise, he responded, "I don't like to write, but someone had to do it!" Whatever exaggeration he may have intended, the statement reflected the bedrock of commitment that underlay his long service as a missionary.

In fact, Hodges represents the quintessential missionary of earlier Pentecostal missions: someone who lacked formal missiological training yet was obedient to the divine call and quick to adapt as a learner when needs arose—"Someone had to do it!" Accordingly, his life and ministry depicted several paradoxes. Having never earned a high school diploma, he contributed to the training of thousands of missionaries and tens of thousands of Third World pastors and evangelists. While fundamentalists and evangelicals winced over the worldwide expansion of Pentecostalism, Hodges won the admiration and friendship of key missiologists; Pentecostal church growth could not be ignored. Although having served in Latin America long before Vatican II and the Catholic charismatic renewal, he recognized the credibility of the latter, dialogued with Catholics, and became one of the first Pentecostal missiologists to discuss the thorny issue of proselytizing. A self-effacing and humble person, he became the foremost authority and exponent of Pentecostal missiology.

Early Years

Melvin Lyle Hodges was born to Charles Edgar and Emma Anna (Peshak) Hodges at Lynden, Washington, on July 8, 1909. Charles had graduated from Upper Iowa University and Boston University School of Theology before serving Methodist parishes in Iowa.1 Broken by declining health, Charles was advised to move West by his doctors, who hoped that a change in climate would improve his condition. While in Denver, Colorado, in late 1906, he attended services led by Thomas Hezmalhalch, a Pentecostal evangelist recently baptized in the Holy Spirit at the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles. Healed after a prayer by Hezmalhalch on his behalf, Charles resigned his Methodist credentials and began to pioneer Pentecostal churches in Washington State.2 Like other Pentecostals who denounced "denominationalism," Charles and Emma preferred the leading of the Spirit to the directives of an ecclesiastical hierarchy. They also believed in the "faith principle": confidence that in response to prayer, God would supply their spiritual, physical, and financial needs. Thus, expectant faith distinguished the home environment and influenced Melvin's spiritual formation.3

Converted as a child, Hodges testified to Spirit baptism at age ten with the evidence of speaking in tongues. After the family relocated in Colorado Springs, Colorado, he attended high school and business school and for a brief time worked as an apprentice at a Denver law firm. With God's call to ministry, however, his plans for the future changed. At seventeen, he journeyed to nearby Greeley to spend a week playing his trombone and preaching on street corners to anyone who would listen. Soon his burden for leading people to Christ and going to places where no Pentecostal had ministered or started a church guided his initiatives. In 1928 he married Lois Myrtle Crews. Born in Eldon, Missouri, she had been reared in New Mexico and Colorado, where she attended high school and later worked as a telephone operator. Three children were born to their union: Miriam, Phyllis, and Gilbert.

Receiving ordination from the Rocky Mountain District Council of the Assemblies of God in 1929, Hodges served a succession of pastorate, along with responsibilities as district youth director and presbyter.4 Even though his father had gone to seminary, Hodges did not receive a formal theological education, perhaps because of limited resources, but also possibly because of fervent expectancy of Christ's return. Fortunately, he benefited from his father's instruction in Scripture and doctrine and in New Testament Greek. Premillennial eschatology left little time for preparation in the "last days." In part, this explains why Pentecostals valued the call to ministry, Spirit baptism, and personal Bible study above the academic study of theology, even considering the latter a threat to spiritual zeal.

Early in his ministry, Hodges became interested in Latin America, spending hours in prayer over possible missionary service. On one occasion, he accepted an invitation to hold evangelistic meetings in Alamosa, Colorado. While there, he met José Giron, a Hispanic Presbyterian-turned-Pentecostal, with whom he enjoyed lengthy conversations and Bible study. In the evening services, Giron led by preaching for half an hour in Spanish; Hodges followed with another thirty minutes in English so that both language groups in attendance would be served. Latin America held center stage in his thoughts and prayers.5

Finally, inspired by the example of Gideon who sought the Lord's will before going into battle (Judg. 6:36-40), he laid a "fleece" before the Lord. In a letter to Henry B. Garlock, a former Colorado pastor then serving in the Gold Coast (present-day Ghana), Hodges told of his interest in missions, and prayed, "Lord, if you want me to go to the mission field, have Brother Garlock say something about this to me in his reply."6 To his dismay, Garlock did not mention the subject. Two years later, Hodges received another letter from him, and one from another missionary to Africa; both urged him to consider missionary appointment. Because this development raised his hopes, he now faced the dilemma of where the Lord wanted him to go, Latin America or Africa? He applied for the Gold Coast.

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Having never earned a high school diploma, Hodges contributed to the training of thousands of missionaries, pastors, and evangelists.
In 1935 Noel Perkin, missionary secretary of the Assemblies of God and himself a former missionary to Argentina, visited Hodges at Fort Morgan, where he pastored at the time, an event that initiated a long and close friendship. Perkin emphasized the need for missionaries in Latin America, sharing with him what others at the Foreign Missions Department must have felt: “Everyone feels good about your being a missionary, but not about your going to Africa.” This confirmed his long-standing interest, and Hodges soon gained appointment for service in Central America.

Theory and Practice

In preparing for their departure, the Hodges family spent several months learning Spanish in San Antonio, Texas, an important center for Assemblies of God mission work among Hispanics, directed by Henry C. Ball. On April 5, 1936, their vessel was nearly shipwrecked as it neared the harbor of Acajutla, El Salvador. Despite this perilous incident, he wrote that “once again in this experience, we have witnessed the truth of the scripture ‘that all things work together for good to those that love the Lord.’” As it turned out, the immigration officers waived the landing fees and duty charges, thus saving these financially pressed missionaries a considerable sum of money.

The formation of his missiology included two influential sources, one inherent to Pentecostalism and the other to publications calling for the establishment of indigenous churches on mission fields. In regard to the first, certainty that New Testament Christianity had been restored with apostolic power for evangelism led Pentecostals to scrutinize church expansion in the Book of Acts. Indeed, they closely identified themselves with first-century Christians, who anticipated Christ’s return; missions in the end times required Spirit-filled believers and congregations capable of aggressive evangelism.

The second influence was Roland Allen’s books Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours? (1912) and The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church and the Causes Which Hinder It (1927), which had an impact on a small cadre of Assemblies of God missionaries (including Perkin). Allen had served as a Church of England missionary to North China with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. His expositions on the Pauline pattern in missions appeared to accord well with Pentecostal interpretations of the Book of Acts, perspectives referred to by many as indigenous church principles or the “three selfs”: the notion that mission churches should be self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating.

This group of missionaries, however, did not accept Allen’s views uncritically, rejecting his sacramentalism and allegiance to episcopal church polity. Allen’s accent on the work of the Spirit in mission also fell short of their radical vision of gospel proclamation accompanied by miraculous signs and wonders (Matt. 10:7–8; Acts 5:12), a spiritual dynamic they recognized as the key to successful evangelism in the non-Western world. Nevertheless, it is a twist of history (or perhaps a blessing of the Spirit) that Pentecostals were among Allen’s best students. Neither Anglicans nor Pentecostals could have envisioned a more unlikely scenario—an Anglo-Catholic impacting the Pentecostal mission enterprise, helping it become one of the twentieth century’s most vibrant missionary movements.

Another Anglican, Alice E. Luce, also influenced Pentecostal missions through her advocacy of Allen’s teachings. She had read Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours? while still an Anglican missionary (Church Missionary Society) in India but, like others, dismissed Allen’s opinions as “visionary and unpractical.” Entering the Pentecostal movement, she moved to the United States and received missionary ordination in 1915 from the Assemblies of God. By this time, she saw the value of Allen’s views and used them to shape the denomination’s mission statement adopted six years later; thus, she became the first missiologist of stature in the Assemblies of God. Aware of Allen’s belief that miracles had ended with the early church (a sentiment shared by the vast majority of Protestant missionaries), she asked rhetorically, “When we go forth to preach the Full Gospel [salvation, Spirit baptism, healing, second coming of Christ], are we going to expect an experience like that of the denominational missionaries, or shall we look for the signs to follow?”

During Perkin’s Colorado visit in 1935, he strongly encouraged Hodges to read Allen’s books, a recommendation he was making to all the missionaries. The influence of Luce, already apparent in Perkin, continued during Hodges’s stay with Ball in San Antonio and, more important, with his appointment to work with Ralph D. Williams, a missionary in Central America and a former understudy of Luce. This afforded Hodges an opportunity to learn firsthand within a context already being fashioned by Allen’s teachings; in time, El Salvador became a showcase of effective church planting. After ten months there, Hodges and his family moved to Matagalpa, Nicaragua, and traveled extensively to survey the churches, often living in primitive conditions. Convinced that training would equip national ministers to reach their own people, Hodges founded a Bible institute in Matagalpa that required students to combine their studies with evangelism and church planting. Nicaragua proved to be a difficult field, but with patience, Hodges helped some existing churches to move toward a more indigenous footing, happily reporting in 1942 that “the native brethren have decided to withdraw financial help from five of the more established assemblies in order to open new fields.”

Before long, Hodges encountered the hostility of the Roman Catholic Church, a predicament shared by other evangelical missionaries in Latin America. Ranking Catholics with the heathen, he insisted in an article entitled “Religion Without Light” that “no people . . . walk in deeper darkness than these very ones who seem to proclaim the Christ . . . there is no religion in the world more adept at ‘changing the truth of God into a lie’ than Romanism.” Although he gave no quarter to Catholic Christianity, it is significant that Pentecostalism has witnessed its most dramatic growth within this cultural milieu, a theological and spiritual backdrop that deserves further scrutiny.

Hodges’s penchant for writing became evident after arriving in Central America. A steady stream of letters and reports flowed from his pen to church publications, and in 1937 he began editing Nicaraguan News Notes, the Assembly of God mission bulletin. A lucid writer using simple grammar, he wrote in English and Spanish to the common person. In his spare time, he occasionally composed poetry and lyrics for gospel songs.

Pentecostalism has witnessed its most dramatic growth within the milieu of popular Catholicism.
Familiarity with Allen’s missiology, association with Williams, and his own mission experiences and writing skills soon projected him into an important leadership role in Assemblies of God missions.

At the close of their second term in 1944, Melvin and Lois returned to the United States, physically exhausted and needing recuperation. Having accepted an invitation to the denominational headquarters in Springfield, Missouri, Hodges worked for five years as editor of missionary publications, including Missionary Challenge, the quarterly magazine of the Foreign Missions Department. His most strategic opportunity, however, arose in 1948, when he became founding editor of Missionary Forum, an in-house journal for missionaries. This position became in effect a “bully pulpit,” affording him the chance to speak forthrightly on matters of concern. In the inaugural issue, he published “As Others See Us,” excerpts from a letter written by an Indian churchman who queried, “Are we right in concluding that the same age-old idea which makes the missionary the supreme dictator over a work for which he happens to find the money is also held by the Assemblies of God missionaries?” Furthermore, “The entire mission system is based on this unscriptural ground which has produced a set of spoon-fed workers ... spiritually and financially crippled.” Designed to startle his readership awake to the changes needed for the times, he printed the article with Perkin’s blessing. In this and other publications, Hodges came down firmly on the side of the developing churches, leading the charge against the old colonial approach to mission.

In 1951 the Foreign Missions Department invited Hodges to address a special gathering of missionaries. The ensuing lectures formed the basis for his best-known book, The Indigenous Church, first printed in 1953 by Gospel Publishing House (the publishing arm of the Assemblies of God). Shortly afterward, it attracted the attention of Moody Press, which gained permission to print it as part of its Colportage Library, albeit with a crucial abridgement. In the chapter “Pentecost and Indigenous Methods,” the editors removed the following statement, among others, thereby de-emphasizing the charismata, which Hodges and his colleagues knew to be indispensable for New Testament evangelism:

On the mission field, the emphasis which Pentecostal people place on the necessity of each individual believer receiving a personal infilling of the Holy Spirit has produced believers and workers of unusual zeal and power. Again, the emphasis on the present-day working of miracles and the healing of the sick has been the means in the hand of God of awakening whole communities and convincing unbelievers of the power of God. These have seen a Power at work superior to that of their own witch doctors and priests. The faith which Pentecostal people have in the ability of the Holy Spirit to give spiritual gifts and supernatural abilities to the common people, even to those who might be termed “ignorant and unlearned,” has raised up a host of lay preachers and leaders of unusual spiritual ability—not unlike the rugged fishermen who first followed the Lord.

Hodges came down firmly on the side of the developing churches, leading the charge against the old colonial approach to mission.

Noteworthy

Personalia

Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, England, has appointed Michael Taylor as president effective January 1, 1998. Since 1985 Taylor has been Director of Christian Aid, and prior to that he was for fifteen years the principal of the Northern Baptist College in Manchester. He is a graduate of the University of Manchester and Union Theological Seminary, New York.

The United Bible Societies (UBS) has elected Fergus Macdonald as general secretary, effective May 1, 1998. He will succeed John D. Erickson on his retirement as general secretary. Macdonald has been general secretary of the National Bible Society of Scotland since 1981. In 1995 the UBS worldwide fellowship of 135 national Bible societies distributed more than 29 million Bibles and New Testaments, and 535 million Scripture portions and selections in some 600 languages around the world.

Two Asians have left the staff of the World Council of Churches for teaching positions in the United States. Wesley Ariarajah from Sri Lanka left his position as deputy general secretary of the WCC and is now professor of ecumenics at Drew University Theological School in Madison, New Jersey. Christopher Durasisingh from India, who was director of Gospel and Culture studies for the WCC, is now professor of applied theology at Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Marian McClure is the new director of Worldwide Ministries Division for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). She earned an M.Div. from Louisville Presbyterian Seminary and a Ph.D. in political science from Harvard University. As a student she spent time in Haiti studying the relationship between rural Haitians and the Catholic Church. She worked as a Ford Foundation program officer in Mexico City from 1985 to 1990. In 1996 she became the Coordinator for Global Education and International Leadership Development of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Announcing

The annual meeting of the American Society of Missiology will be held June 19–21, 1998, at Techny (near Chicago), Illinois. The theme is “Tools of the Trade: Missiological Reference for Church, Academy, and Missionary.” Andrew F. Walls will give the keynote address. Jonathan J. Bonk of the Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, is the ASM president. The Association of Professors of Mission will meet June 18–19 at the same place in conjunction with the ASM. The theme of their meeting is “Methods of Practical Education for Holistic Mission.” Roger Schroeder, S.V.D., of the Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, is president of the APM. For further information and registration for both meetings, contact Darrell L. Guder, Columbia Theological Seminary, P. O. Box 520, Decatur, Georgia 30031–0520 (Fax: 404–377–9696).
A clearer demarcation between Pentecostal and evangelical missiology could not have been drawn at the time. Notwithstanding this deletion, the Moody edition reflects the consensus of doctrine and missiology common to evangelicals and Pentecostals. Consequently, Hodges shared with both communities insights on how to encourage the growth of strong indigenous churches.

After a third term in Central America, Hodges returned to Springfield in 1954 with appointment as field secretary for Latin America and the West Indies, a task requiring oversight of nearly two hundred missionaries; strategic planning; the development of specialized ministries in radio, literature, and ministerial training; and the fostering of relationships with national mission churches. Significantly, his tenure began at a time when regressive forces were at work to return mission endeavors to a paternalistic mode. Hodges's far-sighted attention to mission education and the application of indigenous church principles, a burden shared by Perkin, J. Philip Hogan (Perkin's successor), and other mission leaders, required considerable patience, since it constrained missionaries to become partners in mission with national church leaders. The rewards, however, became readily apparent.

During Hodges's years as field secretary, the rapid growth of Pentecostalism in the non-Western world, and the missions program of the Assemblies of God in particular, stirred the interest of church growth specialists, including Donald A. McGavran, George W. Peters, and Robert Calvin Guy. Recognizing Pentecostal advances in missions, McGavran invited Hodges to contribute several chapters, along with Guy, Eugene A. Nida, and himself, to Church Growth and Christian Mission (1965). A year later, Hodges presented a principal study paper (“Mission—and Church Growth”) at the Congress on the Church's Worldwide Mission at Wheaton College (Ill.). In 1969 he addressed the Latin American Congress on Evangelization at Bogotá, Colombia. One of the first Pentecostals to publish on missiology outside of denominational publications and to speak before major evangelical audiences, his public became worldwide.

At sixty-four years of age and after twenty years' service as field secretary, Hodges retired from office in 1973 to take on a new responsibility—professor of missions at the Assemblies of God Graduate School of Theology and Missions. Hodges expressed the hope that Hodges would have more time for writing and teaching. He had laid down “his briefcase, his passport, and his dictaphone” to teach “a fledgling army of new missionaries.” Hodges retained this post until 1985, three years before his death.

**Church and Mission**

During these professorial years, Hodges completed his most ambitious writing project, *A Theology of the Church and Its Mission* (1977). Though the byline reads “A Pentecostal Perspective,” the reader quickly detects the underlying fundamentalist/conservative evangelical orientation. In the first chapter, the author upholds biblical authority, then follows with other chapters on redemption, ecclesiology, mission, and social action. Mission is central to God's redemptive purpose, the kingdom of God is “now, and not yet,” universalism is condemned, and ministries of proclamation must be preeminent in mission. A synthesis of Pentecostal spirituality within an evangelical framework, the book epitomizes the achievement of postwar Pentecostal missiology. In regard to the doctrine of the church, Hodges reflects the unique paradox of Pentecostal ecclesiology in relation to mission: identification with evangelicals but also fellowship in the Spirit across conciliar and doctrinal barriers. Faithful to the three selves, he focused on the nature and self-reliance of national churches and Spirit-filled leaders as the means for world evangelism. Not surprisingly, Assemblies of God mission churches have become national denominations and for the most part have retained the loyalty of their constituents. In turn, they have chosen to limit contacts with the wider church largely to other Pentecostals and conservative evangelicals.

Pentecostals, however, have also gravitated to where they see the Spirit glorifying Christ. Quite unexpectedly, Hodges’s generation of Pentecostals, basking in newfound respectability through membership in the National Association of Evangelicals (1942), was shocked when charismatic renewal emerged in the historic Protestant churches and the Roman Catholic Church in the 1960s and 1970s. While North American Pentecostals have generally affirmed the renewal, those in countries with Roman Catholic majorities have unfortunately refused to consider the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as an ecumenical grace among all the churches.

It is noteworthy that Hodges recognized winds of change in the Catholic Church as a result of Vatican II and the growth of the Catholic charismatic renewal. Though stoutly contesting particular Catholic doctrines and popular devotions, he suggested that Pentecostals “should extend whatever spiritual help we can to people that are so involved, encourage them in their progress in the kingdom of God, and trust the Holy Spirit to guide them in their decision about church affiliation.” This advice arose from his belief that at the root of Pentecostal spirituality lay an ecumenicity of the Spirit, a position viewed with alarm by certain evangelicals and Pentecostals.

If Hodges looked beyond the traditional ecclesiastical boundaries by affirming the renewal, he remained solidly in agreement with evangelical criticisms of liberation theology and social action. Charitable ministries, with their unending pleas for contributions, could drain needed funds from evangelistic efforts. Wary of the shift of emphasis in some mission circles from individual conversions to social action, he appealed to relevant pronouncements made by theological conservatives (e.g., Wheaton Declaration, Lausanne Covenant) that upheld the priority of proclamation, demonstrating Pentecostals’ vital dependence on evangelical scholarship when faced with critical issues in mission. The bond has been a marriage of conviction and convenience. One notable result, however, given traditional conservative reactions to the Social Gospel, intense expectation of Christ’s return, and growing inculturation, has been the curious lack of “prophetic witness” among many Pentecostals toward systemic evils within their societies, despite their insights into “spiritual warfare.” Nevertheless, younger missiologists have steadily advanced toward a holistic and distinctly Pentecostal theology of mission.

While lacking academic credentials that missiologists take for granted today, Melvin Hodges refused to sit on the sidelines when God’s call came and needs surfaced on the mission fields. A dedicated learner, he used the tools at his disposal well and taught countless students, missionaries, and pastors how a local congregation could become self-sufficient and a beachhead for evangelism in the power of the Holy Spirit. Through his expositions on church and mission, he opened the door in Pentecostal missiology for the examination of issues related to evangelism and unity at a time when charismatic renewal swept across
confessional and councilial lines. And like other missionaries past and present, the young street-preacher with trombone and Bible in hand poured his life’s energy into obeying the Great Commission—because God wanted “someone to do it.”

Notes

1. Information on Charles Edgar Hodges is found in the obituary of his first wife, “Helen Ordway Hodges,” Minutes of the Forty-Fifth Session of the Upper Iowa Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church Held at Osage, Iowa, October 3–8, 1900, ed. Samuel W. Heald (Mount Vernon, Iowa: E. W. Jeffries, Publisher, 1900), pp. 90–91; see also Mabel Cerney, comp., Our Family History (1954); this and letters listed in the references below are catalogued in the Melvin L. Hodges Papers, Assemblies of God Archives, Springfield, Mo.


4. For his early ministry, see Melvin L. Hodges to H. W. Thiemann, September 19, 1972.

5. Lois M. Hodges to Gary B. McGee, n.d.


8. H. C. Ball and A. E. Luce, Glimpses of Our Latin-American Work in the United States and Mexico (Springfield, Mo.: Foreign Missions Department, General Council of the Assemblies of God, 1940).


10. Assemblies of God missionaries have not been alone among Pentecostals in advocating indigenous church principles. For what appears to be the first published Pentecostal theology of mission, see David Landin, Vår yttre mission (Our foreign missions: A biblical guideline) (Stockholm: Forlaget Filadelfia, 1937).


12. Interest and exposition of indigenous church principles predated Allen; e.g., see Rufus Anderson, Foreign Missions: Their Relations and Claims (New York: Charles Scribner, 1869).


23. McGee, This Gospel, 1:200–201, 244 n. 27.


Selected Bibliography

Works by Melvin Hodges


The papers of Melvin L. Hodges are housed at the Assemblies of God Archives, Springfield, Mo. A bibliography of his books and articles is available through this agency.
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The table opposite is the fourteenth in an annual series describing statistics and trends in world mission. Since 1985, these summary reports have been designed to provide a global snapshot of the position at five key midyear points across a century or more. Because each incorporates the latest and newest discoveries—new censuses, new polls, new reports, new findings, new concepts, and also the mass of new bibliography available—these annual reports are not intended to be seen as a consecutive or consistent series. Each report replaces the previous year's report and provides a new and often modified picture of trends across the twentieth century and beyond. The present commentary will now provide some illustration of this.

Building on the secular background (lines 1, 9, 10)

The first ten lines of the table are secular variables, each of which is essential for understanding the context of the later Christian variables. The trends reported here vary somewhat from last year's because the United Nations Population Division has incorporated them in its latest World Population Prospects: The 1996 Revision. Very significant slowing-down in annual population increase is taking place, largely as the result of unanticipated success in programs of family planning across the globe. So the A.D. 2000 population of the world is now projected to be slightly lower than hitherto expected (line 1). But the major urban trends, disturbing to Christians, remain those shown in lines 9–10: urban poor and urban slum dwellers continue to mount in numbers catastrophically year by year. Slum dwellers alone are mushrooming at a current rate of 89,000,000 each year. This single fact alone is now galvanizing Christians and their mission agencies, illustrating once more Roger Schutz's famous dictum “Statistics are signs from God.”

The proliferation of tribal religionists (line 18)

The most startling new figure in the present table occurs in line 18. It refers to this decade’s volcanic eruption in the number of tribal religionists almost everywhere across the developing world. In 1990 the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh quoted as the universal opinion of missionaries and theologians of that day on the subject of tribal religionists: “Most of these peoples will have lost their ancient faiths within a generation, and will accept that culture-religion with which they first come into contact.” Our annual report up to last year recorded how wrong that prognosis has proved and showed tribal religions (animists, polytheists, shamanists) maintaining their total of 100 million throughout the entire twentieth century. This year comes a startling new discovery: analysis of these new censuses results in a global total of 244 million tribal religionists today, located among 5,600 distinct ethnic peoples.

The explanation for this phenomenal new megatrend is simple. It is now one generation since the majority of the former colonies of European countries won their independence. It is also nearly one decade after the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and the USSR. What has now happened in country after country and state after state is that millions of peoples who were previously classified as adherents of their countries’ majority religions or antireligions—chiefly Hinduism and Islam, as well as Marxist atheism—have thrown off these labels and are asserting that instead they are followers of their own traditional local religions. Bearing in mind that the United Nations’ 1946 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that every person’s religion is precisely what he or she states it is, and that no one else has the right to deny this assertion, we must respect this new development.

It thus appears that in the last decade the total number of local tribal religionists in the world has risen to 240 percent of what it was in A.D. 1900. What is the significance of this massive religious shift?

Some readers may see this as a new and formidable anti-Christian force arising just at the moment when they were savoring the collapse of Communist state atheism. Others, however, will see immediately that in actual fact, far from being a threat, this is actually a highly significant opportunity for global Christianity and its world mission. As former Hindus or Muslims, the ethnic peoples involved were difficult or even impossible to reach and evangelize. The history of missions has long demonstrated that local religions, whether animists or fetishists or pagans or shamanists, have always been far more responsive to the Gospel than the resistant great world religions. This means that in this huge new bloc of tribal religionists, Christ’s world mission now has one of its greatest opportunities. Mission agencies that launch into this new arena and invest personnel and energy sharing the Good News with any of the 5,600 peoples involved will find an open door. But let us be warned: this new door may itself remain open for only the next five or ten years.

Notes

Methodological Notes on Table (referring to numbered lines on opposite page). Indented categories form part of, and are included in, unindented categories above them. Definitions of categories are as given and explained in World Christian Encyclopedia (WCE, 1982) with additional data and explanations as below. The analytical trichotomy of Worlds A, B, C is expounded in a handbook of global statistics, Our Globe and How to Reach It: Seeing the World Evangelized by A.D. 2000 and Beyond, ed. D. B. Barrett and T. M. Johnson (Birmingham, Ala.: New Hope, 1990). The global diagram series found in Our Globe is continued in a further series of global diagrams in the monthly A.D. 2000 Global Monitor.


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

21. Total of all non-Christians (sum of rows 12-20 above, plus adherents of other minor religions). This is also the same as World A (the unevangelized) plus World B (evangelized non-Christians).


27. World totals of current long-term trend for all confessions. (See Our Globe and How to Reach It, Global Diagram 5). The 1998 figure reflects the collapse of Communism but also the expansion of terrorism.


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

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

67–68. These measures are defined, derived, and analyzed in "Quantifying the Global Distribution of Evangelism and Evangelization," IFJM 9, no. 2 (April 1992): 71–76, 69–70. Defined as in WCE, parts 3, 5, 6, and 9.

91. Grand total of all distinct plans and proposals for accomplishing world evangelization made by Christians since A.D. 30. (See Seven Hundred Plans to Evangelize the World: The Rise of a Global Evangelization Movement, [Birmingham, Ala.: New Hope, 1988].)

26 INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH
The Legacy of George Brown

Charles W. Forman

The legacies of George Brown are not hard to find: three major Pacific Island churches that he initiated and a fourth that he restored; thousands of people still gathering every year to celebrate George Brown Day; an important school and a college bearing his name in Papua New Guinea; one of the best schools in Samoa, also bearing his name—these among other things give testimony to a lively inheritance from this missionary of a century ago. What kind of man was he, and what did he do to merit such continuing recognition?

George Brown was in many ways the prototype of the pioneer missionary of the past century—adventurous, resourceful, imaginative, willing to suffer yet never complain, buoyant, and friendly. He attracted the enthusiasm of the confident and hopeful society in which he moved; he provided a focus for the general confidence and hopefulness of the time. He also epitomized the expansive Methodism of that era and was by far the most outstanding Methodist in Oceania during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

An Unpromising Beginning

Oddly, he did not start out as a Methodist at all, nor did he ever share the intense emotional experience of conversion that characterized the early Methodists. Born in Barnard Castle in Durham County in England in 1835, he started out as an adventurer pure and simple with no religious interests. Rebell ing against a disciplinarian stepmother, he left home, got involved in a smuggling operation, and then went off to sea, working as a shiphand on voyages to Canada and New Zealand. The seafaring experience stood him in good stead in his later work as a missionary in the Pacific Islands.

The great turning point in his life came when he stayed for a time in New Zealand with his aunt and her husband, who were Methodist missionaries. Here he saw a new kind of family life and began to feel that there was a better existence available to him than what he had hitherto known. He began to attend church and gradually became more and more involved in church life. There was not a particular time of emotional conversion, but new thoughts and new purposes were flooding in. At one point he realized his acceptance by God through faith in Christ and decided to follow Christ’s will. Frequent contact with a minister who was retired from the Fiji mission led him to offer himself for missionary service. He married S. L. Wallis, the daughter of a missionary in New Zealand, and in 1860 was accepted by the Methodist Church and sent out to Samoa.

As a missionary, he engaged in no heavy theological thought. His was a practical, day-to-day faith. He was prepared to follow Christ’s will wherever it would lead, and he had a strong trust in God. When starting on one of his most difficult ventures, he wrote typically, “May God grant us His blessing day by day and guide us in all things.” He maintained a steady devotional life within his household along with openness to all beyond the household who might wish to join in. As he had little of the original Methodist emotionalism in religion, so he avoided the later Methodist perfectionism in religion, which could lead to emphasizing restrictiveness in living. That kind of religion did not fit with his vigorous affirmation of life.

A recent sociological analysis has pointed out Brown’s “basic sense of making history,” as well as his “sense of the portentous” and of “precipitating events.” Approaching an unknown, possibly hostile shore, he wrote, “What is before us? How long before these lands received the Gospel? . . . It may be that a soldier’s grave awaits some of us here. Be it so, the victor’s crown will follow.” This sense of making history provided a revolutionary outlook for the people he worked among.

Establishing the Church in Samoa

The Samoa he entered in 1860 called for all the strength and hope that he possessed. The Methodist Church, begun by Tongans in 1828, had been provided with a European missionary for four years, from 1835 to 1839, but then the mission had been withdrawn in order to avoid competition with the larger London Missionary Society (LMS) work. In 1857 the Australian Methodists reversed this decision and decided to reenter the Samoan field, restoring contact with the confused and leaderless handful of remaining Methodists.

George Brown was not the first foreign Methodist to reenter. That distinction belongs to Martin Dyson, whose first desire was to lead the Methodists to join the LMS. When that desire was thwarted by the local people and by his superior from Australia, Dyson changed his view and worked with a steady hand to reconstruct the abandoned church. Dyson stayed only eight years. In the meantime, in 1860, George Brown arrived, first to help him and then to take over leadership from him. Brown, though he had misgivings about the reentry, had no hesitation about working for Methodist restoration once the reentry was made. To Brown must be given the major credit for building up a Methodist Church that became, in proportion to its size, probably the strongest and most active church in the Pacific Islands. This was his first great legacy.

The achievement can be credited to a variety of factors. First of all, Brown loved the Samoan people and admired their culture. He later wrote, “I have always considered the Samoans to be amongst the nicest and most lovable people with whom I have ever lived.” He studied their culture in great detail. He saw that with knowledge of the culture went knowledge of the language. He had natural linguistic ability, and from the first he immersed himself in the language, preaching his first sermon after only eight weeks in the country. He kept on studying, working with poets and men of high culture to expand his layman’s vocabulary and knowledge of folklore. He wrote 130 hymns, which today make up one-third of the contents of the Methodist hymnbook. His resoluteness and bravery also won him wide influence. He was stationed on the large island of Savai’i, notorious for its dangerous coasts and more treacherous than any Brown had

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seen in his years of sailing. But he regularly sailed from village
to village, negotiating the few and narrow channels through the
reefs. The Samoans were great sailors, and they admired his
courage and ability. His bravery was also shown in the frequent
warfare of the time, when he exposed himself to attacks in order
to prevent battles and the slaughter of noncombatants. Thus he
became recognized as of high chiefly stature.

When he visited Samoa in later life, his reception was that
accorded only to the highest chiefs. He remains, down to the
present, the greatest hero to the Samoan Methodist Church, and
one of the finest Methodist educational institutions was named
for him.

**Recruiting Islanders for the New Guinea Mission**

Yet, devoted as he was to Samoa, he was not content to stop there.
In conversations with sea captains and explorers, he learned
much about further fields where the Christian Gospel had never
been presented, and he was eager to enter them. Already in 1868
he told the mission board that when the Australian church woke
up to its duties in the New Guinea area, he wanted a share in the
work. When he left Samoa in 1874, it was to stir up the Australian
church. With the approval of the mission board he traveled
through the land, talking about the needs in New Britain, the
largest island off New Guinea, and raising funds till there were
enough to start a mission. Though the funds came from Aus­
tralia, it was not Brown's idea to make this primarily an Australian
mission. He wanted it to be a mission of island people, speci­
cally of Samoans and also of Fijians, whom he admired as much
as he did Samoans.

Here came in another of Brown's legacies, at least for the
Methodist Church. He inaugurated the great movement of
Methodist Islander missionaries from Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga to
western Melanesia, a movement that continued in strength for
half a century.

Brown started out in April 1875 to recruit Fijians and Samo­
ans for work in the New Britain area. His appeal in Fiji is famous
because the whole student body of the seminary volunteered to
go and remained firm in their decision even when the British
governor of Fiji tried to dissuade them. Brown worked much
faster than his mission board had expected. They had planned to
send a ship to gather information for the mission, but he secured
his recruits and started out immediately, convincing the board
that they already knew enough. On August 15, 1875, he arrived
on the coasts of New Britain ready to begin work with nine Fijian
and four Samoan missionaries, most of them married. The board
had expected him to settle the Islanders and then leave, but on the
voyage he decided that he ought to stay and work with them. He
established a close friendship with all these fellow workers, and
they responded with full trust in him.

Immediately after getting settled, Brown set out by boat to
visit the villages in eastern New Britain, in New Ireland, and in the
small Duke of York Islands, lying between these two, where
he made his headquarters. The hazards of travel in storms and
among reefs along these uncharted coasts were considerable. So
were the hazards of visiting. He went completely unarmed
among men who habitually carried arms at all times when
outside of their homes. Misunderstandings would bring masses
of spears thrust toward him. He knew never to show anger or
any sign of being ready to fight or flee, for that would mean
immediate death. There were frequent warnings that he would
be killed if he went to certain places, but he went anyway.

His goal was to make friends with the hope that some of the
friends would request Christian teachers, and he was not disap­
pointed. Whether it was because in the local culture powerful
men were seen as generating social order and Brown with his
assurance and sincerity was recognized as powerful,5 or whether
it was, as the local people now say, because the missionaries did
not push the people the way traders did and because they sang
such impressive hymns and brought peaceful relations among
the villages,6 for one reason or another there were soon a number
of villages asking for teachers. During the first two years seven­
teen more missionaries arrived from Fiji and Samoa to help meet
the growing requests. Brown also pressed ahead with linguistic
studies, starting the first grammar and dictionary of any of the
region's languages.

**Crisis with Chief Talili**

Then came the great crisis in light of which, more than of any
other event, Brown's missionary work must be judged. In April
1878 four Fijian missionaries started to cross New Britain on an
exploratory trip. They were intercepted and killed on the orders
of the chief, Talili, who may have been concerned about losing
control of limited trade routes if peaceful relations among vil­
lagos began to spread in the interior. Brown, on hearing the
news, went from his headquarters at once to the village where
the missionaries' families were gathered and found them huddled in
a hut, wailing while warriors were threatening them. Talili
having urged that they all be killed and eaten. Brown tried to
restore calm, praying first for calm in himself, and sent word to
Talili to come for a parley. The reply came from Talili that he had
yams ready to cook with Brown's body and those of the other
missionaries. Apparently the whole mission as well as nearby
white traders were in imminent danger. The bodies of the four

dead men had already been divided and distributed to villages,
whose receipt of them acknowledged their complicity in the
killings and their bonding to Talili for possible further action.

Brown returned to his headquarters and gathered a number
of missionaries and some friendly chiefs and white men to
consult on what to do. He realized that the responsibility for any
decision would fall upon him, and as he wrote later, any violent
action would imperil if not destroy his "reputation as a mission­
ary." There were no forces of law and order close enough for
their protection to be invoked. He briefly considered gathering
two simultaneous raids from opposite sides of the
island and to destroy the gardens and burn the villages of those
complicit in the killings. This was done. The raid led by Brown
did not reach the offending villages, but the other raid not only
destroyed property but also killed about ten men and wounded

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Brown inaugurated the great movement of Islander missionaries from Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga for work in western Melanesia.
many more. Talili and his cohorts gave up and agreed to pay the customary shell-money indemnities for illicit killings. Talili became and remained a fast friend of Brown’s. Judgments on his action varied widely. The local people in the New Britain area all regarded the punitive expedition as necessary. In contrast, some letters to the Australian press were extremely condescending, as were some of the strongest voices in missionary and native-rights circles, the Exeter Hall types in Britain. The British government instructed Sir Arthur Gordon, governor of Fiji, who was also high commissioner for the Western Pacific, to send a Royal naval vessel to make an inquiry. The ship captain’s report was favorable to Brown. The Germans also had a ship in the area whose captain made a favorable report, and the German ambassador in London wrote to the British Foreign Office saying he hoped their report would strengthen Brown in his troubles “with the royal British authorities.” The mission board in Australia voted to support Brown’s action, and later the General Conference of the Australian Methodist Church, while condemning any military enterprises in connection with missions, approved this particular enterprise because it had been in defense of the mission teachers and their families. The chief justice in Fiji, however, Mr. Justice Gorrie, a great supporter of the Aboriginal Protection Society, issued a charge of manslaughter against Brown.

The incessant malaria of the area had been weakening Brown, so that by mid-1879, he seemed to be at death’s door and had to board a passing boat for Australia that was too small to take his wife and young children with him. In Australia the doctors despaired of his life, but he insisted on visiting his older children in New Zealand, who had been sent there for their education in the years when he was still in Samoa. He then intended to go to Fiji to face charges made against him in the court, thus putting his head in the lion’s mouth.

Cleared of Charges and Free to Serve

Sir Arthur Gordon, governor and high commissioner in Fiji, was a longtime friend of Brown’s and received him kindly. He publicly stated in a formal audience that he had seen no evidence of a crime committed by Brown, and on his instructions the prosecution was withdrawn. When Chief Justice Gorrie convened the court on the next day, he was obliged to dismiss the case, much to his chagrin. Brown was free to depart from Fiji.

Looking back a century, we may grudgingly concur in our judgment with Sir Arthur Gordon and the Methodist General Conference. Missionaries who venture out beyond the limits of established legal protection have normally and properly lived at the mercy of the local strongmen and have not expected outside governments to intervene on their behalf. When John G. Paton in the New Hebrides (modern Vanuatu) departed from this norm by lending his approving presence to the punitive shelling by a British warship of villages that the mission had complained about, he was condemned by other missionaries and has been condemned since, because the shelling saved no lives and involved the calling in of external power. When the Papuan government sent lethal punitive expeditions to avenge the murder of James Chalmers, the LMS mission was rightly perturbed because the killings seriously alienated the local people and accomplished no good purpose. But in Brown’s case there was a protective purpose, and according to all reports, no one was alienated. Both his local adversaries and his supporters agreed in the end that he had done the right thing.

His trip back from Fiji to New Britain was slow and harrowing, passing through a raging hurricane, and when he finally got home, in March 1880, he found that two of his three young children had died during his absence. Weakness and ill health continued to dog him and limited his further work in New Britain to only a year. By the time he left, however, there were twenty churches and twenty preaching points established, and he had appointed the first three local preachers, the first fruits of his efforts to build from the very start an indigenous church with its own indigenous leadership. His Australian successors were slow to build further in that direction.

The impression that Brown had made in five years was indelible. He has ever since been honored as the founding father of the New Britain district church. The day of his first arrival, August 15, is still celebrated as George Brown Day, with large crowds watching the reenactment of his original landing at various points by local pastors and people. And the George Brown High School and the George Brown College in New Britain carry his name. The church of the New Guinea Islands region, now part of the United Church in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, is probably his greatest legacy.

The Methodist churches in the Papuan Islands and the Western Solomons owe their existence to Brown.

Restored to Health and New Leadership

On returning to Australia, he soon recovered his health and for three years traveled around the country as a nationally known figure, speaking for the Methodist mission board. Then, from 1883 to 1886, he served as minister of a Sydney church circuit. But most of this time he spent traveling abroad. He crossed America, speaking to enthusiastic audiences, spoke around Britain and at the British Methodist missionary meeting of 1886, and then back across America. All this made him an internationally known figure and the obvious person to lead Australian Methodist missions. When he reached Sydney on his return in March 1887, he had already been elected general secretary of the Methodist mission board, a position he held for twenty-one years.

Given the nature of the man, his general secretarieship could hardly have been expected to be a humdrum period, and it was not. Two principal thrusts marked his leadership. The first was an expansion of the Methodist missions. Within three years of his taking the helm, he was launching a new mission, one to the Papuan Islands. In 1890 Brown went to Papua to consult with the governor and other missions about the location of a new Methodist work. He then returned to Sydney and within a year had recruited and splendidly equipped a party of over seventy people, including missionaries, mostly Fijians, and builders to initiate the new venture. Brown himself led the party to the islands east of Papua and supervised the beginning of the work.

A decade later came another venture. The western Solomon Islands had no Christian mission in their midst, since the Melanesian Mission, an Anglican body that tried to cover the whole of the Solomons, could not stretch itself that far. Brown visited the area, saw the need, and approached the Anglican bishop, convincing him rather against his will, to allow the Methodists to fill the gap. Thus, in 1902, Brown was again
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WHERE SHARING THE GOSPEL MEANS SHARING YOUR LIFE
accompanying a large pioneer party, this time to start the Western Solomon Mission centered in the beautiful Roviana Lagoon. So it is that the Methodist churches, now the United Church, in both the Papuan Islands and in the Western Solomons owe their existence to Brown’s vision, determination, and action—another major legacy.

The second principal thrust was to give more autonomy to the older churches of the central Pacific. The first place to make this effort was Tonga. Already, before Brown took office, the main body of Methodists in Tonga had seized autonomy for themselves, forming a “free church” and leaving only a small remnant faithful to the missionaries. Brown went to Tonga with the desire to convince the faithful few to join the majority and then to get Australia to accept the reunited Free Church as an autonomous Annual Conference. Unfortunately, the key person in Tonga, the prime minister and former missionary, Shirley Baker, would have none of the plan, and there was no general desire for reconciliation. Not till 1924 was reunion with autonomy accepted, and it was then on the terms Brown had proposed.12

In Fiji, Brown met with greater success. In 1901 he proposed that the money received there in the great annual church collections, which had always been sent to Australia, be divided in half, with one-half of it to be kept in Fiji. He also proposed that the Financial Synod, which handled all funds in Fiji and which had been made up entirely of missionaries, now include a majority of Fijians. There was a great outcry among the missionaries at this idea, and most of them said they would leave the country if this were done. But Brown stuck to his plan and carried the General Conference in Australia with him, so the missionaries finally gave in.13 A major step toward independence for the island churches had been achieved.

At this point some consideration of Brown’s attitude toward the Islanders throughout his career is called for, since it explains his policies as general secretary. From the beginning he admired and loved the island peoples. His high regard for Samoans and Samoan culture has already been mentioned. He wanted the Samoan church to be thoroughly indigenous, and he was constantly critical of the other missionaries who put unnecessary restrictions on life. “Why do you stop all the Samoan amusements?” he asked them. “Why put heavy feet upon native customs and throw dark shadows into lives intended for the sunshine?”14 In Fiji likewise, he was a great admirer of the culture and of Fijian life generally.

When it came to New Britain, Brown’s admiration was more qualified. What he desired was the preservation of the culture but without its more cruel elements, following in part the pattern set in Fiji. He admired the skill and artistry of Melanesian crafts and tried to collect examples before foreign influences modified them. The one practice he most obviously opposed was cannibalism, but here again his approach was respectful. On one occasion he visited a chief who was about to eat a fallen enemy. He sat on the ground with the chief and his friends and prolonged his visit endlessly because he was sure the feasting on human flesh would not proceed while he was present. Finally, to get rid of him, the chief promised to bury the victim, and Brown then departed. But he later heard that while the promise of burial was dutifully fulfilled, the body was quickly exhumed, cooked, and eaten.15 It must be said that when Brown was addressing audiences in Australia, America, and Britain, he stressed the cruelty he had encountered, which captivated his audiences but gave an unbalanced picture of the people among whom he had worked.

His relations to white men in the islands also call for comments. He made friends with all of them, even with the pathetic beachcombers and with the German traders whose power plays and land-grabbing he deplored. The British colonial governors in Fiji, Papua, and the Solomon Islands counted him as a friend and spoke of him with high esteem. Robert Louis Stevenson in Samoa saw him as a hero and considered writing his biography.

Because of what Brown saw in Samoa he came to favor British rule. The incessant wars of succession, intensified by foreign intrigue and interference and leading to massive sale of land in order to buy arms, were devastating Samoan society and seemed to be more than the society could handle. He did not want Germany in control because of what he had seen of German actions, but he hoped British rule could be established and protect the native lands as it had done in Fiji. In the mid-1890s, while in Sydney, he wrote a series of influential letters to the newspapers warning of German aggression in the islands and criticizing British inaction. However, these letters were written under a pseudonym, and his personal and professional relations with German traders and governors always remained excellent.

Not only traders and governors but also scientists were among his friends. He was himself devoted to scientific studies and corresponded with some of the greatest anthropologists of his time. He was a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, a member of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science, and vice president of the Australian Native Races Protection Society.16 He avidly collected specimens of flora and fauna as well as artifacts, and after his death his extensive collection was bought and exhibited as one more piece of his legacy by the Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle, his birthplace.17

In April 1908 Brown retired from the general secretaryship, completing forty-eight years of almost unbroken missionary service. Though he was in his seventies, he remained active, publishing a large autobiography in 1908 and an anthropological study, Melanesians and Polynesians, in 1910. Seven years later, in 1917, he died. As a final legacy, he left thirty volumes of his papers in the Mitchell Library in Sydney.

Notes
5. Errington and Gewertz, Articulating Change, p. 110.
6. Threlfall, One Hundred Years, p. 39.

11. A detailed and scholarly report and analysis of one of these celebrations is provided in Errington and Gewertz, *Articulating Change*, pp. 77–106. In this case the occasion is called the George Brown Jubilee, or simply the Jubilee, because it had first been observed in 1925 on the fiftieth anniversary of George Brown’s arrival.


17. The collection was recently sold and moved to Japan. Regarding Brown’s collecting of artifacts, a charge has been made. Stephen Reed in his standard work *The Making of Modern New Guinea* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1943), p. 112, claims that Brown on an early trip to New Ireland made a raid on a sacred spot, under cover of darkness, to steal cultic carvings. Reed jests that this did not stop Brown, “the end justifying the means,” from preaching on the Ten Commandments. The only source given by Reed for his charge is Brown’s own account in his autobiography (p. 128). However, that account says that Brown bought the carvings. He had to go under cover of darkness to secure them because he had to make sure that they were not seen by women or uninitiated men, who, according to local custom, were debarred from seeing or even approaching the vicinity of these objects. Reed’s story seems to be a serious misrepresentation.

**Selected Bibliography**

**Material Written by Brown**


**Materials Written About Brown**


Book Reviews

Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism.


This is an important work in part because of its genre. It is an attempt at a general introduction to systematic studies of the theology of religions (pp. 2-3) and is thus of the same general type as tractates (not textbooks) on particular loci (e.g., God, Christ, church) that structure the Catholic theological curriculum. It is not the personal outlook of the author that counts in such works but success in delineating the “mind of the church.” As Dupuis puts it, he intends “to make an organic presentation of the present state of theological reflection on the main issues which are raised today in the context of religious pluralism” (p. 2).

His book may long be the standard. The only comparable work in theology of religions is V. Bobolik’s Teologia delle religioni (1973), which is now thoroughly outdated and yet continues to be used for lack of alternatives. Furthermore, Dupuis is well equipped to supply a replacement. A professor at the Gregorianum in Rome and director of the journal of the same name, he is a Belgian Jesuit who taught theology for thirty-six years in India and has published extensively on interreligious matters.

Part I, the historical half of the book, is on the whole excellent, although the treatment of the biblical materials is too brief to be anything but disappointing. It will be controversial.

Dupuis aims at “holding fast to faith in Jesus Christ as traditionally understood by mainstream Christianity,” while at the same time assigning “to [other] traditions a positive role and significance in the overall plan of God for humankind, as it unfolds through salvation history” (p. 1). His is a “theocentric Christocentrism” that tries to move beyond the opposition between Christocentric inclusivism (e.g., Rahner’s) and theocentric pluralisms (e.g. Hick’s or Knitter’s) that are not specifically Christian—that is, they are adoptable also by non-Christians.

Dupuis contends that it is neither contradictory nor unorthodox to hold that the triune God of Christian faith could have created a plurality of permanently distinct and valid ways of salvation, each containing unique treasures of revealed truth and grace different from, though not contradicting, the revelation in Jesus. Some of these treasures could be sharable, but others may be intrinsic to their religion of origin and thus unavailable apart from exclusive commitment to that particular faith. Christianity in this perspective is not uniquely privileged in the sense of being the inclusive fulfillment of all religions; others may receive divine self-communications of which Christians do not and perhaps in part cannot know before the Eschaton. The consequences of this pluralism for interreligious praxis are radical, but Dupuis is also doctrinally traditional. He insists that it is the particular divine self-communication in Jesus, God incarnate, which unsurpassably identifies who God is (what he is remains unknown, incomprehensible also to Christians). Because this combination of practical radicalism and doctrinal conservatism moves beyond present polarities, it can help restore a common sphere of discourse in Catholic theology of religions.

Moreover, it is magisterially approvable, in that it is not excluded by past doctrines as interpreted by Vatican II. Recent pronouncements, especially those of the Vatican Secretariat for non-Christians and the Conferences of Asian Bishops, move increasingly in its direction. If present trends continue, this book will long be an influential guide to especially, though not exclusively, Roman Catholic theological and magisterial thinking about other religions.

In conclusion, the care, caution, and exhaustive detail of this book sometimes make it tedious, but it is unfailingly meaty. Even those who disagree with its theology (as the present reviewer often does) will acknowledge its importance.

—George Lindbeck

George Lindbeck is Pitkin Professor Emeritus of Historical Theology at Yale University.

Piety and Power: Muslims and Christians in West Africa.


This book opens with a glimpse into Lamin Sanneh’s roots and ends with a fascinating re-creation of a childhood in Gambia. Sanneh combines a gentle, suave exterior with an aggressive pursuit of truth. He opens by briskly dispelling some misconceptions about Islam and Christianity, emphasizing their differences but also their “potentials for solidarity.” He rejects the simplicity of One Worldism, the Western pessimism about the value of religion, and affirms that creative dialogue is to be rooted in one’s own tradition and to be open to others. The goals of the book work from a Muslim perspective to clarify the relationship between piety and power in the growing context of pluralism and to demonstrate the immense voluntarist imperative in Islam and how it fits with democratic liberalism, leaving it de-theocratized without being disenfranchised. He argues the crucial role of the receivers of these Abrahamic religions, making it clear that Christians stand to profit from an empathetic understanding of Islam.

Sanneh thus reconstructs Muslim spirituality through his own experience of the prophet Mohammed, whose biography glows as an aspect of “lived reality.” A shift of worldview takes us into the heart of Islamic experience, while the debates in nineteenth-century Sierra Leone point to the style of dialogue and the cultural potential of Islam. Dialogue is not mere debate but living together as one people with one purpose, with neither consensus nor overt hostility. Some participants may have romanticized Islam but left a legacy worthy of emulation, especially as the religious force has imploded into the political space in the midst of the crisis and economic stagnation of Africa. Sanneh analyzes the roots of the political theology of Islam and Christianity. The ambivalence in Christian political theology is overshadowed by Islamic certitude about power and piety. To hew liberal democracy from this prideful rock of orthodoxy, Sanneh traces the metanoia of El Kanemi, the pacifist tradition of the Jakhakhe clerics of Senegambia, and the liberal elements in Islam to argue the im-
In this book, Charles Kraft, a leading evangelical missiological anthropologist, synthesizes what he has learned through twenty-six years of teaching missionary anthropology at Fuller Theological Seminary. It is intended as a basic introduction to cultural anthropology for those involved in cross-cultural ministry. It addresses most of the topics covered in standard anthropology textbooks, but it does so with the constant focus on exploring the missiological implications of each. In each chapter Kraft invites reflection not just on the cultures of those with whom the missionary ministers but also on the cultures that have shaped the missionary, and on God’s accommodation to culture in the Scriptures.

On a wide range of subjects Kraft does an excellent job of pushing readers to rethink assumptions their culture has taught them to take for granted. It is to be expected that a book of this magnitude that endeavors to reassess so much of what we take for granted will not always get things quite right. And indeed I occasionally noted ideas I would personally question. But overall, such disagreements were few. In my opinion, the vast bulk of what Kraft argues is solidly and insightfully on target.

Kraft acknowledges (p. xv) the evi-

Fifteen Outstanding Books of 1997 for Mission Studies

The editors of the INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH have selected the following books published in 1997 for special recognition of their contribution to mission studies. We have limited our selection to books in English, since it would be impossible to consider fairly the books in many other languages that are not readily available to us. We commend the authors, editors, and publishers represented here for their contribution to the advancement of scholarship in studies of Christian mission and world Christianity.


January 1998
DENT FACT THAT MANY OF HIS ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOURCES ARE OLDER. ONE WILL NOT FIND ANY USE MADE OF VICTOR TURNER’S TREATMENT OF RITUALS AND SYMBOLS OR OF FREDRIC BARTH’S TREATMENT OF ETHNIC GROUPS AND BOUNDARIES, FOR EXAMPLE. READERS WISHING AN INTRODUCTION TO KEY THINKERS IN ANTHROPOLOGY TODAY WILL FIND THIS BOOK LACKING. NONETHELESS, THE OLDER SOURCES KRAFT DOES USE ARE ANTHROPOLOGICAL CLASSICS, SOURCES THAT HAVE BEEN WIDELY USED BY MISSIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGISTS AND HAVE STOOD THE TEST OF TIME IN PROVING THEIR UTILITY FOR MISSIONARIES.

This textbook is an excellent introduction to missiological anthropology, the best source now available by an evangelical anthropologist. I have long looked for just such a text and have adopted it for my class. Initial student responses are very positive.

—Robert J. Priest

Robert Priest is Associate Professor of Missions and Intercultural Studies at Columbia Biblical Seminary and Graduate School of Missions, Columbia, South Carolina.

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This new American Society of Missiology series volume surveys what has only been sketchily treated up to now: missiological education and training in the postimperial, postmodern era. The essays were originally presented at a symposium marking the retirement of Paul Pierson as third dean of the Fuller School of World Mission, but they have been refined and improved for publication. Covering historical, ecumenical, regional, and other missiological contexts, the survey is notable for its sweeping scope. Given the remarkable diversity of authors and topics, the book contains outstanding individual contributions and high-quality missiological reflection.

A brilliant opening essay by Andrew Walls describing Alexander Duff’s bold but ill-fated efforts to establish a missiological institute at Edinburgh in 1868 provides a challenging context for the entire volume. Duff believed that mission study lay at the center of the theological curriculum, that it was ecumenical and interdisciplinary in nature, and that the church’s understanding of its calling should be shaped by the experience coming from the missionary movement (pp. 14–15). Duff failed to make his case, with the result, according to Walls, that missiology has ever since been assigned a peripheral or extracurricular place in the theological academy. This volume, which coincidently appeared during the centennial year of the establishment of the first modern chair of mission at the University of Halle, occupied by Gustav Warneck, poses a striking paradox. Given the growing sophistication and professionalization of mission studies in the United States in our time, why has missiology by and large failed to penetrate or be accepted by the theological academy? Why has refinement in the discipline and tools of missiological study been accompanied by an overall decline in missionary commitment in the West? What models of missiological education are available to overcome this malaise? Walls’s proposal for a strategy of “holy subversion” is certainly intriguing: “to subvert the other disciplines, irritate them, force them into new channels” (p. 18). If one concedes that missiological reflection is for the time being mainly for the care and feeding of missiologists—a kind of spiritual and intellectual nurture for the converted—then this volume is an invaluable and virtually encyclopedic introduction to the astonishing diversity of missiological contexts and fields of study today. No brief review can do justice to twenty-five essays covering a broad range of theological, confessional, regional, disciplinary, and methodological approaches. The editors are to be congratulated on having assembled a blue-ribbon panel of specialists who provide a rich and balanced diet for our missiological nurture. It is a fitting tribute to Paul Pierson, who did so much to elevate missiological studies at Fuller Seminary.

—James A. Scherer

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


Harold Dollar is professor of Intercultural Studies at Biola University and chair of the missions department at Talbot Seminary, La Miranda, California. In this book he approaches the biblical writings of Luke from a “missiological hermeneutic,” attempting to see the missiological dimensions. The hermeneutic is consistent with Luke’s intent in producing the material, as the author clearly shows.

Biblical studies often focus either on linguistic analysis or on issues of a doctrinal nature. The context of the biblical materials in light of the mission of God, seen in the calling of Israel and the church to mission, is often not given proper attention. Dollar seeks to highlight the missiological issues that are prominent in Luke-Acts. What really surprises the reader is how Dollar highlights subtle issues and themes that, when brought more fully into the light, are quite significant to Luke and the early church.

According to Dollar, Luke masterfully articulates how the early church moved (albeit quite slowly and often painfully) from Jewish particularism to understanding God’s universal intent for God’s mission. Although there are many intriguing avenues to travel on in Luke’s writings, the most fascinating to me is the issue of table fellowship. What appears to be a side issue becomes, in the hands of Dollar’s careful interpretation, a rather significant area of conflict for the early church. Accepting and embracing God’s mission to the nations meant for Jewish Christians the often excruciating task of casting off a practice that not only defined who they were as the people of God but also defined their culture and, by way of extension, even their self-image. It was no easy task for a Jew to sit at the table with a Gentile. God chooses a conservative, zealous Jew whose whole life was an impassioned attempt to maintain the distinction between Jew and Gentile—Saul of Tarsus—to lead the church in Gentile mission. Dollar’s careful study is very enlightening on the struggles the early Jewish leaders of the church had in making this transition.

—Roy Stults

Roy Stults is a missiologist on the faculty of Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri, and is editor of World Mission Magazine for the Church of the Nazarene. He was a missionary to Korea and the Philippines for fifteen years and taught at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary in Manila.


This book analyzes the urban ministries of ten denominations during the four decades following World War II, a period regarded as the heyday of mainline denominational urban ministry in the United States. The underlying assumption is that most of the issues back then are still on the urban agenda, which churches cannot ignore without compromising their integrity.

The histories contained in this book are not merely nostalgic reminiscences by veterans of yesterday’s urban struggles. They are serious examinations of the paradigms that shaped yesterday’s mainline urban ministries with a view to helping pastors and mission leaders engaged in designing urban strategies for the future.

Clifford J. Green is professor of theology at Hartford Seminary, Hartford, Connecticut. The fourteen contributors were all leading practitioners and theorists in their denominations during the forty-year period covered in the study. Eleven key questions, based on sociological and theological assumptions, guided the writers. They addressed denominational concepts of “urban ministry,” models that were followed, motivations, urban-suburban relations, poverty and racism, ecumenical relations, roles of the laity, best examples of denominational urban policy, and changes in policies or strategies.

An annotated bibliography covers the mainline urban literature of the period. Evangelical writings are absent. In the 1980s mainline denominations retreated from urban ministry, and new paradigms, most of them evangelical and charismatic, began emerging. As a form of the church, traditional denominations are probably incongruent with urban life and institutions.

—Roger S. Greenway

Roger S. Greenway is Professor of World Missiology at Calvin Theological Seminary, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Formerly he served as a missionary with Christian Reformed World Mission in Sri Lanka and later in Mexico, and as professor of missions at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.

Christian Missions and the Judgment of God.


David Paton was a unique figure in mission and ecumenical history. He was an ecumenist who served the Student Christian Movement in his youth, the Missionary and Ecumenical Council of the Church of England in midlife, and in his maturity, the World Council of Churches as author and editor of its Nairobi Assembly report, Breaking Barriers. He was, by deep theological conviction, an Anglican and a priest, whether in China, in the Church House in London, or in the parish in Birmingham and Gloucester. He was by faith a radical, a follower of Roland Allen and Hong Kong bishop R. O. Hall, driven by a
vision of the church in mission to strong
indictment of its current practice and life-
long service to its repentant movement
ward a more ecumenical vision. And he
was, in all of this, a missionary—for ten
years overseas in China, and for a lifetime,
with a special love for China, wherever he
lived and worked.

It is the contribution of this book to
bring this life into focus. The author’s son
offers a factual and also warmly personal
biography, and a bibliography of his
father’s writings. A lifelong colleague, Bob
Whyte, places Paton’s missionary reflection
in its ecumenical, Anglican, and
Chinese context. But the centerpiece is a
reissue of Paton’s own Dublin lectures of
1953: the judgment of God on Christian
missions and the consequences for the
church’s mission that are to be drawn
from it. They were an event when they
first appeared. Missionaries had just been
driven from China, under devastating at-
tack as agents of imperialism. Would the
same happen elsewhere in Asia and Af-
rica? Communism was triumphant, with
its blistering indictment of the greed and
inhumanity of the capitalist Western
world. Was this the wave of the future?
Paton went more deeply into the crisis of
the time. He based his prophecy on the
missionary calling of the church through
the ages and on the failure of missions to
embody that calling as they moved from
the prosperous dominant cultures of the
Western world into Asian and African
lands, especially China. He called for a
repentance that would include accepting
the judgment of God expressed in the
Maoist victory. This did not mean idealiz-
ing Communism as the cause of God, but
it did mean, as it still does, a radical re-
structuring of the mission enterprise—its
organization, its theology, its use of money,
and its forms of control—so as to bear
witness to the work of the Holy Spirit
through the church in a plurality of cul-
tures, in revolutionary movements against
Western domination and exploitation, and
in the search for a unity amid diversity
that truly transcends our human construc-
tions.

This is still the agenda of mission
reform and renewal. Some of Paton’s sense
of urgency is related to the history of his
time. Some of his indictments are over-
stated. Some readers will want to ques-
tion his Anglican ecclesiology (or be ques-
tioned by it). But we would do well to
review this crisis-provoked analysis to-
day and measure our own life and witness
against it. Crises illuminate the spiritual
landscape in which we live, with a special
flash. As such, they offer guidance on our
way.

—Charles C. West

Charles C. West is Professor Emeritus of Christian
Ethics at Princeton Theological Seminary.

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ty of one’s own faith.”—Wilbert R. Shenk,
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The history of denominational missions in Zimbabwe has been a fertile field for doctoral studies by Zimbabwean scholars. In this work Dr. Chentcai J. M. Zvobgo, senior lecturer in history at the University of Zimbabwe, has provided a needed general mission history.

We expect the historian to research diligently for source materials. Zvobgo has done so with excellence, combing church and government archives in Zimbabwe, and also in Great Britain, for relevant data. Oral interviews with elderly African leaders enabled him to avoid reliance on missionary records in sensitive areas. The text is replete with documentation, including biographical notes for both missionaries and African church leaders.

Next, we look to the historian to provide an interpretative framework with a selective use of supporting data. In this task I give the author a mixed review. In my judgment he made a mistake in placing the relationship between church and state beyond the scope of his study. He omits from his chapter on the early opening of mission stations, for example, the strategy of Cecil John Rhodes to thwart Portuguese colonial ambitions by establishing a line of missions along the eastern border. All we have is a pedantic enumeration of places, dates, and mission founders.

By contrast, the chapter entitled “The African Response to Christianity in Zimbabwe” is a gripping narrative. Zvobgo highlights contrasting attitudes toward polygamy and traditional marriage customs by juxtaposing data from missionary journals and oral interviews with responses by elderly African informants.

By design, the author gives major attention to mission schools and medical work. Fortunately, on these issues he includes church-state relationships, as missions were the surrogates of government in providing social services for the African population. Meticious details are provided down to the number of students who passed exams institution-by-institution, the subjects taught in a nurse training school, and who attended a committee to consider founding an ecumenical secondary school. Alas, no comparisons are made with parallel education or health provided by government for white settlers, or with African education in neighboring countries. The result, for the reader, is akin to a large jigsaw puzzle only three-fourths completed—it is hard to see the big picture.

—Norman E. Thomas

Norman E. Thomas, the Vera B. Blinn Professor of World Christianity at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, served as a Methodist missionary in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) from 1962 to 1972.

West Africa: Christ Would Be an African Too.


John Pobee is a highly respected Christian leader and theologian from Ghana. I met him for the first time in 1994 and immediately became aware of his strong passion and commitment to the task of making the Christian Gospel relevant to the “complex whole of African cultures” (p. xi). This book is a brilliant analysis of the “Gospel and culture” debate within the context of West Africa.

The major strength of the book lies in its biblical, apostolic, and catholic (ecumenical) perspectives (pp. 49–52), which the author applies to the Gospel and culture debate in reference to West Africa. The book aims primarily to give (1) a critique of European constructs of the Christian faith and practice and (2) a theological defense of the task of “skenosis,” or “inculturation.”

Pobee asserts that “the missionaries brought what they knew, the creations of their contexts.” As a result, “the received constructs of Christian faith and practice do indeed bear the marks of Greek and Latin Christianity” (p. 3), hence, the need to reconstruct the Christian faith and practice with the marks of African Christianity. A few examples of West African reactions and responses are presented as historical precedents to the theological task of “skenosis,” or “inculturation.” The entire book is an explication of both a theological method and concept of “skenosis,” based on John 1:14 (the tabernacling of the Word in culture). This book offers the reader many thoughtful, helpful, and challenging reflections on the Gospel and culture debate in Africa.

—Yusufu Turaki

Yusufu Turaki is Education Director of the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA), Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria.


This book commemorating 160 years of Methodism in Fiji is the outgrowth of a conference held in Fiji in October 1995, in which over eighty people gathered to reflect oral traditions and personal stories of the Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma. The bulk of the book contains twelve of the conference papers written by Fijian scholars as well as by some well-known Pacific mission historians such as Charles Forman and John Garrett. These more academically oriented papers cover such topics as Methodism in the Pacific and Fiji context (Forman), Fijians in the Methodist ministry (Thornley), women in Fijian Methodism (Sovaki), Fijian missionaries in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands (Jakes), leadership patterns in the Methodist Church (Niukula), the Indian Christian Church in Fiji (Mastapha), and biographical vignettes of John Hunt (Kanailagi), Josua Mateninni (Baleiwaga), and Ratu Varani (Cabenalevu).

The book is written in both English and Fijian. A Fijian summary follows each of the conference papers written in English. The oral-tradition stories are in Fijian. In many ways this is a good model for non-Western churches reflecting on their history.

This book helps us understand the Methodist Church in Fiji in at least the following three ways. First, Methodism in Fiji was a highly communal faith. Because Fijian society at the time of missionary contact was consumed by warfare and cannibalism, Christianity was socially...
In the essays entitled "Defining the Church," the writers turn their attention to what congregations and pastors can do to enact a congregational missionary posture. Hunsberger is joined by an able team of pastoral theologians to offer some of the best essays I have read on just what it means to be a "missionary congregation" in North America.

This book is required reading in seminaries and among parish leaders. More North American pastors must come to view themselves as missionaries working in an essentially pagan culture where the Gospel competes with a variety of other modes of salvation. Congregations must grow toward a vision of themselves as the embodiment of Christ's radical challenge to this culture. Here is the book to help us do just that.

—William H. Willimon

William H. Willimon is Dean of the Chapel and Professor of Christian Ministry, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

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In our contemporary world of religious pluralism, the growth of interreligious dialogue has resulted in a veritable library of literature. The present encyclopedic volume brings together all the dialogue documents that constitute "the official teaching of the Catholic Church," covering over three decades (1963–1995). It is a comprehensive collection edited by Francesco Gioia, who has served with the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID, a Roman office established by Pope Paul VI in 1964 for the purpose of promoting Catholic involvement in interreligious relations). An earlier Italian edition covered the years 1963–93; a French edition is in preparation.

The book contains ten parts: (1) introductory matters; (2) Vatican Council II (7 entries); (3) solemn magisterium—encyclicals and apostolic exhortations (19 entries); (4–6) magisterium of Paul VI, John Paul I, and John Paul II (89, 2, and 199 entries respectively); (7) Roman curial documents (12 items); (8) legislative documents (3 items); (9) International Theological Commission statements (4 items); and (10) geographic and analytic indexes (2 sections). Selection was rigorously limited to interreligious texts (excluding ecumenical documents and those covering relations with the Jewish people). And yet, over 300 entries are presented—an indication of the church's commitment to the missionary apostolate of interreligious dialogue.

The book has many fine features: an attractive and comprehensive presentation, two extensive indexes, clearly readable print, and a durable binding. It is questionable, however, whether the volume provides "the opportunity of easy access" (p. xxvii) to church documents for a wide audience (Christians and members of other faiths). Where is the entry point of "easy access" to this mountain of undifferentiated material? Some kind of introductory overview is needed. Readers perhaps should have been directed to the two synthesis documents of the PCID: "Dialogue and Mission" (pp. 566–79) and "Dialogue and Proclamation" (pp. 608–42).

A helpful marginal numbering system is employed for this volume, but the original/official paragraph numbers of the documents do not appear. The outline and footnoting structure is unclear. The reader is never informed whether the quoted text is only a selection or a complete document, or whether the numbers in the indexes are marginal or page numbers. Some key subjects found in the literature do not appear in the analytic index.

Undoubtedly, this is an important book; it is truly a milestone on the dialogue highway. Rigorous editing would have improved it. As a research volume, it is indispensable for all mission and theological libraries.

—James H. Kroeger, M.M.

James H. Kroeger, M.M., has published several works in mission theology and dialogue; his most recent book is Living Mission. He teaches at the Loyola School of Theology in Chicago and heads the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Desk for Asian Missionary Societies of Apostolic Life.

People of the Mandate: The Story of the World Evangelical Fellowship.


This book marks the 150th anniversary of the founding in London in 1846 of the Evangelical Alliance by participants from about a dozen different countries. This was the forerunner of the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF). The author is a member of the International Council of WEF.

It is not a history, but it alludes to all the significant historical events. The history was written in 1986 by David Howard in The Dream That Would Not Die. This is a new, readable, journalistic account mainly of the last ten years of WEF, which integrates anecdotes about Jun Vencer, Tokunboh Adeyemo, and other leading personalities into a popular recapitulation of the history. By the end of the book, the reader has a clear picture of what WEF is about today and the kind of people who lead it.

There are about 140 people listed in the index. More than half of them are from the Third and the Second Worlds. This indicates where the main activities of the movement are today.

The book describes the significant role that WEF has played in the struggle for religious liberty in recent years. The index does not include the word "Pentecostal," and the only reference to "Charismatic" is in a sentence (p. 39) about "mixed charismatic Christianity with traditional spiritism." I wondered what this says about WEF or the author. (Is the issue too hot to handle?)

More articulate is the treatment of the relations between WEF, ecumenical groups, and Roman Catholics, and it seems as though the lines are drawn in much the same places.

—Tom Houston

Tom Houston is the Minister-at-Large of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and lives in Oxford, England.

The World's Parliament of Religions: The East/West Encounter, Chicago, 1893.


This is a carefully researched and elegantly written analysis of the 1893 interreligious meeting between Christians and Jews from the West and representatives of the major religions from the East. A parliament of the world's religions, the planners thought, would be an ideal climax to the 1893 World's Fair—the largest exposition of its kind in history to that time—which was held in Chicago to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the arrival of Columbus in America. Seager not only describes the parliament, he evaluates it from the early planning stages to its dramatic closing and the aftermath. His assessment of the immediate and long-term impact of the gathering, especially in relation to missiological issues, is particularly incisive. In fact, much of the book deals with these and other issues we now face as our North American society becomes more and more culturally and religiously pluralistic.

Seager's principal thesis, which he convincingly argues, is that the fair as well
as the parliament were based on a myth or assumption that Christianity, particularly Anglo-Protestantism, was not only superior to all other faiths but also was destined to spread and eventually dominate the world. As Seager observes, however, the parliament succeeded only in revealing the dubiousness of this notion and exposing the underlying ideology of the designers, who mistakenly conceived of the parliament as a perfect venue for demonstrating the superiority of Christianity and deficiencies of all other religions. That the parliament failed in this regard is no surprise. Why it failed, however, is the most provocative and significant part of Seager’s captivating account. Ironically, by giving Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, Taoist, Shinto, Jain, and Muslim spokespeople such a conspicuous platform, he contends, the parliament actually opened the door for them to showcase their respective faiths and thereby gain acceptance as a part of the U.S. religious scene.

—Alan Neely

Alan Neely is Henry W. Luce Professor of Ecumenics and Mission Emeritus, Princeton Theological Seminary.

Power, Politics, and Pentecostals in Latin America.


The editors have developed a most valuable volume, which reinforces a theme in Latin American studies that has become increasingly standard. As Harvey Cox has observed, “Pentecostalism most likely represents the most fundamental transformation in the political and religious landscape of the continent since the Conquest” (backcover).

The introductory chapter by Edward Cleary provides a clear chronology of the emergence of a burgeoning pool of research on Latin American Pentecostalism that grows increasingly broad as the 1990s progress. Homogeneity has never been a mark of Pentecostals, and the contributors in this volume skillfully demonstrate the varying hues of the Pentecostal landscape. In addition, references to emerging Pentecostal scholarship done by Pentecostals are numerous, and inclusion of chapter contributors who are themselves Pentecostals lends integrity to the volume.

Rapid growth has brought increasing influence from the public square, where Pentecostals are now being challenged to respond. Political influence, women’s issues, and justice concerns are just some of the dimensions that the authors address. Readers will enjoy a refreshing avoidance of stereotypical jargon and ideological gibberish, all too often present in literature about Pentecostals in Latin America in recent years.

A fitting conclusion to the volume is the final chapter by Stewart-Gambino and Everett Wilson, appropriately called “Old Stereotypes and New Challenges.” The authors present clear reasoning for the demise of old misconceptions without succumbing to triumphalistic portrayals that could cloud the realities yet facing Latin American Pentecostals. The concluding chapter points out the challenges (dangers) facing this movement and states simply that there is much yet to be researched and evaluated.

While topics are carefully addressed in the volume, additional thematic introductions to develop further Cleary’s opening chapter would have been helpful enrichments to each section. While these...
would have enhanced the volume for student usage, the bottom line remains the same. This volume stands firmly as a must-read book for anyone who wants a clear-cut, well-researched volume on the coming of age for Pentecostalism in Latin America.

—Byron D. Klaus

Byron D. Klaus is Vice President for Latin America ChildCare, a child-development ministry for the Assemblies of God (USA). He also serves as Professor of Church Leadership, Southern California College, Costa Mesa, California.


The reality of “In Christ There Is No East or West” is truer today than fifty years ago. The distances between Western churches and those in the developing world have shrunk dramatically, and numerous ethnic and alternative language-group churches have been planted in the West. This volume (English translation of title: “Community Formation of Asian, African, and Central- and South-American Christians in the Netherlands: A History in Process”), the result of a collaborative editorial effort by University of Utrecht missiologist Jongeneel, Indonesian Dutch Christian church pastor Budiman, and Hendrik Kraemer Institute principal Visser, includes contributions from these churches themselves. Having incorporated a large number of immigrants from the developing world since World War II, the small country of the Netherlands—historically self-conscious about its richly diverse religious life—is a helpful prism by which to reflect on the future of multicultural Christianity in the West.

This is a reference work, not a narrative. In addition to colonial and other histories, identity issues arising from ethnicity and language, varieties of organization, key ecumenical relations, and legal and other problems of integrating into Dutch life, this volume provides extensive bibliography, key addresses, and a compact English summary. Though some of the problem areas are specific to the Dutch (e.g., legal issues), more are universal. How can the ecumenical successes of local churches be translated to the national scene, where nonindigenous churches are invisible? How can pastoral exchanges be effected across cultural lines? Should ethnic and monolingual ecclesiastical bodies (presbyteries, districts) be encouraged? What about the church’s obligation to provide refuge for illegal immigrants? What do we need to learn from non-Western Christians?

This is an invaluable resource and model for what needs to be done in other contexts. An English translation would be welcome.

—John Bolt

John Bolt, a Canadian, is Professor of Systematic Theology, Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan.
Christianity and African Culture: Conservative German Protestant Missionaries in Tanzania, 1900–1940.


Klaus Fiedler, former missionary in Tanzania and now lecturer in theology and religious studies at the University of Malawi, wrote this study of conservative thinking among missionaries who labored in colonial German East Africa and mandatory Tanganyika as a University of Dar es Salaam dissertation. The original German edition, Christentum und afrikanische Kultur, is currently marketed by the Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft in Bonn. The English version differs from the German one in that it lacks maps, mercifully has the notes at the bottom of each page, and contains a lengthy piece by Catholic missionary Robin Lamborn on Christianized transition rites among the Yao, which adds to the length and cost of the book.

Fiedler focuses on the views of African culture held by individuals from four German Protestant mission societies—the confessionalist Lutheran Leipzig Mission, the “United” (Lutheran-Reformed) Bethel and Berlin Missions, and the Moravian (Hermnuth) Mission. Among the major figures treated are Bruno Gutmann, Joseph Busse, Traugott Bachmann, Ernst Johannsen, Georg Fritze, Anna von Waldow, and Julius Oelke. The author argues that although in their overall outlooks they differed in being “conservatives” or “progressives,” they assessed African culture in markedly positive terms and regarded many aspects of it as worth preserving and adapting into the Christian life. This resulted from the heavy influence that Romanticism and its emphasis on the Volk had on them. Fiedler makes a good case for Volkish nationalism as a central theme in German missiology. (In my contribution to Essays in Religious Studies for Andrew Walls [1986], this point is expressed even more forcefully.)

In a short review one cannot adequately summarize Fiedler’s nuanced analysis of such matters as clan structures, the role of the elders, folklore, initiation and circumcision rites, African leadership, and the role of schools. The strength of the book lies in his interviews and correspondence in the late 1960s and early 1970s with Africans and missionaries, many of whom are no longer alive, and in his systematic mining of mission archives in Germany and Tanzania. As the studies of Marcia Wright and others have shown, these underutilized sources have great potential. However, he has not adequately incorporated the recent scholarship in German missiology and African studies, such as Hans Kasdorf’s treatment of Gustav Warneck or Lamin Sanneh’s assessment of the crucial role of Bible translation.

—Richard V. Pierard

Richard V. Pierard is Professor of History, Indiana State University, Terre Haute. He has taught in Germany and in spring 1997 was a visiting lecturer at the Moscow Baptist Seminary in Russia.


Since Vatican II interreligious dialogue has become a major theological and methodological issue for the church in India and its mission. The book under review is a massive volume on the theology and practice of interreligious dialogue. There is no doubt that the author has done his homework thoroughly. Hardly anything written on the topic seems to have escaped his attention.

The book is divided into four parts. The first presents the readers with the long history of interreligious dialogue from the precolonial days to post-Vatican years and the efforts at the practice of dialogue through ashrams and pastoral centers in India. Part 2 examines the theology of interreligious dialogue at the level of all the churches in India, their official organs and bodies, and the theologians. The third part gives us the theology of dialogue as proposed by the best repre

This is the most complete and authoritative book on dialogue in India to date. It is bound to remain a classic on the subject for a long time. The book contains an excellent bibliography of 106 pages on the topic of dialogue. This is certainly a great service to all those who will do research into the theology and practice of dialogue. Theologians, missionaries, and students of theology are all indebted to Jose Kuttianimattathil for this magisterial work.

—Sebastian Karotemprel, S.D.B.

Sebastian Karotemprel, S.D.B., a contributing editor, is Professor of Missiology at the Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana, Rome, and member of the International Theological Commission.
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