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## Editorial

For theologians and cross-cultural communicators, the centre of the theological debate has shifted to issues in the relationship of the Gospel to culture. It is a sign of growing maturity that evangelicals are willing to listen to those from whom they differ on issues of contextualization. This is especially true in Latin America where Liberation Theology has challenged evangelicals to examine their own cultural heritage and Protestant history. While rejecting the implications of the Marxist analysis of history, they have recognised that true theologising can only take place through involvement in the historical moment. Too often western evangelicals continue to answer questions that only the elite are asking. Their answers appear irrelevant to the poor and oppressed who constitute the world's majority.

The search for *dynamic equivalence* for biblical language and concepts which has long been the concern of Bible translators is now the concern of theologians who are beginning to interact with the anthropologists and sociologists.

Many of us have warned against the dangers of universalism and syncretism but we must not allow fear of syncretism to paralyse boldness to experiment with language and concepts. But in contrast to modern existential theologians who begin with the relativity of culture, Paul began with the interpretation of the Scriptures as the authoritative Word of God. It is true that the Bible is culturally conditioned, but our belief in the unique inspiration of Scripture assures us that this cultural conditioning was also under the sovereign hand of God. The prophetic nature of the faith helps us to understand God's reforming acts in culture. But in order to comprehend the truths of biblical theology, we must constantly examine our use of the grammatico-historical method of exegesis and test the claims of critical and redaction research in the light of the Bible's own truth-claims. For this we need well-trained biblical scholars. But here too the communicator must first critically examine his own pre-understandings and approach his task with humility and reliance on the Holy Spirit, for the act of contextualizing can never be absolute. He will accept the mutual correction of God's people. In other words, it is the Church living under the Lordship of Christ and the authority of Scripture, who can faithfully interpret the Word for our world today. [p. 3](#)

## Believing in the Incarnation Today

by RICHARD BAUCKHAM

*The Myth of God Incarnate (SCM 1977) Pp. 212 edited by Professor John Hick of Birmingham University, gathered well-known and time honoured arguments against the deity of Jesus Christ. The novelty lay in the number of leading Anglican Churchmen who contributed to the*

book. In *The Truth of God Incarnate* (Hodder 1977) Pp. 144 Michael Green assembled a cross section of orthodox opinion (Protestant and Catholic) to reply. In this article Richard Bauckham, lecturer in the history of Christian thought at the University of Manchester focuses the main issue raised by Professor Hick's book.  
(Ed.)

THE DEBATE over *The Myth of God Incarnate*<sup>1</sup> may be taken as a useful challenge to rethink the credibility and the meaning of belief in the incarnation today. This article will take up just two issues out of the complex variety of questions raised by *The Myth*.

## I. THE POSSIBILITY OF INCARNATION

Perhaps the most fundamental criticism of incarnational doctrine is that it is incoherent or unintelligible. The idea of Jesus' personal identity with God is alleged to be a self-contradictory idea, a logical impossibility, like a square circle. This point is made, for example, by Don Cupitt: 'The eternal God, and a historical man, are two beings of quite different ontological status. It is simply unintelligible to declare them identical.'<sup>2</sup> Similarly Maurice Wiles asks: 'Are we sure that the concept of an incarnate being, P. 4 one who is both fully God and fully man, is after all an intelligible concept?'<sup>3</sup>

This problem must not be dismissed too hastily. A student of the history of Christology may well be tempted to think that the perennial difficulty of conceiving what it means for God and man to coincide in one person results from the basic impossibility of doing so. God and man possess contradictory attributes, and it is *prima facie* nonsensical to say that Jesus is both infinite and finite, immortal and mortal, omniscient and ignorant, Creator and created. A good case could be made for the view that the attempt to combine the two natures in one person has always been a practical victory of one over the other. Much traditional Christology has had a docetic tendency. In spite of their belief in Jesus' full humanity, the Fathers often distorted the human reality of the historical Jesus beyond recognition. Modern Christology is determined at all costs to avoid Docetism: we have rediscovered the real humanity of Jesus, and whatever else must disappear into the doctrinal melting-pot we will not surrender that. Jesus' humanity must mean that he was fully human in ways the Fathers scarcely realised: human in all the historical conditionedness and all the historical relativity of other human existence, human in the depths of his psychology. But now that we more fully appreciate what full-blooded humanity means, where is the room for divinity? The temptation is strong to cut the Gordian knot and admit that the very idea of the God-man is incoherent and unintelligible.

This is the heart of the modern Christological problem. It is a most searching issue because it opens up the whole field of theology. It requires us to relate our Christology to our understanding of God and our understanding of man: is God such and is man such that God *cannot* become man? As R. A. Norris says, 'To understand and criticize a Christology is to understand and criticize a total theological outlook, a total intellectual framework for portraying the relation of man to God.'<sup>4</sup> Whether and how we p. 5 believe in incarnation

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<sup>1</sup> ed. John Hick, London: SCM Press, 1977.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Finality of Christ', *Theology*, 78 (1975) p. 625.

<sup>3</sup> *The Myth*, p. 5. Cf. John Hick, *God and the Universe of Faiths* (London: Collins, 1977), p. 170: 'Every attempt to specify further the idea that Jesus was both God and man has broken down. It seems impossible to take the thought of the God-Man beyond the phrase "God-Man" and to find any definite meaning or content in it.'

<sup>4</sup> *Manhood and Christ* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. vii.

is no isolated issue. Moreover there is a serious question of method here: Do we come to the concept of incarnation with a prior understanding of God and man by means of which the possibility of incarnation is to be judged, or do we accept the fact of incarnation and allow it to modify our understanding of God and man?

It may help at this point to remind ourselves of a central Christian affirmation with which the authors of *The Myth* agree and even stress: that Jesus reveals God, and reveals God to be self-giving love. This revelation of God in Jesus is not a trivial illustration of what we should know perfectly well without Jesus. It determines the central content of the Christian concept of God, and we may not therefore judge the possibility of incarnation by any other standard than this. From the definition of God as immortal, invisible, omnipotent, omniscient—as all the negatives and superlatives which seem to rule out incarnation—we should not have guessed that God's character is self-giving love. Without Jesus we should have had only hints of that. So if incarnation turns out to be after all a possibility for the Christian God, it should have something to do with this specifically Christian revelation of God's character in Jesus. We shall return to this point.

The problem of the two natures with the two irreconcilable sets of attributes can be approached in two ways, both of which are probably necessary:

(a) One way is to insist that after all divine and human nature are not so dissimilar. They look contradictory from the point of view of the metaphysical attributes of God, but from the point of view of the moral attributes the problem is quite different. God is love, and love can be human nature as well as divine. Jesus, it may be said, is God precisely in being perfect man.

There is truth in this approach, but it cannot be sufficient. If we base our doctrine of the incarnation simply on an assertion of the general compatibility of divinity and humanity, we shall end by dissolving altogether the distinction between God and man. This was the path taken, notoriously at the time, by the Conference of the Modern Churchmen's Union in 1921, which proposed that: 'Perfect humanity is deity under human conditions.'<sup>5</sup> p.6 From which the conclusion is that Jesus is the supreme example of the potential divinity of all men.

(b) The better way to begin is by recognizing that God and man are even more incomparable than the authors of *The Myth* allow. Man is finite and God is infinite: they are not at all in the same category. But this is precisely why we must admit the possibility of incarnation. The doctrine of the two natures of Christ would be an absurdity if divine and human nature were two varieties of the same kind of thing: then it would be, as it has sometimes been said to be, like putting two men together to make one. But precisely because God, unlike man, is infinite, his infinite life may *include* a finite existence in human history. Only this recognition of God's utter incomparability with creaturely being makes incarnation conceivable.

The doctrine of the incarnation involves us in saying that the God who made this world of finite experience is not by his infinite perfection excluded from it forever. Rather his perfection is an infinite richness of possibility which permits him to enter his own creation and experience time and ignorance and suffering and death. It might still be useful to recall two old analogies of incarnation: the playwright who writes himself a part in his play, or the king who goes in disguise to live among his subjects. They are only parables. We who are bound by finite experience cannot know what it means for God to become man. But it seems an inadequate concept of God to deny him that possibility.

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<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Charles Gore, *Belief in Christ* (London: John Murray, 1922), p. 171. On this Modernist doctrine, see A. M. Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple* (London: Longmans, 1960), pp. 68–73.

Of course this is not to suggest that God became man in order to enrich his experience. On the contrary: 'Christ who was rich, for your sake became poor' ([2 Cor. 8:9](#)). God is not like the prince who becomes a pauper because he envies the pauper's carefree existence. He is rather more like the prince (unknown among human princes) who leaves the palace to share the misery and the starvation of his subjects.

The infinite nature of God allows us to envisage the *possibility* of incarnation. But the mere possibility of incarnation may not lead us to the fact of incarnation as a matter of course, especially [p. 7](#) when we remember the kind of incarnation of which Christians speak. The incarnation of God in Jesus does not mean simply that God became man in order to live the one supremely perfect human life. That can seem, in the light of our first approach by way of the compatibility of God and man, to be something rather appropriate for God. The incarnation of God in Jesus means that God became man in order to live and die in self-identification with sinners. This (as Luther saw so clearly) is what contrasts so brutally with what men expect of divinity. Men who naturally define God by excluding from his perfection all the undesirable aspects of their own condition would never have guessed at the possibility of *that* incarnation.

It is the self-giving love of God which determines the astonishing fact of incarnation. We could never have known the full reality of either without the other. Only because God is self-giving love was he not content to remain in the sufficiency of his own perfection but entered also into the negative and impoverishing experience of incarnation in order to enrich us. Of course, because he is self-giving love, our enrichment becomes also his enrichment.

The claim that incarnation is an inconceivable idea must be given its due. It may serve to remind us that the incarnation is not to be regarded as a matter of course, something we should have expected. As Karl Barth says, 'The statement that Jesus Christ is the One who is of divine and human essence dares to unite that which by definition cannot be united.'<sup>6</sup> Christology is not obliged to dispel the ultimate mystery of the incarnation which is the mystery of God's astonishing love.

## II. THE 'MYTH' OF INCARNATION

The confusing term 'myth' seems to be most often used in *The Myth* to mean a story which conveys truth but is not itself literally true. I have already referred to parabolic illustrations of the idea of incarnation, which might be called 'myths' of incarnation. It is as well to realise that the New Testament writers also use mythical language about incarnation, when they speak of Jesus as a divine [p. 8](#) being who existed before the incarnation in heavenly glory and descended from heaven into this world. But in these cases myths are being told about what is taken to be the fact of incarnation. The authors of *The Myth*, however, claim that the idea of incarnation itself is myth and that Christology is mistaken to take it literally.

In that case, what is the truth of which the incarnation is only a picture? The credibility of the argument of *The Myth* depends entirely on a credible answer to this question. The authors have several different answers, of which we shall here examine two.

(a) John Hick regards incarnation as 'a mythological expression of the immense significance of our encounter with one in whose presence we have found ourselves to be at the same time in the presence of God.'<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Church Dogmatics* IV/2 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1958), p. 61.

<sup>7</sup> *The Myth*, p. 184.

No doubt this expresses why it was that the early Christians found themselves obliged to use language of deity with reference to Jesus. Jesus they knew as the mediator of God's saving presence to them, the one through whom they knew the Father. Jesus was the focus of all their experience of God. He was not, like Mahomet, a prophet who communicated God's revelation and then stepped aside. Jesus became himself *part of* the early Christian experience of God. He embodied God's saving purpose and action and presence in his own person. In the Christian experience of God Jesus was so identified with God that in the end he had to be identified *as* God.

Hick wishes us to stop before the end of that development. Jesus has indeed those functions in the Christian's relation to God, but he is not (literally) God. But a functional Christology which thus stops short of Jesus' essential divinity must finally be what Jews and Muslims have always argued it is: blasphemy and idolatry. No human representative of God may rightly fill the role which Jesus fills in the New Testament writings, and which the authors of *The Myth* (with the exception of Don Cupitt) want him to continue to fill in the Christian religion. In our encounter with this man (says Hick) we are in the presence of God. If the God in question is the God of the Old Testament, the God who p. 9 requires that nothing creaturely be confused with him, then *it follows* that this man *is* God.

In the development which led to the early Christian confession of Jesus as God there are three basic steps: (i) Jesus functions as God, (ii) Jesus is therefore worshipped, (iii) Jesus is therefore identified as God. The logic of the third step is irrefutable given the first two. In that case, John Hick's explanation of the myth of incarnation takes us back to the fundamental reason for belief in the fact of incarnation.

(b) Frances Young says that the truth of the myth 'can be summarized approximately by saying that God is to be understood as *a suffering God*'.<sup>8</sup>

This is a rescue of something of value from the sinking ship. Frances Young can certainly say what she says about God's loving involvement in the suffering of his world, without the need for belief in a literal incarnation. But Young's God suffers in sympathy with his world: he does not precisely subject *himself* to the world's evil as men experience it. To return to the parable I used earlier, the God who becomes incarnate is like the king who leaves his palace to come among his subjects and share their sufferings at first hand as one of them. Young's God is like a king who sends someone else to do that on his behalf, so that his subjects can believe that the king in his palace sympathizes with their lot. As Brian Hebblethwaite says, 'there is all the difference in the world between the sending of condolences and actually bearing the brunt of the suffering oneself.'<sup>9</sup>

Now it could be objected that my parables are too anthropomorphic, but it may be that at this point anthropomorphism is justified. It is helpful to recall the point at which the Old Testament reaches its profoundest understanding of God's suffering love for his people, in the prophecy of Hosea. Hosea's perception of God's suffering love for Israel is achieved by the analogy of his own love for Gomer. The analogy holds only by gross anthropomorphism, but with Christian hindsight this seems one of the highpoints of the Old Testament revelation of God.

The incarnation is the ultimate step in the same direction. God's p. 10 love is now seen not just by human analogy. It takes human form, so that the earlier anthropomorphisms of speech are now, as it were, justified by an anthropomorphism of fact. The culmination of God's loving self-involvement with his people is that he comes among them as a man to

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36: the whole passage, pp. 36f., should be read.

<sup>9</sup> 'Incarnation—The Essence of Christianity?', *Theology* 80 (1977), p. 88.

suffer as human suffering the evil of the world. If that is myth, not fact, then the cross has less to say about the problem of suffering than it might. [p. 11](#)

# The Fundamentalism Debate: A Survey of Reviews of James Barr's Fundamentalism

by A. N. S. LANE

*List of Reviews*<sup>1</sup> (followed by abbreviations used in this article)

- J.R.W. Stott, *All Souls Magazine* Sept–Oct 1978, pp. 12f. (AS) (also repeated, in an abridged form, in *Church of England Newspaper* 22.9.1978, p. 7 and, in a slightly modified form, in *Christianity Today* 8.9.1978, pp. 44–6)
- G. Whitefeld, *The Ampleforth Journal* 83, 1978, pp. 67f. (AJ)
- L. Misselbrook, *Baptist Times* 28.7.1977 (BT)
- M. Wadsworth, *British Book' News* November 1977 (BBN)
- A. N. S. Lane, *Christian Graduate* 30, 1977, pp. 77–80 (CG)
- J. Goldingay, *Churchman* 91, 1977, pp. 295–308 (Ch)
- D. L. Edwards, *Church Times* 15.7.1977 (ChT)
- D. Williams, *Crusade* October 1977, p. 49 (Cr1)
- P. Cousins, *Crusade* October 1978, pp. 32f. (Cr2)
- B. C. Farr, *Digest* April 1978, p. 5 (Dig)
- D. W. Cartwright, *Elim Evangelical* 30.7.1977, pp. 8–10 (EE)
- A. S. Wood, *Epworth Review* 5, 1978, pp. 123f. (ER)
- R. M. Horn, *Evangelical Times* November 1977, p. 7 (EvT)
- C. S. Rodd, *Expository Times* 88, 1977, pp. 353–5 (ExT)
- L. Jacobs, *Jewish Chronicle* 5.8. 1977, (JC)
- D. R. Hall, *Methodist Recorder* 3.11.1977 (MR)
- Anon, *The National Message* June 1978, p. 185 (NM)
- M. Warren, *New Fire* 4, 1977, pp. 456–9 (NF)
- H. Dean, *The Officer* September 1977 (Off)
- P. Wells, *Revue Reformee* 29, 1978, pp. 85–94 (RR) [p. 12](#)
- G. W. Anderson, *SOTS Booklist* 1978, p. 84 (SOTS)
- D. F. Wright, *Themelios* 3, 1978, pp. 86–9 (Them)
- K. Ward, *Theology* 81, 1978, pp. 145–7 (Theol)
- P. Helm, *Third Way* 14.7.1977, pp. 17f. (TW)

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to the SCM Press for supplying copies of some of the reviews. Since I have often been dependent upon copies I have not always been able to supply full details of volume, page, etc. The reviews are listed in alphabetical order of periodical. A chronological study might reveal some interesting unacknowledged borrowing, but this task I will leave to the literary critic. I have sought as far as possible to let the reviews speak for themselves and so have quoted freely. In giving short quotations there is always the danger of misrepresentation. I have sought to the best of my ability to avoid this but I apologise for any instances where I may have failed.

J. Negenman, *Tijdschrift voor Theologie* January 1978 (TvT)  
C. Longley, *The Times* 5.12.1977, (Ti)  
W. Edgar, *Westminster Theological Journal* 40, 1977, pp. 154–6 (WTJ)

## INTRODUCTION

PROFESSOR JAMES BARR'S *Fundamentalism*,<sup>2</sup> published in July 1977 has provoked a number of responses but so far there is no sign of anything like a controversy. This is unlikely to occur since one of the striking features of the informed reviews of *Fundamentalism*, whether by conservative evangelicals<sup>3</sup> or others, is the wide measure of agreement between them.

A number of reviews confine themselves almost exclusively to giving a brief summary of the contents of the book, whether without comment (A), with praise (BBN, Off, SOTS, TvT) or with criticism (MR, TvT). As these reviews offer little more than a summary of the book they merit no further mention.

There can be said to be a general consensus among reviews by conservative evangelicals: *Fundamentalism* makes some important points that need to be headed but it is marred by serious inaccuracies.

I sincerely hope that evangelicals will not imagine that Barr's blemishes exempt them from taking him seriously. He makes many points of substance and hits his target often enough and accurately enough to leave the evangelical thinker with plenty of food for constructive thought (CG 78).

In summary, then, Professor Barr's analysis and critique of the fundamentalist cast of mind is frequently compelling, though sometimes misled and often overstated, over one particular and p. 13 theological issue (the doctrine of inspiration/infallibility itself) unsatisfactory (Ch 307).

The general flavour and gross simplifications of the book are regrettable for the further supremely important reason that they may hinder evangelicals from taking to heart its many valid criticism of evangelicalism (Them 88).

Only two of the evangelical reviews can be described as uncompromisingly hostile (EL, Cr2).

Non-conservative reviewers do not go into the same detailed criticism as the evangelical reviewers (which is not surprising since their knowledge of the subject is presumably indirect and less detailed) but the same essential points of criticism are found. It is for this reason that a new 'fundamentalism controversy' is unlikely—there is not sufficient disagreement in the assessment of *Fundamentalism* to make a controversy.

## CRITICISMS

### 1) Approach

Professor Barr maintains that his goal is to understand 'fundamentalism' (pp. 8f.). But the most common criticism of *Fundamentalism* is its polemical approach.

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<sup>2</sup> James Barr, *Fundamentalism* (SCM, London 1977, 379 pp. £3.95). Dr. Barr is Oriel Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture at Oxford University.

<sup>3</sup> Throughout the article the terms 'conservative' and 'evangelical' may be taken to mean 'conservative evangelical', except where the context clearly indicates otherwise.



Some explanation is certainly needed why a book which sets out to analyse and understand (p. 9) becomes a hatchet job. Like a child with the pile of wooden bricks on the cover, Barr is bent on demolishing evangelicalism. A sympathetic reviewer in *The Scotsman* called him 'ruthless', and so he is. It will be no surprise if the book embitters relations between different kinds of Christians (Them 86).

This fault is not one to which evangelicals can plead innocent and John Stott indicates the appropriate response:

*Fundamentalism* has increased my own determination in all religious debate to respect the other person, listen carefully to him, and struggle to understand him. For there can be no understanding without sympathy and no dialogue without respect (AS 12).

Those whose beliefs are under fire will naturally tend to view their antagonist as polemical and their judgement may be considered partial. Indeed Barr has sought to preempt such charges by prophesying that any critical appraisal of fundamentalism will p. 14 be branded as a distortion and a caricature (p. 325)<sup>4</sup>. But similar complaints are also made by non-conservative reviewers:

He writes without sympathy, and it is this lack which makes his understanding incomplete (ExT 355).

Had Professor Barr been less consistently polemical, and shown more understanding of the positive values of conservative evangelicals (sic) his book would have been more balanced and more effective (MR).

One evangelical reviewer uses an interesting illustration to make this point:

Today, students who wish to understand a living society and its religion immerse themselves in that society and try to understand it sympathetically from the inside. Professor Barr seems not to have tried to do this with fundamentalism (Ch 297).

This illustration is taken up by a later, non-conservative, reviewer.

He begins by avowing his own belief that Fundamentalism is a pathological condition of Christianity, that it is incoherent and completely wrong; yet he wishes to understand and expound its intellectual structure. The programme is rather like that of early anthropologists who, in expounding the nature of religion, were really trying to explain how such gross superstitions could ever come to be held by rational beings. Such an attitude is not conducive to understanding, and it does not produce very much of it in this case (Theol 145).

## 2) Selectivity

Another criticism of *Fundamentalism* is its Selectivity. This appears in three different ways. First, the author claims to have 'worked through the morass of British conservative evangelical literature' (p. 223) but his reviewers are not convinced. His reading is limited in scope and, more seriously, dated (AS 12, CG 77, Cr1, ER 123, NF 458, RR 90f., 93, Them 86, WTJ 155).

Some of Dr. Barr's own attacks also show that his research into what Evangelicals are actually saying has not been sufficiently comprehensive to be worthy of what is, on the face of it, a p. 15 major book by a major scholar (ChT).

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<sup>4</sup> One reviewer chooses to judge Barr's case by the reception it has received and concludes from the moderate tone of the review in the *Churchman* that Barr's charges 'cannot be true of the whole movement even if they have substance in some cases' (Ti).

Secondly, Barr makes no mention of a number of evangelical bodies and events such as the Tyndale Fellowship, the Shaftesbury Project, Latimer House, NEAC (Keele, 1967) and the 1974 Lausanne Congress (CG 77, Them 86, 88 Cr1). Had these been included in his research the picture would have been very different, e.g. in connection with social attitudes or self-criticism.

Thirdly, it is argued that there is no need for these gaps.

Professor Barr speaks of what fundamentalists 'probably' think or what they 'possibly' believe. His uncertainty is strange: could he not get such points elucidated by his conservative evangelical colleagues at Manchester (where the bulk of the work was presumably done)? As it is, the probablys and the perhapses make the work sometimes reminiscent of a study of Israelite (or Ugaritic or Babylonian) religion, where such uncertainties have to remain unresolved because Cyrus or Zechariah are not available for comment (Ch 298).

A similar charge is made by a non-conservative reviewer of parts of the book:

'These sections, I fear, are little better than armchair sociology, without benefit of statistical research or convincing citation' (Theol 146).

At this stage a word about Professor Barr's own past is appropriate.

A quarter of a century ago he was president of the Christian Union at Edinburgh University (Them 86).

This partly explains the dated nature of *Fundamentalism*:

'His general experience of evangelical religion is dated in the 1950s, a period when some things were said and done which should make us all bow our heads in shame' (Cr1).

### **3) Inaccuracies**

Some major lapses must be mentioned. The very title of the book has been questioned. Although Barr theoretically distinguishes between conservative evangelicalism and fundamentalism the whole thesis of the book is that conservative evangelicals are fundamentalist. This objection does not simply arise from evangelical hyper-sensitivity, as is shown by David Edwards:

Dr. Barr attacks positions which are being quite rapidly abandoned, and he insists on applying this emotionally loaded word p. 16 'fundamentalist' to teachers who have publicly abandoned those positions. Many who, like this reviewer, are not markedly 'conservative' will ask whether this is a fair method of debate (ChT).

The objection to Dr. Barr's use of the name 'fundamentalist' is not a purely semantic matter. There has been a genuine change in the conservative evangelical movement in recent years which Barr does not recognise.

On a host of issues he is unaware of the strong winds of change blowing through the movement (Them 87, cf. Ch 307).

He seems generally reluctant to differentiate between an indefensibly inflexible literalism and what in recent years has developed into a much broader conservative evangelicalism.... The consequence is that the majority of the newer conservatives would find themselves in agreement with many of Professor Barr's strictures (ER 123).

The same point is made more forcefully by non-conservative reviewers.

He is simply wrong not to do justice to a movement of Evangelical liberalisation that in its own way is quite as remarkable as the *aggiornamento* among Roman Catholics (ChT).

Equally misleading is Professor Barr's neglect of the genuine diversity that exists within the conservative evangelical fold. He devotes some space to consider the differences within conservative evangelicalism (especially Ch.7) but reviewers agree that he seriously fails to recognise the extent of diversity (CG 77, Cr2 32, RR 90, Them 87). One reviewer notes that there is almost as great a theological difference between Packer and Hal Lindsey, say, as between Packer and Barr (RR 90). This failure to acknowledge the extent of diversity is not incidental to the thrust to *Fundamentalism*.

The point is, he cannot face both ways at once. Either fundamentalism is a closely-knit structure in which the party line has to be toed at whatever cost, an 'intellectual sect', as Barr calls it, or it is not. If it contains elements of both then no general criticism can be made of it. This is not merely to make the point, not sufficiently noted by Barr, that any grouping is a coalition of interests, and that it is likely to be very difficult to say something that is going to be generally true of all members p. 17 of such a group and at the same time worth saying. It is rather that the range and inconsistency of the criticism Barr makes imply a defect in his method (TW 17).

The same point is made by non-conservative reviewers.

The truth is, the argument of this book makes no distinction between polemicists, and believers who tend to be literalist out of simplicity, and believers profoundly concerned about Christian life in the world, who want to witness to their Faith but tend to be conservative through genuine perplexity. It is faulty analysis to confuse all these under the title 'Fundamentalist' (NF 459).

Professor Barr lists three characteristics of fundamentalism:

- a. a very strong emphasis on the inerrancy of the Bible, the absence from it of any sort of error;
- b. a strong hostility to modern theology and to the methods, results and implications of modern critical study of the Bible;
- c. an assurance that those who do not share their religious viewpoint are not really 'true Christians' at all (p. 1).

These are noted by a large number of reviewers. Many of the conservative evangelical reviewers protest that if these are the marks of fundamentalism they are not fundamentalists and, conversely, if Barr is describing British conservative evangelicalism, as he professes, he is not being fair (AS 13, BT, CG 78, ER 123, Them 86, WTJ 154). Barr's understanding here is due to his failure to acknowledge either the extent of the diversity within evangelicalism or the changes that have taken place. None denies that these three characteristics have been or still can be found within British conservative evangelicalism. What is disputed is Barr's claim that they still are the dominant characteristics of mainstream British conservative evangelicalism today.

The late Canon Max Warren, brought up as a 'fundamentalist' and became a 'liberal evangelical', offers a different account of the essence of fundamentalism.

"Here I stand I can do no other" ... remains the classic religious response of the man or the movement which believes that something fundamental is at stake about which a protest must be made. Surely this response must find its place in all religions, other than the Laodicean; in all philosophies; in all sciences, p. 18 indeed wherever the mind of man is active. In all these instances it is a profoundly religious response.... Have we not to recognise that all fundamentalisms, in so far as they relate to religion, have as their

essential characteristic the response of men of what to them appears to be an attack on truth as they understand it... There is no hope of beginning to understand fundamentalism of any kind without the recognition of this deeply religious dimension (NF 456f.).

Canon Warren refers to 'brash and over-confident and intolerant young conservative Evangelicals', like himself over fifty years ago.

*Behind* their militancy was not, and is not, a rigid belief in the inerrancy of the Bible. Rather it was, and is, a deep personal commitment to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and a consequent dedication to witness and evangelism... It was, I think, Coleridge who said, "The Bible finds me". That is the 'hard core' of Evangelical belief. I am no fundamentalist in Professor Barr's sense, but that is as true for me today as it was when I was an undergraduate (NF 457f.).

One of the criticisms of British conservative evangelicalism in *Fundamentalism* is 'its quite total complacency and lack of selfcriticism' (p. 162, cf. 163, 222f, 338). This description has triggered off considerable response. Most striking is that of David L. Edwards.

A few words contain the substance of this attack on fundamentalism.... 'They must therefore acknowledge with deep shame that their treatment of Scripture seldom coincides with their view of it... They are sometimes slovenly, sometimes simplistic, sometimes highly selective and sometimes downright dishonest.' These strong words, however, do not occur in Professor Barr's polemic. They are quoted from ... the Rev. John Stott (ChT, quoted in Ch 306, cf. NF 459).

The review in the *Times* repeats Canon Edward's point and concludes that 'refusal to be self-critical is not therefore a charge that can be made to stick'. The same point is made by evangelical reviewers, citing NEAC and the Lausanne Congress (CG 77, Them 86).

#### **4) Dr. Barr's Alternative**

Professor Barr claims that 'the concept of heresy has ceased to p.19 be functionally useful for the evaluation of present-day theological opinions' (p.197) and several reviewers have commented on this (NM, RR 93). They also ask what alternative Barr has to offer to the 'fundamentalism' of his opponents (CG 79, EvT, NM, RR 94, WTJ 154). Some of the non-conservative reviewers comment on the same point.

What he never comes to grips with is the real difficulty a conservative evangelical has in seeing where a firm basis for faith can be found, if not in the literal truth of the Bible (Theol 146).

Barr's position is unlikely to appeal to 'fundamentalists' since, as Max Warren argues, the essence of fundamentalism is the willingness to stand up and be counted for one's convictions (NF 456f.).

#### **5) Conclusion**

It would be unfair to leave the reader with the impression that *Fundamentalism* can be written off as hopelessly inaccurate. While the approach is defective there remains much in the book that is challenging. The major evangelical reviews all acknowledge important lessons to be learnt from *Fundamentalism*. Happily, the evidence is that *Fundamentalism* is leading not to another sterile 'fundamentalism controversy' but to renewed self-examination and self-criticism by evangelicals.

## CHALLENGES

The serious evangelical reviews all recognise that *Fundamentalism* poses important challenges that need to be faced by evangelicalism.

### 1) Inerrancy

Undoubtedly the major issue raised by Professor Barr is the inerrancy of Scripture. Here he has the support of the non-conservative reviewers.

The claim that Holy Scripture is 'infallible' or 'inertant' is intellectually indefensible, and the attempts that have been made to defend it since the rise of modern scholarship deserve all the adjectives which Mr. Stott piles up.... Dr. Barr is surely correct to suggest that fundamentalists have lived in this intellectualism p. 20 with consequent damage to their mental health (ChT).

But the main conservative reviewers defend the concept of inerrancy.

It is not dishonest, in the face of apparent discrepancies, to suspend judgement and continue looking for harmony rather than declare Scripture to be erroneous. On the contrary, it is an expression of our Christian integrity (AS 13).

Is the teaching of different parts of the Bible ultimately compatible or not? If it is, as evangelicals affirm, we are committed to an exegesis that accepts it all—perhaps synthesis is a better word than harmony, because it is important that each part be allowed to speak for itself. If there is no ultimate compatibility, as Barr affirms, we are forced to pick and choose. If Paul and James, say, are *ultimately* incompatible, we can be even-handed only in rejecting both; otherwise we must choose one or the other (CG 78).

I shall prefer not to get into an argument over inerrancy, because the framework of thinking it may suggest can be inappropriate; but if someone insists that I declare whether I think Scripture is inerrant or not, I will be willing to affirm that belief, reckoning this to be less misleading than to deny it (Ch 301).

One reviewer offers some helpful clarifications of the meaning of the term.

Barr never defines inerrancy but makes no distinction between 'No part of the Bible errs' as a methodological principle and as something that dictates exegetical conclusions, despite the fact that such a distinction is widely made in the literature he consulted... Because he fails to appreciate the methodological character of the fundamentalists' commitment to biblical inerrancy it is not surprising that he cannot make up his mind whether commitment to inerrancy involves a recognition of different literary types in Scripture or the interpretation of all biblical texts as involving 'correspondence to external reality' (TW 18).

Another reviewer criticises Barr for 'his fastening on the formally negative, technical concept of inerrancy as the most significant feature of the evangelical view of Scripture. In reality, the divine authority of the Bible, which is a positive theological principle, p. 21 is of far greater importance' (Them 87).

Some of Barr's sternest criticism is reserved for those who appeal to Jesus' teaching in support of the doctrine of biblical inerrancy. Here two reviewers draw a careful distinction between Jesus' passing references to Moses, Daniel, etc. and his 'attribution of religious authority to the Old Testament Scriptures', his acceptance of them as "the authoritative Word of God" (Ch 300f., CG 79).

It might be imagined that by remaining firm on these two points the evangelical reviewers are simply confirming Barr's contention that they are fundamentalists. But they seek to make a careful distinction between 'fundamentalism' and 'conservative evangelicalism'. John Stott does this as follows:

The fundamentalist emphasises so strongly the divine origin of Scripture that he tends to forget that it also had human authors who used sources, syntax and words to convey their message; whereas the evangelical remembers the double authorship of Scripture.... On the one hand, God spoke.... On the other hand, men spoke.... This double authorship of Scripture naturally affects the way the evangelical reads his Bible. Because it is God's Word, he reads it like no other book, praying humbly to the Holy Spirit for illumination. But because it is also men's words, he reads it like every other book, paying close attention to the context, structure, grammar and vocabulary (AS 13).

Others draw a similar distinction.

There is also the distinction between the purely dogmatic approach to Scripture, working simply from the doctrine of Scripture even if the conclusions are then defended by the use of historical argument, and the conservative approach which seeks to give weight to both historical criticism and the doctrine of Scripture (CG 78, cf. TW 18).

I believe we have to hold on to the doctrine of inspiration, but also to seek to treat Scripture historically.... Conservative evangelicals who want to practise historical criticism have hard work to do in working out a coherent understanding of both how the Bible can be God's word if it is also a fully human book, and how they can use the historical method on a book they believe came about by God's providence (Ch 304).

Two reviewers cite a seminal article by Dr. Packer which argues [p. 22](#) the need for constant interaction between our doctrine of Scripture and the empirical evidence (CG 78, TW 18).

Dr. Barr is aware of the difference between modern conservative biblical scholarship and traditional fundamentalism but he attributes this to inconsistency and/or dishonesty. He has a surprising ally in one of the more conservative reviewers. Robert Horn, in the *Evangelical Times*, cites Barr with approval as a further confirmation of his fears concerning the course of modern conservative biblical scholarship. Dr. Barr and Mr. Horn share a common presupposition—that there is no real *via media* between 'fundamentalism' and 'liberalism'. Yet this is precisely what is affirmed by those who seek to follow the path outlined in the previous paragraph—they seek *both* to hold to a firm doctrine of Scripture and *also* to be open to the use of the historical critical method. Those who stand between fundamentalism and liberalism need not be inconsistent or dishonest but may be acting according to firm principles. *Fundamentalism* never really considers this possibility.

Barr sees B. B. Warfield's doctrine of Scripture as the basis of fundamentalism, although it has been wrenched from its context in the process. Some of the details of Barr's argument here have been faulted (EvT, NF 458, RR 91–3, TW 18). But Warfield's doctrine has been criticised by conservatives in the past (RR 93) and is recognised as inadequate by some of the evangelical reviewers today.

One of our most urgent unfinished tasks is the elaboration of a satisfactory doctrine of Scripture for an era of biblical criticism. The development of critical, *i.e.* literary and historical, study of the Bible constitutes one of the great divides in Christian history; there can be no turning the clock back. We cannot afford to rest on Warfield's laurels, but must meet the challenges of today (Them 88, cf. CG 79).

One evangelical reviewer passes beyond defense of the conservative position to a challenge to liberalism.

Is there a danger of 'liberalism' failing to be self critical? I put it in this way because this is exactly the criticism Professor Barr makes of conservative evangelicals.... But is this not exactly the danger of 'liberalism' too? It is, of course, *internally* self critical in a rigorous way: within the critical framework it is thoroughgoing in its willingness to commit itself

to historical [p. 23](#) investigation, to admitting that particular critical positions were wrong, to abandoning cherished answers and leaving questions open, and so on. But to be truly self critical would involve distancing oneself from this stance and asking whether it is adequate (Ch 304f.).

He cites the work of Gerhard Ebeling and others in support and his argument is quoted with approval by the *Times* reviewer. At this point there is room for fruitful dialogue between the two sides 'if only both parties could be brought to meet' (NF 457).

## **2) Interpretation of Scripture**

Professor Barr argues that evangelical exegesis follows a 'completely unprincipled—in the strict sense unprincipled, because guided by no principle of interpretation—approach, in which the only guiding criterion is that the Bible should, by the sorts of truth that fundamentalists respect and follow, be true and not in any sort of error' (p. 49). The reviewers do not agree.

Many evangelical scholars would agree with the charge that evangelical exegesis and hermeneutics leave a lot to be desired, but I doubt whether 'completely unprincipled' even begins to be fair. It is noteworthy that Barr's bibliography contains only a very few evangelical commentaries and not one that is recent and substantial (CG 78).

Quite a few Conservative Evangelical scholars have adopted the 'new hermeneutic'. This is the method of asking how a passage, given its cultural conditioning, plays its part in the witness of Scripture as a whole—which alone is finally authoritative. (ChT).

But this does not mean that there is no need to learn from Barr at this point.

We evangelicals have always been much better at defending the authority of the Bible than at wrestling with its interpretation. Dogmatic assertions about infallibility and inerrancy are no substitute for conscientious, painstaking studies (AS 13, cf. CG 78 (quoted above), Ch 299f., EvT).

## **3) Rationalism**

Dr. Barr discerns a rationalistic tendency in the treatment of miracles by evangelicals. The overriding concern is to preserve the historical accuracy of the text, even if this involves emptying [p. 24](#) it of all supernatural content. The truth in this charge is noted by some reviewers (Ch 300, Them 88, WTJ 155f.) though there are qualifications to be made (Them 88, TW 18). Related to this is a rationalistic tendency in terms of 'a pre-Kantian empirical or rationalist bias behind their thinking' (WTJ 156, cf. Ch 300, ER 124).

Unfortunately, much of this is all too true. While Barr is not attuned to the complex philosophical questions surrounding the proper versus the improper uses of reason by Christian and non-Christian, he has certainly exposed a weakness in much of contemporary evangelical apologetics (WTJ 156).

## **4) Tradition**

Professor Barr makes the serious charge that biblical authority is a form rather than a reality in evangelical thought (p. 11). The real normative authority is evangelical tradition and the Bible is simply used to support this (pp. 37f.). Those reviewers who discuss this point all agree.

We do sometimes use our venerable evangelical traditions to shelter us from the radical challenges of the Word of God (AS 12, cf. EvT).

It is the perennial danger of all authorities, whether religious or otherwise, to resort to dishonest means to suppress valid criticism, but this must be resisted.

Evangelicals can be in a position quite analogous to that of those religious groups in the gospels who emphasise the Scriptures but are indicted for their lack of scriptural understanding. Psychologically, those who believe that their faith is biblical, that they have responded to the biblical message, can by that very conviction be hindered from hearing aspects of that message. What they have already grasped provides the framework of reference for understanding the Bible as a whole and also the means of gagging those parts of the Bible that do not fit with this framework. And their theological commitment to Scripture can make them assume that they would not do such a thing (Ch 296f.)

## 5) Evangelical Theology

Dr. Barr is very critical of evangelical theology and his criticisms p.25 are accepted by the evangelical reviewers, though with qualifications (Them 87). First, he charges that evangelical theology is fossilised and inactive. 'Within true fundamentalism there is no real task for theology other than the conservation and reiteration of a tradition believed to have existed in the past and in any case now taken as immovably fixed' (p. 162). Compared with evangelical scholarship 'practically all they say about theology or philosophy can only be described as abysmally poor in comparison' (p. 160). It is acknowledged that there is much truth in Barr's criticism but not that it is universally true. The situation is much better in Holland or the U.S.A. than in England. The neglect of theology proper in England is not confined to evangelicals but has deep historical roots. In recent years there has been a recognition of the need and steps have been made by the Tyndale Fellowship to encourage more theological scholarship though there is still, as Barr shows, a long way to go (AS 12, CG 79, TW 18).

Secondly, Barr states that 'nowhere in the conservative evangelical literature have I found evidence of any serious attempt to understand what non-conservative theologians think' (p. 164).

While this statement must be taken as further evidence for the narrowness of Barr's reading it must be admitted that much evangelical polemic completely bears out his point (CG 79, cf. TW 18).

## 6) Continuity with the Past

Professor Barr claims that it is 'liberals' not 'fundamentalists' who stand in continuity with the church of past centuries. This point is not conceded by the reviews.

His attempt to show that the line of continuity from Luther and Calvin runs down to, let us say, *The Myth of God Incarnate*, rather than to evangelicalism is myopic. Barr is clearly not at home in historical theology; he discounts an Athanasian Christology (p. 171), and twice misconstrues the Westminster Confession (pp. 261ff. 294) (Them 87 cf. CG 80).

But while the point has been overstated, it remains true that:

Evangelicals generally lack a satisfactory understanding of doctrinal development. As a consequence, theology is rarely seen as a constructive and creative task (p. 223), and the most overtly developed Christian doctrine, that of the Trinity, enjoys p.26 little more than formal recognition in much evangelicalism (pp. 176-177) (Them 88). Some evangelicals too glibly refer to 'historic Christianity' when they are in fact referring to a section of the post-Reformation Protestant tradition (CG 80).

## 7) Conclusion



There remains much of significance in *Fundamentalism* which has received no mention. This is partly because of the nature of the book.

I found the book's exposition of its care diffuse; it offers not so much an unfolding argument as a series of essays on various aspects of the topic (Ch 296, cf. TvT).

This diffuseness does not make for a good book but it means that there is a considerable wealth of material scattered throughout its pages. The discussion within the reviews and this survey has not exhausted the interesting and stimulating material to be found in *Fundamentalism*. [p.27](#)

## Questions Concerning the Future of African Christianity

*by* DICK FRANCE

A FEW years ago I found myself the only white man in a crowd of several hundred marching along a road in a new suburb of the ancient city of Ife, Nigeria, lustily singing 'Onward, Christian Soldiers' in Yoruba. We were marching to lay the foundation stone of a new church, the 13th congregation in Ife of that one denomination, founded only 40 years before; they had already outgrown their 400-seater church building. Usually such a procession in a Nigerian city draws a huge crowd. That day it did not, for the very good reason that practically all the population of the area was already in the procession. Christianity is on the march in Africa.

That was the Christ Apostolic Church, one of the larger of the hundreds of independent churches which have sprung up in the last half-century across Africa, particularly in South Africa and Nigeria. Usually beginning as breakway movements from the mission-founded churches, they have developed their own leadership, their own forms of worship, and often their own theology, recognisably Christian but sometimes disturbingly unfamiliar to a western visitor. Dreams, visions, fasts and prophecy are prominent; physical healing, exorcism and protection against witchcraft are major concerns, and western medicine is suspect if not positively forbidden.

The remarkable success of these independent churches is largely due to their ability, too seldom shared by the missionary, to scratch where it itches. It is they who are in the forefront of the spectacular statistical growth of Christianity in most of Africa south of the Sahara, causing statisticians to predict a predominantly Christian continent by the end of the century.

But the missionary-founded churches are also growing, governed in most areas now by national leaders. Missionaries must increasingly, even if sometimes reluctantly, stand back and watch [p.28](#) the juggernaut which they have launched gather speed. It is certainly out of their control—but is it out of control altogether? Some of them think so, and so they try to keep a hand on the wheel. Particularly among the evangelical missions there is a reluctance to let go, and so powerful African voices have been raised calling for a complete 'moratorium' on missionary involvement in Africa. 'Moratorium' implies a limited period,

but among its main proponents there seems little enthusiasm for the eventual return of the missionaries.

When you have visited a mission guest house where the only thing African was the servants; when you have sung Hymns A & M at half speed to harmonium accompaniment; when you have listened to an African cleric in full medieval European regalia reading in Elizabethan English to a black-suited congregation, and then you step outside to the colour and rhythm and sheer exuberance of the real Africa—you cannot help sympathising with the frustration which has led to the call for moratorium. But it is too simple a solution to a very deep-seated problem, for the staunchest upholders of the foreign traditions are usually the national leaders themselves. I remember a prominent Nigerian Methodist layman rejecting a potential lesson-reader as ‘not properly dressed’—he was wearing impeccable national dress, not a western suit!

And even when you have banished all the missionaries and burned all the organs, will the churches necessarily be any more effective in interpreting the biblical revelation to the African context? If not, what is the future for Christianity in Africa?

Colonial protection is a thing of the past, and the post-colonial hangover is passing. Many African Christians can see persecution ahead. In Chad the church has already had to face up to the compulsory reintroduction of traditional initiation rites, and it was caught unprepared: many complied, and many died. The compulsory unification of the churches in Zaire in the interests of ‘authenticity’ may well indicate a growing tendency for governments to try to take over the churches for political ends. In Uganda—well, who knows what is happening in Uganda, or why? But there seems no doubt that Christians as such rank high on the lists for elimination. And the worldwide re-assertion of the political goals of Islam is already being felt by Christians in several areas along the southern edge of the Sahara, while the Ethiopian [p. 29](#) situation suggests that Marxist governments in Africa cannot be expected to humour Christians any more than their European and Asian counterparts.

African Christianity is going to need, indeed it already needs, more than numbers. If it is to survive, it must be seen to be more than a relic of the colonial period. It must be truly African, speaking to actual African concerns with an authentically African voice. But, if it is to have any *raison d’être*, it must also be truly Christian, and that means that what it applies to the questions of Africa must be the biblical revelation. It is on its ability to be both truly African and truly Christian that the future of African Christianity hinges.

## **GROWTH OF ‘AFRICAN THEOLOGY’**

In recent years the question of ‘African Theology’ has been increasingly aired. The recognition of the predominantly western concerns of the traditional theological syllabus has led in Africa, as in other parts of the third world, to an attempt to break away into a new form of articulating Christian truth. So far so good. It is a quest which is both necessary for Africa and also salutary for the West, in that it may make us aware of areas of the biblical revelation (such as spirits and demons, or group solidarity) which we have tended to ignore.

The lead has been taken by scholars in the Religious Studies departments of African universities, such as Professors John Mbiti of Makerere and Bolaji Idowu of Ibadan. They have directed their attention particularly to the beliefs and practices of the traditional religions of Africa, and this is surely an essential starting-point in order to establish what are the basic religious concerns to which African Christianity must address itself. The problem is to know where to stop. While these scholars would not want, with one Ghanaian professor, to produce an ‘African theology’ which is distinct from ‘Christian

theology as it may be expressed by African theologians', there are many who fear that their attitude to the traditional religions goes beyond the search for points of contact to the affirmation of truths which are indeed African, but which are hardly compatible with biblical theology. p. 30

Thus Dr. Byang Kato, the late General Secretary of the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar, persistently warned against a trend towards universalism in such 'African theologies', which he regarded as essentially syncretistic. While his strictures have been felt by some evangelicals to be too shrill, there is a widespread distrust of 'African theology' among those who want to affirm that Christ has brought a way of salvation which African traditional religions could not offer.

Thus there is beginning to develop in Africa the scenario which we already know too well in the West, where avant-garde theologians shock and delight the reading public, and thus come to be regarded as the authentic voice of scholarship, while evangelicals snipe from the sidelines, and thus project an out-of-date, reactionary, and even unscholarly image. Evangelical scholarship in Africa desperately needs to get in where the action is, and not to allow 'African theology' to slide by default into an unbiblical syncretism.

It does not lack opportunity: practically every university Religious Studies department in Africa is desperately short-staffed (how unlike the West), and the shortage is most severe in the area of biblical studies. There are few more strategic areas for Christian prayer and action than the filling of these posts with African scholars who are as concerned to be biblical as they are to be African in their theology. There are such men, but they are mostly confined within the walls of evangelical seminaries, which are, as far as the great debate on African theology is concerned, the sidelines.

But it is not only the scholars but the church as a whole which has got to learn to think biblically for the African context. Evangelicals, who make so much of biblical authority, are too often ruled in practice, in Africa as in the West, by theological and behavioural conventions which they would be hard put to it to defend biblically. We are used to following, not to thinking issues through for ourselves; so no wonder we do not make the running.

With all this in mind, it was with a sense of great expectation that I sat recently in a small group late one night in the Ivory Coast laying the foundations for an Evangelical Theological Society for Africa. A name and an organisation mean nothing, but if the evident enthusiasm for this development is maintained, it suggests p. 31 that African evangelicalism is beginning to stir itself to think seriously about the application of biblical truth to the African scene. And if that is so, it augurs well for the church in Africa as a whole. It is not too late to influence the growth of the infant African theology in the direction of a more healthy balance of the two crucial factors of being at the same time African and biblical.

## **THE ISSUES AT STAKE**

But what sort of issues are involved? Where is this 'serious thinking' needed for Christianity in Africa? Three main areas seem crucial, within each of which are many more specific issues than can be mentioned here.

### **1. Theology**

The traditional religions of Africa, which have long been dismissed by the educated, at least in the missionary-dominated areas, as primitive and incompatible with 20th century life, are increasingly the object not only of academic study but of experimental interest; some intellectuals are no longer ashamed to be known as 'traditional religionists', and

some 'African Christian theologians' are becoming prominent apologists for, even promoters of, the old faiths. So the African Christian is being forced to reconsider the total repudiation of his ancestral religion which the missionaries had taught him. Was it, as he was often taught to believe, all a work of the devil? Is there not the possibility of truth apart from the Judaeo-Christian tradition? Or, to put it more theologically, just how far does general revelation extend? In this connection passages like Acts 14.15ff, 17.22ff, and specially Romans 1.18ff come vividly to life. Would Paul have preached in the same way in pre-Christian Africa? Is this how the missionaries approached African religions?

Even to raise such questions is to cause horror in many Christian circles in Africa. It is uncomfortable to feel a rocking of the boat which the missionaries launched and which has been forging ahead so smoothly; it is irresponsible thus to unsettle the unquestioning faithful. But the questions are being asked, and the younger generation of African intellectuals are taking them up eagerly. This is not a time for clinging blindly to traditions, but [p. 32](#) for a careful re-examination of the evidence; in other words, for theological discussion, which in this connection will mean a responsible exegetical study of passages like [Romans 1](#) and [2](#), leading to a restatement of the doctrine of general revelation in relation to the African context.

The point, at which this question becomes most acute is often that notoriously 'grey area' in Christian theology, the fate of the unevangelised. Granted that salvation is only through the atoning work of Christ (and even that is *not* granted by all concerned!) what does this imply about the devout traditional religionist who never heard the gospel? It is one thing to debate this issue in a cosy British common-room with centuries of Christian tradition shielding us from any personal implications; it is quite another matter when your grandfather died in undisturbed 'paganism', and everything in your culture insists that your ancestors are still very much involved in the life of your community. In that situation you may well find it more congenial to study the Old Testament saints and to discuss their status before God than to keep on trotting out the 'hard-line' texts like John 14.6 and Acts 4.12 with a smug *QED*. Then you may hear some theologians suggesting that the traditional religions were a sort of *praeparatio evangelica*, a schoolmaster to lead to Christ just like the Old Testament law, and even proposing that African Christians dispense with the Old Testament and put in its place the corpus of African religious tradition.

When you are up against this sort of question, there will be little help to be found in the western theological texts which line the shelves of African seminary libraries. The African church has got to do its own theological homework, and unless it finds theologians who take the biblical revelation as their non-negotiable starting-point but who are prepared to ask radical questions about its interpretation and its application to their own intellectual scene, its future is murky.

## 2. Culture

The need for an increasingly African image in such areas as church music, buildings, dress, forms of worship, etc., is now widely recognised, at least in theory, although there is often strong resistance at the grass-roots level to such 'unchurchly' innovations [p. 33](#) as drums and dancing. The Catholics have taken the lead here, acting while the protestants talk, and some of their developments in African Christian art, music and architecture are quite exciting.

But these are not the most difficult issues in cultural adaptation, important though they are for the appeal of Christianity to the newly self-conscious Africa. Culture goes deeper than forms of expression. It involves the whole life of a people, and religion is an inseparable part of it. Here arise the more serious problems, when the traditions received

from the missionaries conflict with those of the society. To decide what is fundamentally unchristian, as opposed to what is unfamiliar or unacceptable to western Christianity, is a task which demands careful study and an almost impossible degree of objectivity, as the African theologian is torn between the pull of African authenticity and a long-grained suspicion of 'pagan' customs.

Should a Nigerian Christian, for instance, seek or accept chieftaincy titles? They have lost nothing of their importance in the life of the community, and are an undoubted source of prestige and authority which could be valuable to the Christian cause. To refuse such a title is to cock a snook at society. But these titles have religious associations, not now taken very seriously *as religion* by most of those involved, but traditionally an essential part of the ceremonial. So the missionaries denounced them as intrinsically pagan. Now the churches find themselves divided, with the Catholic church permitting and even encouraging its members to take titles, while most protestant bodies are officially opposed to them, but far from agreed in practice.

More fundamental still is the issue of polygamy, which is a central feature of many African societies, and is far from dying out after a century of colonial rule. Most African Christians agree that monogamy is God's ideal, and would disapprove of a Christian taking a second wife (though this is not true in many of the independent churches). But the question of the Christian who was a polygamist before his conversion is a sure recipe for a lively debate in African evangelical circles. The missionaries generally refused to baptise a polygamist until he had divorced all but his first wife.

It was a workable rule of thumb, but was it the biblical position? Does the New Testament attitude to divorce count for so little? [p. 34](#) And what of Paul's advice that a convert should remain in the condition in which he was called (I Corinthians 7.17ff)? If this does not apply to polygamy, why not? Without in the least weakening the insistence on monogamy as the biblical ideal, many Christians are questioning seriously which is the lesser evil in this situation. It is not an academic issue; you cannot conclude smugly that the biblical evidence is not clear when you have a polygamist sitting in front of you asking for baptism!

Such issues are easily decided on the basis of prejudice and convention, and that is too often the level at which the debate is conducted. But there has been too little open discussion of the biblical position, not at the level of proof-texts but of principles.

### **3. Social and political issues**

Christianity is stigmatised throughout Africa as the white man's religion. To point out that this is not true in terms of its ultimate origin cuts little ice when in most of Africa it was the white man, the political and economic exploiter of Africa, who brought it. And it is undeniable that the values and practices, not to mention the theology, of African Christianity have been until very recently overwhelmingly those of the white man. Christianity is thus an obvious target for the militant nationalism which is the over-riding reality in modern Africa, whether it finds its ideological base in traditional religion and culture, or in Marxist theory, or even in the political aspirations of Islam. (It is interesting how much more successful Islam: has been in projecting itself as an authentically African religion than Christianity; undoubtedly Christianity's link with the colonial regimes has a lot to do with this.) While nothing is further from the intention of most present-day missionaries than cultural imperialism, Christianity is saddled with the image of the colonial era.

Last December Christians from all over Africa met in Nairobi for the Pan-African Christian Leadership Assembly, and one of the dominant impressions of those present was the breaking down of barriers between black and white in a common commitment to

the cause of Christ in Africa. Yet when I visited Nairobi a few days later, and talked to more radical churchmen outside the PACLA constituency, I found the whole exercise branded as an imperialist propaganda device, designed to buttress white control p.35 of the future of African evangelicalism and to rehabilitate the white regime in South Africa. African Christianity, and especially evangelical Christianity, has a lot to live down.

Such an image may be unfair and outdated. But that does not stop it being believed. African Christianity has got to show that it knows and cares about the concerns of Africa today, that it is not tied to the vested interests of western 'Christian' capitalism. African evangelicalism has got to realise that an exclusive concern for personal piety and doctrinal orthodoxy is not the sum total of biblical religion, and that a concern for political and economic issues is not a sign of worldliness and deviation from the truth. (Try telling that to the Old Testament prophets!). If the discussion of exploitation and liberation is left to the radicals, you cannot complain at radical results.

When the All-Africa Conference of Churches calls for a missionary moratorium, it is not enough to 'tut, tut'; there must be thorough study of mission-church relationships in the past and in the present, and a new look at the biblical pattern for cross-cultural co-operation in the mission of the church. When South African theologians produce a 'Black theology' (not to be confused with 'African theology') which virtually equates 'black' with 'good' and 'white' with 'evil', it is not enough to shrug one's shoulders and return to the production of Sunday School manuals. The Bible has a great deal to say about justice and nationhood, and it is up to African evangelicals to study it and apply it to the crying needs of their continent. Until they do, the whole of African evangelicalism is in danger of being dismissed as one great Uncle Tom.

## **THE GREATEST NEED**

I have written all this as an outsider. Really I have no right to do it, and I stand open to correction by my African brethren, particularly for some of my more cavalier statements. But I wonder if the very fact that it was a Westerner who was asked to write this article is not perhaps an indication that there is some truth in the assessment I have given.

I have talked a lot about theology, about the need to develop a theology for Africa which is both uncompromisingly biblical and p.36 authentically African. I believe this (if 'theology' is taken in a sufficiently broad sense) is the single greatest need of the church in Africa today.

Meanwhile the church marches on. It grows by leaps and bounds. It is overwhelmingly an evangelical church, at least in the broad sense that most grass-roots believers, whether in the independent churches or in the denominations of western origin, turn instinctively to the Bible as their religious authority and believe in a God who is real and a salvation which really makes a difference. But it is also a credulous church, wide open to any appealing new teaching which can quote a biblical verse or a miraculous cure in its support. It needs teaching and direction, from within, not from outside. It needs theology, its own African, Christian theology. Until it has it, while it may continue to grow in numbers, it will not grow in influence on the new Africa, and it will be increasingly dismissed as a hangover from the colonial past. p.37

# The Theology of Liberation in Latin America

by EMILIO A. NUNEZ

IN ROMAN CATHOLIC as well as in Protestant circles, theology in Latin America has historically been simply a repetition of what has been said in Europe and the United States. The Latin American churches have only echoed the theology formed in other cultures, rather than contributing to the development of Christian thought. But this situation has begun to change, especially since the 1960s. For the first time in the history of Christianity, a theological movement is coming out of Latin America which has awakened the interest of the experts in those countries which seemed to have a monopoly on the science of theology.

That the so-called "Latin American theology" is not totally original is obvious. What theology could be original after nearly twenty centuries of Christian thought? If the Latin American theologians have anything original, it is their effort to relate their concept of Christianity to the Latin culture.

The Latin American theological current best known outside this continent is no doubt the already-famous "theology of liberation." Simply stated, the theology of liberation is an effort on the part of Catholic and liberal Protestant theologians in Latin America to provide a theology which they trust will serve as the base for the "liberation" of oppressed peoples. It has become popular because it proposes to relate theology to the Latin American scene and to speak theologically to socio-political needs. Because of the widespread influence of this theological position and because of its implications for missionary endeavors and churches throughout Latin American countries, it is imperative that the so-called theology of liberation be examined carefully by [p. 38](#) evangelicals. Evangelicals in North America who are interested in and involved in missionary endeavors in the Latin sector of the Western Hemisphere will benefit from an awareness of this pervasive system of theological thought.

## I. CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN LATIN AMERICA (ISAL)

Although ISAL (Ilesia y Sociedad en la America Latina) has basically the same emphasis as the Roman Catholic theology of liberation, it began as a Protestant movement offering a liberating option to the Latin American people. ISAL proposes not only theological reflection but also a plan of action to help in the economic, political, and social transformation of underdeveloped nations in Latin America.

### The History of the Movement

The roots of ISAL are in the youth movements that sought to promote the social work of the church during the 1940s. These movements included the MEC (Christian Student Movement) and the ULAJE (Latin American Unity of Evangelical Youth). The magazine *Iglesia y Sociedad en la America Latina*, published since 1959, has been one of the principal exponents of the movement.

The first continent-wide consultation of ISAL was held in Huampani, Peru in July, 1961 under the auspices of the World Council of Churches. One of the main purposes of the

consultation was to find “the meaning that social changes have from a Christian viewpoint, and our common responsibility toward them.”<sup>1</sup>

In the meeting sponsored by the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland in 1966 on the theme “Church and Society,” the representatives of ISAL had ample opportunity to express their point of view before the delegates from many different countries. The ideas of ISAL continued to take shape in the international consultations held in El Tabo, Chile (January, 1966), Piriapolis, Uruguay (December, 1967) and Nana, Peru (July, 1971). After the fall of the Allende government in Chile, ISAL seems to have p. 39 been losing strength as an organization, although its ideas continue to form a part of Latin American liberation theology.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Emphasis of the Movement**

An important key to understanding the thinking of ISAL is the document published after the fourth continental assembly, held in Peru in 1971.<sup>3</sup> A major preoccupation of the ISAL people is the economic dependence in which the Latin American nations live. This dependence, according to the leaders of ISAL, is the cause of a whole series of dependences which afflict Latins today: political, cultural, technological, military.

How can this dependence be overcome? According to ISAL, the answer is found in the conscientization of those exploited by the dominant social classes and by imperialism.<sup>4</sup> They define the process of liberation as “breaking with the system of economic dependence and exploitation under which our people suffer, due to the action of imperialism in alliance with the dominant national classes.”<sup>5</sup> The purpose of liberation is to create a more just society in which class distinctions will disappear.<sup>6</sup>

Those in ISAL ask what has been and what is the participation of Christians in the process of national liberation, and they answer that there have been three tendencies: (1) that of the Catholics who try to put into practice the “social doctrine of the church”; (2) that of the “developmentalists”, members of the Christian Democrat parties; and (3) that of the radicals who identify themselves with the revolutionary movements of the continent. An example of this last group is Camilo Torres, the guerrilla priest who died along with a group of revolutionaries in Colombia in 1966.<sup>7</sup>

The leaders of ISAL say that those Christians who have identified themselves with the revolution have discovered “Marxist analysis as the most appropriate for understanding the Latin p. 40 American situation and for projecting an effective action of radical change in it.”<sup>8</sup> They then point out that this discovery may lead Christian revolutionaries to work together with Marxists in the liberation of Latin America: “Working together on the foundation level makes the division between Christians and Marxists disappear, thus

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<sup>1</sup> *Encuentro y Desafío* (Montevideo: ISAL, 1961), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> For more details on the situation of ISAL after Allende’s death, see Orlando E. Costas, *Theology of the Crossroads in Contemporary Latin America* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1976), pp. 199–223.

<sup>3</sup> *América Latina: Movilización Popular y Fe Cristiana* (Montevideo: ISAL, 1971).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 144–46.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.



helping to overcome dogmatism.”<sup>9</sup> According to ISAL, the Christian must identify himself with the proletariat and act as a revolutionary in the churches, among his people, and in political parties and organizations belonging to the popular classes.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Theology of the Movement**

In the opinion of the ISAL theologians, what is needed is not a repetition of the theologies formulated in opulent societies, such as the “theology of the death of God” or the “theology of hope,” but rather a theology of the people, which is quite different from a “theology for the people.”<sup>11</sup> Theology, they affirm, cannot be made apart from political involvement; it must be made rather in the midst of that involvement. The starting point for theology has to be the concrete situation of Latin America.

The analysts of ISAL have pointed out the names of various theologians who in one way or another have influenced ISAL thinking. They mention, for example, Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Paul Lehmann, J. B. Metz, Jürgen Moltmann, and others, all of whom are studied critically in the ISAL circles. Special mention needs to be made of Richard Shaull, called by some “the father of ISAL,” and who confesses having neoorthodoxy as his theological background.<sup>12</sup> The influence of Karl Marx is without question.

Among the Latin American thinkers who have contributed most in giving ISAL its theological orientation is Rubem Alves, a Brazilian Presbyterian and a graduate of Princeton University. Based on his doctoral dissertation, entitled “Toward a Theology of Liberation,” he wrote the book *Religion: Opio o Instrumento de p. 41 Liberacion*.<sup>13</sup> The English version of this work has been a best-seller in the United States.

Alves begins his focus on the theme of liberation by referring to the search for a language that expresses vision and passion for human liberation. From there he goes on to describe what he calls “political humanism,” which is actually a new conception of man, a new anthropological analysis.

According to Alves, there are three elements in this conception of man: (1) One element is *a new consciousness* of oppression, of “colonial domination.” As examples of this new consciousness of oppression he mentions the blacks and the students in the United States. Obviously, Alves is writing from the highly developed culture of North America. (2) A second element is *a new language* that expresses this new conception of man. (3) A third element is *a new community*. The appearance of a new language presupposes the presence of a new community, the worldwide proletariat, “an ecumenical phenomenon which joins together people from the Third World with blacks, students, and other groups from the developed nations. This consciousness does not have, therefore, national, economic, social, or racial limits.”<sup>14</sup>

Alves goes on to contrast political humanism with technology and theology. Following Marcuse in the description of technological language, Alves says that technological society

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

<sup>12</sup> *America Hoy* (Montevideo: ISAL, 1966), p. 58.

<sup>13</sup> Montevideo: Tierra Nueva, 1970.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8–9.

has converted itself rather into a system that engulfs, conditions, and determines man.<sup>15</sup> It converts him into a buyer of merchandise, making him think that there is no need of a future, that he can be happy in the present by means of the conquests of technology.

Alves finds points of similarity and contrast between political humanism and theology. He rejects existentialism because it reduces liberation to a subjective plane. He goes along with Barth in his radical criticism of the present, but laments the fact that Barthianism does not give enough importance to the future or to the work and creativity of man. For Barth, Alves suggests, man is not the creator of his own future.<sup>16</sup> p. 42

There is also a contrast between “political Messianism,” which he espouses, and the theology of hope of Moltmann. Alves admires Moltmann for his emphasis on the future, but does not agree with his idea that the movement toward the future arises in answer to a promise that comes from without and makes it possible. He rejects the concept that man’s renovating activity springs not from the present reality, from the present condition of man through his activity in history, but rather from a promise that is transcendent. Alves believes that the future is “an open horizon of possibilities where liberty will be created, introduced by action.”<sup>17</sup> Man is the creator of a future that has not yet been determined.

Political humanism includes the rejection of what is inhuman in the present, the concern for the transformation of this present by means of political action, and an openness to the future, based on history itself and not on a promise that is transcendent.<sup>18</sup>

### **An Evaluation of the Movement**

Alves’s emphasis is definitely anthropocentric. His work deals with liberation by man and for man himself. It may be said that Alves abandons the oppressed to his own resources, facing a present that needs to be rejected and a future that will always be relative and uncertain. He has no set norms for determining whether man in his efforts to create the future is going in the right direction. Of the content of his book, Alves affirms that “Since these reflections are a product of my historical situation, which is relative and temporary, they share that same temporary and relative character. They must remain therefore unfinished and open. Another, in a different historical situation, might have a different interpretation. I cannot say that my historical experience is more than his.”<sup>19</sup>

Alves’s work reveals lamentable lack of biblical exegesis. The text of Scripture seems to be used only as a pretext to defend political humanism. In his search for “a new language,” Alves falls under the influence of the “new hermeneutics” and exalts history over words, without taking into account that “the Bible always gives preeminence to the word over history, in the sense that p. 43 history remains silent without revelatory interpretation, and this interpretation depends on the initiative of God.”<sup>20</sup>

Having moved away from the authority of the Scriptures, those in ISAL remain totally at the mercy of relativism in their theology and their praxis.

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 32–39.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 65–82.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 82–101.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> Andre’s Kirk, “La Biblia y Su Hermeneutica en Relacion con la Teologia Protestante en America Latina,” *El Debate Contemporaneo Sobre la Biblia* (Barcelona: Ediciones Evangelicas Europeas, 1972), p. 180.

## II. ROMAN CATHOLIC THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION

When theology of liberation is mentioned today, one thinks not so much of ISAL as of the Roman Catholic expression of liberation theology. However, the Catholic and the Protestant aspects of this movement are closely related. For example, Hugo Assmann, a Brazilian Catholic, works in cooperation with ISAL. And from a purely theological point of view, it is not surprising that in their analysis of the theology of liberation, writers such as J. J. Gonzalez Faus from Spain should study Hugo Assmann (a Catholic) and Rubem Alves (a Protestant) together<sup>21</sup>.

Besides Assmann, other Catholic liberationists include Gustavo Gutierrez and Juan Luis Segundo. According to Faus, "The first work to which one should refer in approaching the themes included under the title of Liberation Theology is perhaps Assmann's book,"<sup>22</sup> that is, *Opresion-Liberacion: Desafio a los Cristianos*.<sup>23</sup> For Jose Miguez-Bonino, an Argentine theologian, the work of Gutierrez is more systematic and inclusive, while that of Assmann is more critical.<sup>24</sup> It has also been said that if Gutierrez is the systematizer, Assmann is the apologist for the theology of liberation. The now well-known book of Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*,<sup>25</sup> has been called "the Bible of the liberationist movement." p. 44

### Historical Context

In a sense the theology of liberation is a result of the upheavals that have occurred within the Roman Catholic Church, especially since World War II. The proclamation of democracy in opposition to the dictatorial powers of the Axis helped to strengthen the desire for liberty among millions of Latin Americans who were living under oppressive powers on this continent.

The Catholic Church had been serving the dominant classes, and the masses were turning their back on it politically and socially. Catholicism was losing ground in the minds and hearts of the Latin American people. Leftist ideologies had found here a well-fertilized field for their propagation. At the same time, some ecclesiastical leaders began to realize that the so-called "Christianization" of Latin America was an unfinished task. The Roman Catholic Church was facing one of its most critical hours in these countries and in the whole world.

It was in that crucial moment that the kindly figure of Pope John XXIII appeared, with his decision to convene the Second Vatican Council in order to bring about the ecclesiastical transformations that the postwar world demanded. Without producing fundamental theological changes, the Council has introduced currents of renewal to Roman Catholicism. Two examples of this renewal are the openness of the Catholic Church toward other churches and religions and its new attitude toward socio-economic problems.

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<sup>21</sup> J. J. Gonzales Faus, "La Teologia Latinoamericana de la Liberacion," *Actualidad Bibliografica de Filosofia y Teologia* (Barcelona: Facultades de Filosofia y Teologia de San Francisco de Borja, 1973), pp. 359-448.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 413.

<sup>23</sup> Montevideo: Tierra Nueva, 1971.

<sup>24</sup> Jose Miguez-Bonino, "El Nuevo Catolicismo," *Fe Cristiana y Latinoamerica Hoy*, comp. Reno Padilla (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Certeza, 1974), p. 108.

<sup>25</sup> Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973).

A sequel to Vatican II was the Conference of Latin American Bishops, held in Medellin, Colombia in 1968. It focused on the theme, "The transformation of Latin America in the light of the Council," and established guidelines for new action by the Church in Latin America.<sup>26</sup> In contrast to the Catholic conservatism of the preconciliar period, Medellin seems to be a turn toward the left in regard to the problems of underdevelopment in the Latin American countries. Consciously or unconsciously, the bishops were opening the door for a free expression of liberationist theology in the heart of Latin American Catholicism.

For its part, the World Council of Churches continued to encourage p. 45 churches and individuals around the world to identify themselves with a Christianity deeply concerned for social issues. The Council's attack against social injustice was felt in a special way in the third world countries.

This was the historical-cultural scene in which the theology of liberation made its appearance.

### General Characteristics

The following are some of the distinctives of Roman Catholic liberation theology.

*Foundation.* As in the case of ISAL, the emphasis of Catholic liberationism is more sociological than theological. Its starting point and frame of reference is, of course, the socio-economic reality of the underdeveloped nations. Assmann declares, "There is near unanimity in the texts which have circulated until now: the contextual starting point for a 'theology of liberation' is the historical situation of dependence and domination in which the peoples of the third world find themselves."<sup>27</sup> He also writes, "The 'text,' we repeat, is our situation. It is the 'first theological reference point'.... The usual perspectives of the exegetes that 'work from the sacred text' no longer satisfy us, since we want to 'work from the reality of today.'"<sup>28</sup>

What Assmann proposes is not an analysis of the social scene in the light of the Scriptures in order to formulate an eminently biblical theology. Rather than a movement from theology to society, it is a movement from society to theology. The means for understanding the reality of Latin America is provided by the social sciences, without excluding the postulates of Marxism.

But if someone asks if that is *theology*, Assmann answers that it is, although not in the traditional sense in which the term is understood. As he states it, "In order for critical reflection on praxis to be theology, it should have the distinct mark or reference to the faith and to the historical mediations of this faith (Bible and Church History)."<sup>29</sup> p. 46

Nevertheless, he hurries to add that for this process, "purely theological" criteria are not enough, "if by this we understand criteria taken only from the supposedly exclusive sources of theology."<sup>30</sup> The reasons for this deficiency are obvious to Assmann: (1) The sources do not speak clearly for themselves; even as a "text," they must be "made to speak" through the human sciences. (2) The sources are inadequate "to tie in the 'Word' with the

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<sup>26</sup> *La Iglesia en la Actual Transformacion de America Latina a la Luz del Concilio*, 2 vols. (Bogota: Secretariado General de la Conferencia Episcopal Latinoamericana, 1969).

<sup>27</sup> Hugo Assmann, *Opresion-Liberacion: Desafio a los Cristianos* (Montevideo: Tierra Nueva, 1971), p. 50. The content of this book is also found in *Teologia desde la Praxis de la Liberacion* (Salamanca: Sigueme, 1973).

<sup>28</sup> Assmann, *Opresion-Liberacion*, p. 141.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

present events of human history.”<sup>31</sup> Definitely, human sciences and the outcome of history are what determine the meaning of the text. In other words, his hermeneutic is existential.

Assmann recognizes that even the means of analysis provided by the human science “easily hide ideological presuppositions.”<sup>32</sup> This leaves him without any reliable criterion; and yet he does not look for the solution in a submission to the written revelation of God, but rather in the effort to liberate the available criteria from their ideological presuppositions by means of the praxis to which he feels called. In the final analysis it is his socio-political action that determines the kind of theology he will proclaim.

It is not strange that the liberationist theologians should speak of a theology that is becoming forged along the way of liberation, and that theology comes afterward, and within praxis, “as a critical reflection on action.”<sup>33</sup> “Some chapters of theology,” says Gutierrez, “can be written only afterwards.”<sup>34</sup>

In the area of hermeneutics the conflict between conservative evangelical theology and the theology of liberation becomes sharper. The liberationists, Catholic as well as Protestant, also use the Scriptures to support their presuppositions. They make an effort to hang biblical clothing on the sociological framework that they themselves have erected, and they speak constantly of the Exodus, the new man, the kingdom of God, and other biblical themes, as “paradigms of liberation.” It is in the interpretation and application of the sacred text that the discrepancy between liberationism and conservative Protestantism becomes more and more evident. The difference that evangelicals have traditionally made between p. 47 interpretation and application is not taken into account, and application becomes interpretation. Segundo believes that when it comes to the Word of God a “hermeneutical circle” is needed in order to relate the past to the present. He states that the church needs a

... continual change in our interpretation of the Bible in the light of the continual changes in our present society, both individual and social. Hermeneutics means interpretation. And the circular character of that interpretation consists in the fact that each new reality obligates us to interpret anew the revelation of God, to change that reality with it, and in turn, to interpret again ... and so on.<sup>35</sup>

Costas has good reason to warn against the danger of being carried toward theological syncretism by situational hermeneutics.<sup>36</sup> Latin American theologians are left with the task of giving careful study to the hermeneutical problem that these new currents of thought have brought to the theological scene.<sup>37</sup>

## Theological Themes

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 141–42.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 272.

<sup>34</sup> Gutierrez, p. 272.

<sup>35</sup> Juan Luis Segundo, *Liberacion de la Teologia* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Carlos Lohle, 1975), p. 12.

<sup>36</sup> Orlando E. Costas, *The Church and Its Mission* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1974), p. 252.

<sup>37</sup> For a discussion of the hermeneutical problem in relation to liberation theology, see J. M. Breneman, “El Exodo como Tema de Interpretation Teologica,” *Liberacion, Exodo y Biblia* (Miami: Editorial Caribe, 1975), pp. 11–52; and Andres Kirk, “La Biblia y Su Hermeneutica en Relacion con la Teologia Protestante en America Latina,” *El Debate Contemporaneo Sobre la Biblia* (Barcelona: Ediciones Evangelicas Europeas, 1972), pp. 155–213.

*The kingdom of God.* This is one of the most important themes in the theology of liberation. The kingdom of God is viewed as a reality that finds itself in the eschatological tension of the “now” and the “not yet.” This kingdom does not belong only to the future, nor is it simply other-worldly. God’s kingdom is here and now as “a process which becomes closely related to the constant dynamic of the historical process,”<sup>38</sup> and is moving toward its consummation. Gutierrez affirms:

The growth of the Kingdom is a process which occurs historically *in* liberation, insofar as liberation means a greater fulfillment of man. Liberation is a precondition for the new society, but p. 48 this is not all it is. While liberation is implemented in liberating historical events, it also denounces their limitation and ambiguities, proclaims their fulfillment, and impels them effectively towards total communion. This is not an identification. Without liberating historical events, there would be no growth of the Kingdom. But the process of liberation will not have conquered the very roots of oppression and the exploitation of man by man without the coming of the Kingdom, which is above all a gift. Moreover, we can say that the historical, political liberating event *is* the growth of the Kingdom and *is* a salvific event; but it is not *the* coming of the Kingdom, not *all* of salvation.<sup>39</sup>

According to Gutierrez the kingdom is a gift of God and a work of man; socio-political liberation is a human achievement and a manifestation of the kingdom. Without the liberation that man attains by himself there is no growth of the kingdom. Gutierrez wants to avoid fully identifying the kingdom with a particular political system. Assmann does the same, when he says that the kingdom is always open to what is ahead, in “constant futurization, even in its conquests.”<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, the total panorama of liberationist theology is that of a commitment to leftist ideologies, although the liberationists would resist admitting that their option might be equivalent to a “sanctifying” of the socio-political system that they have chosen as the most adequate in this historical moment for the liberation of the Latin American man.

*Soteriology.* The liberationist view on the kingdom of God suggests that salvation does not pertain merely to the life beyond. The dualism of the “religious” and the “temporal” has been overcome. Salvation consists also in the progress of the kingdom, a fact that implies in turn the search for a radical break with the status quo, in order to begin the formation of a new society that one day will have completely suppressed the class system and produced a totally new man. This hope is not based on archaic messianism, but rather on scientific rationality, on a historical, scientific analysis of reality. It is liberation carried out by and for p. 49 the oppressed masses. It is not a case of mere humanitarianism but of humanism in the strictest sense of the term. The idea that the Christian should be called to cooperate in the work of salvation goes along closely with the traditional synergism of the Roman Catholic Church.

In this view, the Christian, in order to fulfill his liberating mission, must act in the economic, political, and social arena. The Christian faith has a political dimension. This dimension is not simply a complementary aspect of the faith; it is “the act of faith as such in its concrete context of historical praxis.”<sup>41</sup> Gutierrez affirms that just as Pius XII said that the church civilizes by evangelizing, so now in the Latin American context “it would

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<sup>38</sup> Assmann, *Opresion-Liberacion*, pp. 163–64.

<sup>39</sup> Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 177.

<sup>40</sup> Assmann, *Opresion-Liberacion*, pp. 164.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

be necessary to say that the Church should politicize by evangelizing,"<sup>42</sup> in the sense that it should manifest the political dimension of the gospel. The emphasis of the church's mission falls definitely on social action. "In Latin America to be Church today means to take a clear position regarding both the present state of social injustice and the revolutionary process which is attempting to abolish that injustice and build a more human order."<sup>43</sup> And Assmann says: "Now that the merely 'salvationist' meaning of the mission of the Church has been surpassed, the open affirmation of the universal possibility of salvation has radically changed the concept of the Church's mission in the world .... the Church orients itself toward a new and radical service to mankind."<sup>44</sup>

Liberation theology is a humanist theology, with strong universalist tendencies, a fact that is not surprising in a theological system characterized also by liberal ecumenism, and by relativism in regard to its sources of authority.

*Anthropology.* According to the theologians of liberation, man is enslaved, but not to the extent that he cannot become aware of his slavery and free himself from the forces that oppress him. Gutierrez says that man knows he is entering a new era, a world fashioned by his own hands. "We live on the verge of man's epiphany..."<sup>45</sup> In contrast to conservative Protestants who p. 50 expect a theophany—the return of the Lord, Gutierrez expects an "anthropophany."<sup>46</sup>

And yet the interest of the liberationist theologians in the "new man" indicates that for them man is not what he could and should be. This theme is not new for the diligent reader of the Bible. But it is to be regretted that Latin American evangelicals have not proclaimed more forcefully and perseveringly that the promise of a totally transformed "new man" comes from the gospel, and that this promise can become a reality only in the ideal Man, "the man Christ Jesus."

Liberation theology speaks of sin; but it emphasizes not so much personal sin as the sin of the "oppressive structures."<sup>47</sup> One is left at times with the impression that the poor are not sinners, due to the fact that they are poor, and that the rich are sinners simply because they are rich. Gutierrez quotes the following words of J. Girardi: "We must love everyone, but it is not possible to love everyone in the same way: we love the oppressed by liberating them; we love the oppressors by fighting them. We love the oppressed by liberating them from their misery, and the oppressors by liberating them from their sin."<sup>48</sup>

The concept of the total depravity of man does not enter into the picture in liberation theology. The reality of the supernatural, demonic forces in the universe that war against the purposes of God is not taken into account either.

*Christology.* The doctrine of Christ is treated very deficiently in the liberationist system. The main interest seems to be in the earthly ministry of the Son of God, in order to emphasize His "relation to the political world."<sup>49</sup> The liberationists insist that Christians

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<sup>42</sup> Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 269.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 265.

<sup>44</sup> Assmann, *Opresion-Liberacion*, pp. 73–74.

<sup>45</sup> Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 213.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 285, n. 56.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 225–32.

find Jesus Christ in their fellowman, especially in the poor and the oppressed.<sup>50</sup> This idea is starting to become popular in Latin America. Assmann points out that Christology is “one of the most neglected themes in theology today.”<sup>51</sup> This is certainly the case in liberation theology, and the same thing could be said of its pneumatology. p. 51

## CONCLUSION

This overview of the theology of liberation shows that this theological movement is far from being, strictly speaking, a *biblical* theology, and is therefore not satisfactory for those who have the Scriptures as their supreme rule of faith. It is a relativist theology, because it takes lightly the firm foundation of biblical authority, because its contextual starting point is the changing reality of Latin America, and because its proponents opt for the insecurity of a future that is always open.

If theological liberationism has brought any benefit to evangelicals in these countries, it has been that of prompting them to rediscover in their faith certain elements they have not incorporated as they should have in their message to the Latin American people. In answer to the liberationist challenge, some members of the Latin American Theological Fraternity have dedicated themselves to serious reflection on the biblical text, taking into account the reality in which evangelicals live here.<sup>52</sup> It is hoped that their efforts will contribute to the formation of an *evangelical* answer to the serious problems which face believers in this continent.

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# Evangelism in a Latin American Context

by ORLANDO E. COSTAS

ALL OVER contemporary Christianity we find a growing awareness of “context” as a fundamental concept in the church’s understanding of its mission in the world. This growing preoccupation with “contextualization” is linked to the focus on the “now of history” in contemporary theories of biblical and theological interpretation.<sup>1</sup> Not that the

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 196–203.

<sup>51</sup> Assmann, *Opression-Liberacion*, p. 76.

<sup>52</sup> The Latin American Theological Fraternity has published in Spanish and English some of the articles written by its members. See also the Latin American papers presented at the Lausanne Congress on Evangelism, *Let the Earth Hear His Voice* (1974).

<sup>1</sup> Cf., among others, H. M. Kuitert, *The Reality of Faith: A Way Between Protestant Orthodoxy and Existentialist Theology*. Translated from Dutch by Lewis B. Smedes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968); E. Schillebeeckx, *Interpretacion de la fe: Aportaciones a una teologia hermeneutica y critica*. Translated from the German edition, with the author’s revision and approval, by Jose M. Mauleon (Salamanca: Ediciones Sigueme, 1973); Emilio Castro, “La creciente presencia de criterios de interpretacion historica en la evolucion de la



context has been foreign to theology. Indeed, it has been around for a long time. Its role, however, has been circumscribed to that of clarifying the biblical text or the dogmatic formulations of the church. Only in recent years has the historical context really been taken in full seriousness as a category of biblical and theological interpretation.

On the one hand, it has become increasingly clear that both the biblical text and the dogmatic formulations of the church constitute, at the bottom, interpretations of interpretations. As such, they have their historical conditionings which need not only to be understood but critically analyzed.<sup>2</sup> This implies that not only our “forefathers” but we ourselves are conditioned by the historical forces in the midst of which we carry out our theological task. The truth of faith is consequently mediated through our particular socio-cultural contexts.<sup>3</sup> p. 53

If this is the case with the interpretation and understanding of the faith, it is no less so in the case of that task *par excellence* that characterizes the life of Christians in the world: communicating the faith to those who stand outside its frontiers. Just as the gospel arises from within a concrete historical situation, so its communication takes place in a particular context. To evangelize one needs to understand the world of those that are to be evangelized, interpret the gospel in the light of their historical reality and transmit it in terms relevant to their life experiences, culture and social situation.

This is why in our pursuit of the question of evangelism in Latin America we must begin with an overview of the context. As we view this continent three characteristics stand out.

## I. THE WORLD OF LATIN AMERICA

### A Complicated Mosaic

First of all, Latin America represents a multiplicity of situations. It is a complicated mosaic of people with all sorts of ethno-cultural backgrounds. Indian aborigines, African descendants, Northern, Central and Southern Europeans, Middle Easterners and Orientals combine to make up a truly cosmic race. They form ethnic clusters that challenge geographic and political boundaries. Thus the transnational ties that exist between the Indian communities of Yucatan and Guatemala and of the Andean countries, the Afro-Caribbean communities of the Atlantic coast of Central America, and the Ukranian and Germanic communities of Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina. This also explains the fallacy of defining *Latin America* in geo-political terms, as being made up of the people who dwell in the lands south of the Rio Bravo and in the Spanish and French-speaking Caribbean. For as a matter of fact, they have long extended themselves (even before their Anglo-

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hermeneutica biblica,” in *Pueblo oprimido, Señor de la historia*, Hugo Assmann, ed. (Montevideo: Tierra Nueva, 1972), pp. 213–218.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. W. Pannenburg, ed. *Revelation as History*, trans. from the German by David Granskou (London: The Macmillan Co., 1968). Cf. also G.C. Berouwer, *Studies in Dogmatics: Holy Scripture*, trans. and edited by Jack B. Rogers (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), *passim*; C. Rene Padilla, “The Contextualization of the Gospel” in “A ‘learning in Dialogue’ Experience” (Abington. Pa.: Partnership in Mission, 1975), (mimeographed); Daniel von Allmen, “The Birth of Theology: Contextualization as the Dynamic Element in the Formation of New Testament Theology,” *International Review of Mission*, LXIV: 253 (January, 1975), 37–52.

<sup>3</sup> On this, see the excellent discussion on “Hermeneutics Truth, and Praxis, in Jose Miguez-Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), pp. 86–105. See also, Severino Croatto, *Liberacion y Libertad: Pautas hermeneuticas* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Mundo Nuevo, 1973); Juan Luis Segundo, *Liberacion de la teologia* (Buenos Aires: Carlos Lohle, 1975).

saxon counterparts) across the River into what is today the (USA) South and Middle West and over the Caribbean sea into the (USA) North and Southeastern seaboard.

The majority of Latin Americans, however, have a geographical identity: they are attached to the land mass that extends from the northern Mexican frontier to the bottom of Argentina; they are also found in the French and Spanish speaking islands of the p. 54 Caribbean Sea plus many islands in the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. These lands constitute a vast topographical mosaic: huge mountain ranges, large tropical forests, arid deserts, coastal lands and fertile valleys and plains; hot-humid climate, cold-freezing weather and spring-like temperature; rain forests, lakes, rivers and volcanoes.

The topographical varieties affect the culture and lifestyle of the Latin American peoples. They contribute to internal political conflicts and socio-cultural contrasts within and between nations and regions. These conflicts and contrasts, in turn, make specific demands upon the evangelistic message. Concepts such as reconciliation, justice and peace take on a special significance in this environment. The evangelistic approach is decisively affected. The way to evangelism varies considerably between the high and the low lands, the interior and the coast, the jungle frontiers and the arid desert. Effective methods in one are often ineffective in another. This is so, not merely because the cultural and social circumstances of people vary from place to place, but also because the geophysical condition p. are different and affect their behaviour in peculiar ways, especially, but not exclusively, in the way they respond to and express religious faith.

The Latin American world represents also a linguistic mosaic. Of course, the great majority speak Spanish or Portuguese. There are, however, significant pockets where Spanish or Portuguese are not the predominant languages or where they must compete with other European, Asian or aboriginal languages and dialects. Such is the case in areas of Southern Brazil, where in addition to German and Dutch speaking groups, there are Japanese and Korean speaking blocks. This too is the case in Paraguay, where there is an *official* non-European language (*Guarani*). In addition, German, Ukrainian, Japanese and Korean blocks which use their respective languages as the primary vehicle of communication. In Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, for decades large European colonies use primarily their mother tongues. Note also the influential role which the English language has throughout the Continent: in some sectors (the Atlantic coast of Central America, the eastern section of the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and the Hispanic USA) English either competes with Spanish as the primary vehicle of communication or functions as a second official language. p. 55

### **A Common History**

But while Latin America is a continent of contrasts and diversity, its history has been shaped by similar circumstances. Indeed Latin Americans find their common identity in their history.

The Brazilian anthropologist, Darcy Ribeiro, has shown, in *The Americas and Civilization*,<sup>4</sup> how the history of Latin America was shaped by the Mercantile and Industrial Revolutions. According to him, these two revolutions set in motion several successive civilizational processes which condemned the people of Latin America to a history of backwardness and under-development by structuring them into nuclei of exploitative production. This process went through several stages—from the purposeful decimation of parcels of aborigines and the deculturation of the rest, to a stage of acculturation, where elements taken from the master European culture and from the subjugated aborigine culture shaped a body of common understanding, to an

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Darcy Ribeiro, *The Americas and Civilization* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1972), pp. 89–429.

enculturation of persons torn from their original societies (slaves and their descendants as well as the agents of domination and their descendants). Out of this, a new culture emerged which could have become “authentic” (integrated internally), but became instead “spurious” (traumatized internally and dependent on alien decisions).

American societies were thus enslaved and integrated into the world economic system. This has created a situation of cultural dependence which serves as the basis for the present situation of backwardness and underdevelopment. It does not matter whether the majority of American nations have become formally better off than others. The fact is that while the northern Anglo-Saxon nations (the USA and Canada) managed to emancipate themselves by an evolutionary acceleration that enabled them to develop autonomously as a new focus of expansion, enabling the majorities of its peoples to enjoy a superabundant and luxurious style of life, the great majority of the Latin American nations and peoples passed from colonial to neo-colonial status by way of historical incorporation. Accordingly, now they are not only economically and culturally backward but are underdeveloped because they are dominated by foreign powers and the constricting p. 56 role of internal dominant classes. These agents of domination deform the very process of renovation, transforming it from an evolutionary crisis common to peoples affected by technological revolutions into a paralyzing trauma.<sup>5</sup>

To speak of Latin America is to speak of a continent whose history is one of economic and cultural exploitation. Indeed the Latin America of today is the offspring of a 500 year rape by Western culture and civilization, a rape which began with the Spanish conquistadores and was continued by the English, the Dutch and the French and was successfully concluded by the North Americans.

### **A “Christian” Continent**

This tragic reality is made worse by the fact that Latin America is supposed to be a Christian continent. The overwhelming majority of its people profess at least nominally to be Christian. Its culture and value system is basically Christian. It has had a longer Christian presence than any of the continents of the Third World and even longer than North America

This is a continent, nevertheless, in which the Christian church has been guilty of a traditional alliance with the dominant classes and/or external powers responsible for the perpetuation of a state of injustice, domination and institutionalized violence. This alliance has been reinforced by an ethic of neutrality oriented toward the justification of the *status quo*. The faithful have been taught to separate reconciliation from the demand of justice. The rich have been permitted to “give to the Lord” with one hand and exploit the poor with the other. The poor have been taught to accept their poverty and exploitation passively. The weak have been encouraged to be politically passive while the strong have been supported in their political aggressiveness.

This highlights the superficiality of the so-called Christian “advance” (Latourette) in Latin America. After five centuries of missionary history Latin America remains an unevangelized continent. Many of its people have never had a reasonable opportunity to consider the gospel as a *personal* option. Others flatly reject any religious faith. Yet others profess what could p. 57 be characterized as a syncretistic faith, being followers of such movements as Macumba, Candomble and Umbanda in Brazil and Voodoo in Haiti. Even among those who profess themselves Christians by virtue of baptism, many have never personally experienced the gospel. In the words of Bishop Samuel Ruiz-Garcia, they “go

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<sup>5</sup> See also Ribeiro’s earlier work, *The Civilizational Process* (Washington: The Smithsonian Institution Press, 1968).

through life without being truly converted to the Gospel, without a personal encounter with and commitment to Jesus the Saviour.”<sup>6</sup>

Something has gone wrong somewhere when the gospel has been experienced so little, when so many still stand outside its boundaries and when it has been used as an ideological tool to keep so many in bondage to the privileged classes. Throughout all of these years of so-called “Christian” history, has the gospel indeed been held in captivity? The Bible tells us otherwise: “The word of God is not lettered bound” ([2 Tim. 2:9](#)). What then has happened? What has gone wrong?

I submit that what has happened is that evangelism and the evangel have been distorted beyond recognition. Evangelism has been confused with Christianization, which is a historico-sociological process that brings people of other faiths within the bounds of the Christian church. Evangelism, however, is something else. It is the sharing of the gospel with men and women in such a way that not only are they able to understand it, but are led to accept it and incorporate it into their lives through faith in Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. But how can this message be shared when in fact it has been overshadowed by the structures of Christendom, the notion of a Christian society centered on the Christian Church and oriented by a set of supposedly Christian principles and values?

We need desperately to re-discover the lost threads of the gospel if we are to effectively evangelize the oppressed Latin American world. Let us, therefore, take a look at the material of the Gospels to see even if schematically, the meaning of its message is in the context of Latin America. [p. 58](#)

## II. THE GOSPEL IN THE CONTEXT OF LATIN AMERICA

### The Source of the Gospel: the Father who Sends

The Gospel of Mark tells us that “Jesus came ... preaching the gospel of God” ([Mk. 1:11](#)) and Paul tells us that he was “set apart for the gospel of God, which he *promised* beforehand through his prophets in the holy scripture” ([Rom. 1:1-2](#)). Such texts place the gospel in the framework of God’s action in history. It is a message promised beforehand. It is the announcement of the fulfillment of that promise. It is good news from God.

Who is this God who sends good news and what is the content of his message?

The N. T. tells us that he is the great unknown of the Athenian philosophers ([Acts 17:23](#)), the creator and provider ([Acts 17:24-26](#)), the saviour and judge ([Acts 17:27-31](#)) of the world. He is the God who spoke in the O. T. through many different ways to the Hebrew fathers; the God who revealed himself as the creator and redeemer of Israel and the world ([Is. 43:1](#); [44:24](#); [45:5-6](#)), the Lord and judge of Israel and the nations ([Is. 43:16ff.](#)). He is the great missionary shepherd who goes before his people, feeds, gathers and carries them in his bosom ([Is. 40:10-12](#)) and sends them “to be a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness” ([Is. 42:6-7](#)). He is the Father who has spoken redemptively by the Son through the miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit ([Heb. 1:2](#); [In. 1:1-3](#), [14-18](#), [32-34](#)). The God of the gospel is thus the creator and redeemer of the world,

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<sup>6</sup> The Most Rev. Samuel Ruiz-Garcia, “Evangelization in Latin America,” in *The Church in the Present Day Transformation of Latin America*, Vol. 1 (Bogota: CELAM, 1970), p. 160.

the provider and judge of the universe, the first and the last, whose undivided action in history witnesses to his oneness.

### **The Content of the Gospel: the Revelation of the Son**

The gospel announces the unique presence of God's rule in our one human history ([Lk. 17:21](#)). The guarantee of this announcement is Jesus Christ who is the only begotten of the Father ([Jn. 1:18](#)). In him the Father has revealed his true identity: grace and truth ([Jn. 1:14, 18](#)). Through him he has made known his will for the world: "not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" ([Jn. 3:17](#)). He is the embodiment of God's rule ([Lk. 7:22-27](#)). Little wonder John of Patmos after describing in [Rev. 1:4](#) the Father as the presence of [p. 59](#) the future ("he who is, and who was and who is to come") refers in verse [5](#) to Jesus Christ as "the faithful witness, the first born of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth." In other words, the whole of history is centered on the revelation of Christ. He is the *focus* of the gospel.

This is in fact Paul's argument in [Rom. 1:1-6](#). The gospel, he says, is concerned with the life and work of Jesus. It is the announcement of who Jesus is and what he did; namely, that he was born a Jew ("descended from David according to the flesh"), that he died, was raised from the dead and was made Lord over all things ("designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead") and, finally, that through him grace has been given to the nations for "the obedience of faith" ([Vv. 3-5](#)).

Thus Jesus came proclaiming the kingdom of God, a new order of life characterized by the liberation of creation from its bondage and captivity; the restoration of humanity and the cosmos to its original vocation; a new creation. This is why Jesus associates his mission with those who bear the greatest evidence of the tragedy of sin: the poor, or those who have no one to look after them; the captives, or those whose freedom has been curtailed; the blind, or those who are physically hindered from contemplating and enjoying the good things of God's creation; the oppressed, or those whose humanity has been crushed by other human beings through the abuse of power. To all of them Jesus announces the year of jubilee: the new age of God, the liberation of history!

Because of this, it follows that the new order is oriented by the law of love—of giving oneself to others without counting the cost. To quote Paul again: "Christ died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised" ([2 Co. 5:15](#)). This living "for him" is not a privatistic I-thou relationship, but rather a living in the world, in the service of the others for whom Christ died. It is a salvation whose evidence *par excellence* is participation in the ministry of reconciliation ([2 Co. 5:19](#)). Therefore, the writer of Hebrews exhorts us "to go forth to him outside the camp, bearing abuse for him" because "Jesus ... suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood" ([Heb. 13:12, 13](#)). [p. 60](#)

The cross of Christ stands as the basic sign-post of the new order of life which the gospel proclaims. Rather than being an alienating escapism to a comfortable other-world reality, the gospel is a call to service "outside" the comfortable circle of the redeemed fellowship. True that the gospel calls us to a living hope ([1 Pe. 1:3](#)). But it is equally true that in our journey to "the city which is to come" ([Heb. 13:14](#)) we are to bear "abuse" for Christ. And this abuse is not simply a suffering on account of our faith, but especially a suffering on behalf of the world. For the cross is not a place of self infliction, but of suffering for and in behalf of others. Indeed, it is a place of commitment and mission.

The cross represents both the way of salvation and judgment. It is "folly to those who are perishing" while being "the power of God" for those "who are being saved" ([1 Co. 1:18](#)). It involves both the disclosure of the mystery of salvation and God's critical assessment of

the wisdom of this world; his judgment of all human strategies of salvation. God has “made foolish the wisdom of the World ...” by the preaching of the cross ([1 Co. 1:20](#)).

The ministry of reconciliation, the proclamation in word or deed of the message of the cross, is, at once, a word of salvation and judgment. To those who, like the Jews, may demand a supernatural or an out-of-this-world verification, or who, like the Greeks, may demand scientific evidence, the gospel is foolishness. They thus respond with scorn and disbelief. They refuse to follow “the way of the cross,” namely, the acceptance of God’s reign in Christ and an unconditional commitment to others, especially, those who have no one. Instead, they go on living “unto themselves.” For those “who are called,” however, the message of the cross is “the power of God and the wisdom of God” ([1 Co. 1:22–24](#)).

What does it mean “to be called”? How is one called? When does this call take place?

### **The Agent of the Gospel: the Witness of the Spirit**

Obviously we have entered the territory of the Holy Spirit, the *agent of the gospel*; he through whom the message is actualized. We are reminded of Jesus’ Johannine sayings: “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him ...” ([Jn. 6:44](#); p. 61 Cf. Vv. [63–65](#)). The “Spirit of truth ... whom I shall send ... from the Father ... will bear witness to me ... he will teach ... all things (and) guide ... into all the truth ... and ... convince the world of sin ... of righteousness and ... judgment ...” ([Jn. 15:26](#); [14:26](#); [16:13, 8](#)). Paul, for his part, tells us that “... any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him ... all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God ...” ([Rom. 8:9, 14](#)). But who are the ones that are led? Those who hear the gospel and believe ([Eph. 1:13](#)).

A mystery saturates the proclamation of the gospel. Through it the Spirit endows men and women with the gift of faith, calling and, thereby, enabling them to accept and commit themselves to the foolishness of the cross. A miraculous event takes place. The cross is transformed into the power and wisdom of God as the Spirit bestows the gift of faith upon those that hear the gospel. A passage takes place—from suffering and death to life and resurrection. And yet it is a passage that does not dismiss the principle of suffering. On the contrary, it brings the cross to its correct position: as the place wherein God’s reign of love becomes efficaciously present in the service of others. Because of faith we can now face the future in hope and are, therefore, *free to give* ourselves sacrificially in the service of the world.

Through the action of the Holy Spirit, and only through it, men and women can respond to God’s claim upon their lives. This claim, which is made in virtue of the fact that they were created by God and are ultimately responsible to him for their life and work, is made uniquely relevant in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. In him God makes known the basis of his reign and the criterion for the reconciliation of men and women with him. Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom leads to the exhortation: “repent and believe the gospel” ([Mk. 1:15](#)). But what makes possible Jesus’ embodiment of the rule of God, what makes possible the response in repentance and faith to the gospel is the dynamic operation of the Spirit. Indeed, he is the very breath of God, he in whose power Jesus came and ministered ([Lk. 4:18a](#)), through whom he offered himself at the cross ([Heb. 9:14](#)) and by whom he was raised from the dead ([Rom. 1:4](#)). The Spirit is also the one who makes God’s rule in Christ present in the world ([Jn. 16:12](#); [2 Co. 1:22](#); [3:17–18](#)) and, especially, in the proclamation of the gospel p. 62 ([1 Co. 2:4–5](#)).

Yet the work of the Spirit does not take place up in the air, in a vacuum, in an abstract world, nor just in the inner life of believers. His sphere of action is history, the concrete history of men and women. It is in the contextual process of everyday life where his dynamic action is ultimately verified.

The evangelistic consequence of this pneumatological maxim is quite obvious: The proclamation of the good news of God's rule of love in Christ needs to be accompanied by concrete signs. The weakness, yet power of the cross, must be verified in concrete historical situations. In the words of the Lausanne Covenant: "... a church which preaches the Cross must itself be marked by the Cross." Preaching without life, words without deed, love without efficacious sacrificial service is not only theological nonsense, but a historical alienation.

This is precisely the tragedy of evangelism in the Latin American world. On the one hand, the gospel has not been proclaimed in its fullness, as the reign of the Father in the Son made dynamically present through the Holy Spirit. Christ has been divorced from the Father and both from the Spirit. The gospel has been separated from the kingdom, redemption from creation, salvation from history. The work of evangelism has been limited, accordingly, to the sphere of a privatistic, I-thou relationship. Congruent with the latter is the fact that the proclamation of the gospel has not been adequately validated by efficacious historical signs. The church in Latin America has not shown the marks of the cross of unconditional engagement in the struggles and agonies of the suffering oppressed majorities. To be able to fulfill its evangelistic task today, the Latin American church needs, in consequence, not only to recover the fullness of the gospel, but, especially, to authenticate its truth and power in a life of unconditional obedience.

### III. THE CHALLENGE BEFORE THE CHURCH

From the foregoing, it follows that evangelism in the Latin American world *today* requires engagement in its concrete history. It requires an "immersion" into the *living* issues before each and all of the different parts of the Latin American mosaic. This implies a fundamental commitment to its cause; solidarity with the **P. 63** ongoing struggles of society; the embodiment of the history of rejection, exploitation and domination of the Latin American peoples; participation in their present state of repressed frustrations and silent protests; and the articulation of their future hopes and aspirations.

Such commitment can only be expressed by taking the identity of those who are the representatives *par excellence* of this Latin American history: the beggars who crowd the streets; the peasants who tirelessly work the land only to get a meager part of their labour in return; the prostitutes in the red-light districts of the cities; the under-paid factory workers; the social, economic and/ or political expatriots; the convict, the naked and the hungry; the helpless widow and the lonely aged, the homeless orphan, the sick and the shut-in; in short: the weak and disenfranchised, which comprise the over-whelming majority of Latin Americans.

Taking upon oneself the identity of the poor is the only way to effectively authenticate one's engagement. This takes us beyond the mere adoption of Latin American cultural categories. For often what is recognized as "culture" are the natural expressions, customs and creations of the *dominant* classes of society. We must cross, therefore, the frontiers of the "acceptable" culture and make the *counter-culture* of the disenfranchised our fundamental cultural reference. This means, basically, becoming one with them, renouncing the power, prestige and privileges of the dominant culture and making the life's concerns of the outcasts of society one's life's commitment.

Is this not what Paul was referring to when he said that Christ took "the form of a slave" ([Ph. 2:7](#)) or that he "became poor" for our sake ([2 Co. 2:8](#))? Was this not the direction in which Jesus was pointing when he described the kingdom as a place of solidarity and service for the hungry and thirsty, the stranger and naked, the sick and the prisoner ([Mt. 25:31-46](#))?

Indeed, a fundamental test of my commitment to the gospel is measured by my engagement in the cause of the poor. Likewise, the test of my engagement lies in the real, *effective* place which the poor occupy in my life and ministry.

Yet, it is a fact that my engagement can only be realized in and through the community of faith. The same principle applies to the evangelization of Latin Americans: it can only be realized [p. 64](#) *today* from within the historical engagement of the body of believers.

Theologically speaking, evangelism is a task of the church, not of individual believers. Of course, the church carries it out through its respective members. The personal witness of believers, however, is undertaken as part and in representation of the church. This is so not only because there is just “one body” ([Eph. 4:4](#)), but also because the church is a fundamental, though, admittedly, provisional, goal of evangelization. Beyond and because of this, she plays herself an indispensable part in the evangelistic task as a *communal paradigm* of the gospel. She is called to embody in her very life the qualities of the gospel. She is to be a community of love, justice and peace; “first fruits” of the new order of life proclaimed in the gospel. This, however, is to be *lived* and not just “be-lieved” (assented to). Only in engagement can the church be an efficacious sign of the gospel.

This becomes even more essential in a situation like that of the Latin American world where the institutional church far too often has been a *counter*-sign, a contradiction of her message. Indeed, rather than representing the interests of the power-less grass roots, she has defended the rights of the power-ful elites. Her art, architecture, music, liturgy, theology, pastoral structures and group life have reflected by and large the worldview and lifestyle of the dominant classes and of their North Atlantic colonial and neocolonial allies.

To overcome this communication barrier, the church needs to be transformed into a truly prophetic, engaged community. This, however, is more easily said than done, given the heavy institutional equipment which its historical manifestations as denominations and congregations carry along. Thus the relevance of small groups, or what the Catholics call base-communities, or what the Pietists used to call *eclesiolae* (little churches), not as counter-church structures, but as prophetic models or catalysts *within* the churches, and effective links *between* them and the world. To accomplish this noble objective, these ecclesial grass roots or base-communities must meet three basic requirements: (1) They must be engaged in and with the sociologically poor. (2) They must maintain a Christian (Evangelical) fellowship. (3) Their fellowship must be defined in function of their “*prophetic ministry*” in the [p. 65](#) secular world.<sup>7</sup> In other words, these communities need to truly represent the state of the poor from within an engaged, prophetic poverty. They must be effective paradigmatic communities and must maintain a liberating evangelistic ministry in the world.

#### IV. METHODOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The methodological consequences of my argument can now be briefly outlined. If, as I have said, the Latin American world represents one global reality with multiple variants, then the evangelistic task must have a comprehensive, yet concrete approach. That is, the announcement of the evangel must have a global historico-cultural focus. The history of oppression and exploitation of the Latin American world must serve as a fundamental reference to any evangelistic effort. To have such a reference, the evangelistic enterprise

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Enrique Dussel, “La ‘base’ en la teología de la liberación (Perspectiva latinoamericana),” *Concilium*, No. 104 (April, 1975), 84, 85. In the same place, see Jose Marins, “Comunidades eclesiales de base en America Latina,” pp. 27–37; and Jose Comblin, “Las comunidades de base como lugar de experiencias nuevas,” pp. 90–100.



needs to be disassociated from the traditional international and national centers of power. When we see, for example, evangelistic campaigns, which in themselves have nothing culturally or psychologically wrong, fashioned after the Anglo-American pattern, with the same hymnody, language, preaching style and content, organizational and promotional schemes, financial backing, rightist political support, and undergirded by middle-class, privatistic religious values, we know that we are up against an approach that does not take seriously into account our present global reality, let alone our oppressive and violent past.

This applies not just to evangelization proper, but to all aspects of the life of the church and ministries. If evangelism is not something which the church does in her spare time, if it is central to her life in the world, if all of her functions have their point of convergence on the evangel, if the church witnesses not only by what she says but by what she does, then she must see to it that *all of her activities*, indeed her whole life, have a Latin American historico-cultural frame of reference. The church must be reminded, time and again, that when she gathers in worship to [p. 66](#) celebrate God's work in Christ, she does so as the community for others, as representative before God of the world of which she is part—in this case, the oppressed Latin American world.

When the church teaches and disciples the faithful, she must bring before them the context in the midst of which they must live their Christian life and witness to Jesus Christ. Indeed, among the many tasks of so-called Christian education some of the most important are making the church aware of the crossroads of life, enabling the faithful to become authentically engaged in the struggles of the world, helping them to become more human and to keep life human; in short, leading the church into a deeper involvement in the liberating struggles of the poor and oppressed. This means, inevitably, a more profound, engaging evangelistic witness and a total re-organization of priorities, which affects not only the use of one's personal resources of time, abilities and earnings, but the collective resources of the church as well.

We must avoid, however, being so global and comprehensive that we never land on the specific and concrete. For every local situation possesses particular problems to which the gospel must be addressed. The call to repentance and faith must be made in terms relevant to those to whom the gospel is being announced. Thus, for example, when Jesus witnessed to the rich young ruler he told him to sell all that he had, give it to the poor and follow him ([Mk. 10:21](#)). Jesus, aware as he was of this young man's context, confronted him with what he saw as the test of true repentance and faith: his *efficacious* disposition to open himself unconditionally to God and neighbor. On another occasion, when witnessing to an adulterous woman, Jesus limited himself to a simple: "Neither do I condemn you; go and do not sin again" ([Jn. 8:11](#)). We are confronted here with a radically different approach! Does it mean that Jesus had a double evangelistic standard? No. This woman had nothing, and she knew it! The rich young ruler was also helpless, but didn't recognize it. Conversion had to take a different form from that of the adulterous woman. The specific context in which the word of forgiveness was announced to the woman was totally different from that of the rich young ruler.

One of the key problems with evangelistic programming is that churches and missionary organizations fail to take into account [p. 67](#) the concrete issues and circumstances of those they set out to evangelize. They announce an abstract gospel to an abstract person in an abstract state of sin. The result is an evangelistic event that not only does not cause any offense, but that brings about little *effective* concrete change!

If we, as Latin American Christians, are to undertake seriously and efficaciously the evangelistic challenge which our world poses *today*, we have got to start evangelizing *the church*; *i.e.*, calling her to experience a new conversion to the Christ who stands alongside

of the oppressed and exploited. We have got to uncover the liberating foundations of the gospel. Above all, we have got to approach the evangelistic situation comprehensively, yet concretely so as not to lose sight of the larger dimensions of our task nor the particular problems to which the gospel must speak. Thus evangelism will be able to contribute to the transformation not only of men and women personally but of the particular society of which they are part. p. 68

# A Selective Bibliography for Christian Muslim Workers

by WARREN W. WEBSTER

THIS BRIEF annotated listing of helpful books for Christian workers has been compiled from hundreds of volumes in English dealing with Islam and the Muslim world. The intent was to provide a basic list of 50–60 titles which is suggestive rather than comprehensive. It is recommended that interested Christian students of Islam and those beginning work with Muslims attempt to get well acquainted with at least one volume in each section of this outline while awareness gradually extends to some of the other titles.

Some valuable materials unfortunately are now out of print, but they generally can be located for research and study in one of the libraries majoring on missions or Islamic studies. Many hard to obtain volumes, especially some published in other countries, can be obtained through the Fellowship of Faith of Muslims (205 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5B 1N2).

It is perhaps understandable why no attempt could be made in this brief bibliography to include important works available in Arabic, French, or other major languages of the Muslim world, but the serious student should begin to acquire those materials for the areas in which he is interested. Also in the interest of brevity we could not include references to the many excellent articles on the Christian mission to Islam appearing in such periodicals as the *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, the *Muslim World Pulse*, *Missiology*, the *International Review of Missions*, and *The Muslim World*. Magazines and journals, however, contain some of the best current reports and ideas and should be regularly consulted.

Hopefully, the bibliography and annotations which follow will provide a helpful introduction to some available materials which may contribute, directly and indirectly, to more effective communication of the Good News in Jesus Christ to Muslims. p. 69

## I. INTRODUCTION TO ISLAM

“Focus on Islam” booklets. Toronto: Fellowship of Faith for Muslims.

A series of inexpensive, informative booklets which may be useful in introducing laymen to the nature and challenge of Islam. Titles include: “The Muslim Challenge to the Christian Church,” “Islam: What is it?” “The Five Pillars of Islam,” “The Ahmadiyya Movement,” “The Life of Muslim Women,” “From Islam to Christ—How a Sufi Found His Lord,” and “The Qur’an Says....”

*What is Islam?* W. MONTGOMERY WATT. (London: Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., 1968.)  
A generally helpful introduction by the Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Edinburgh.

*Introducing Islam*, J. CHRISTY WILSON. (New York: Friendship Press, 1959.)  
A brief, popular introduction with the illustrations and a helpful glossary.

## II. LIFE OF MUHAMMAD

*Mohammed, The Man and His Faith*, TOR ANDRAE. Translated from the German. (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1956.)

A serious but very readable study based on vast knowledge and immense research which avoids extremes in interpreting the life of Muhammad.

*Muhammad-at Mecca*, W. MONTGOMERY WATT. (London : Oxford University Press, 1953.)

*Muhammad-at Medina*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1956.)

*Muhammad-Prophet and Statesman*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1961.)

A series of detailed, classical studies by an outstanding scholar. [p. 70](#)

## III. THE QURAN (KORAN) AND THE TRADITIONS (HADITH)

*The Koran Interpreted*, ARTHUR J. ARBERRY, (New York: Macmillan, 1964.)

A scholarly attempt to convey to the English reader something of the spirit and tone of the Quran in Arabic. It is said to be “the most poetic of the English translations”—and one of the best.

*Introduction to the Qur’an*, RICHARD BELL. (Edinburgh University Press, 1953.)

A technical and critical study of the origin and compilation of the Quran.

*The Event of the Qur’an. Islam in its Scripture*. KENNETH CRAGG, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1971.)

A modern Christian attempt to sympathetically, yet critically, assess the meaning and significance of the Quran as an “event”—not simply a document—fusing Muhammad’s personal *charisma*, poetic eloquence, Arab consciousness and vibrant theism into the Scripture of Islam.

*The Traditions of Islam*, ALFRED GUILLAUME. (Oxford University Press, 1924.)

A somewhat dated, yet classic, introduction to the study of Hadith literature (traditions concerning Muhammad and his companions) which is regarded by many Muslims as having an importance and authority nearly equal to that of the Quran itself as a source of Muslim belief and practice.

*The Qur’an as Scripture*, ARTHUR JEFFREY. (New York: Russell Moore Co., 1952.)

A Christian scholar’s assessment of how Muhammad came by his notion of Scripture and how he developed his own mission in terms of the pattern of prophetic succession he had learned from “The People of the Book.” The last section of this small book is devoted to one of the best brief discussions available on the textual history of the Quran. [p. 71](#)

*The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, MOHAMMED MARMADUKE PICKTHALL. (New York: Dover Publications, 1977.)

An explanatory translation by an Englishman who became a convert to Islam.

*Companion to the Qur’an*, W. MONTGOMERY WATT. (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1967.)

Notes on the quranic text giving helpful background information and explaining illusions which western readers might not understand. Based on Arberry's translation but can be used with any translation. Contains a useful index of proper names in the Quran.

#### IV. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAM

*A Brief History of Islam—A Christian Interpretation*, HARRY BOER. (Ibadan, Nigeria: Daystar Press, 1969.)

A concise history of Islam written especially for Christian readers by the principal of a theological college in Africa. Special attention is given to Muslim penetration and expansion in West Africa.

*History of the Islamic Peoples*, CARL BROCKELMAN, (New York: Capricorn Books, 1973.)

A revised edition of a classic one-volume history in English of all the Islamic states and peoples. Reviews events country by country. Complete with bibliography, index, maps, etc.

*Mohammedanism—An Historical Study*, H. A. R. GIBB. (Oxford University Press, 1973.)

Another scholarly classic which has been updated and reprinted with the addition of a chapter on Islam in the modern world.

*History of the Arabs*, PHILIP K. HITTI. (New York: St. Martin, 1970.)

A comprehensive standard textbook on Muhammad's people from pre-Islamic times to the present. [p. 72](#)

*Islam, its Origin and Spread in Words, Maps and Pictures*, F. R. J. VERHOEVEN. (Amsterdam: Djambatan, 1962.)

A well illustrated graphic aid to the understanding of Islamic history.

#### V. MUSLIM SOCIETY AND CIVILIZATION

*Muslim Institutions*, MAURICE GAUDEFROY-DEMOMBYNES.

(London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1968.)

Translated from the French and reprinted, a pocket encyclopedia dealing with most every aspect of Islamic life, custom and law.

*Muhammadan Festivals*, G. E. VON GRUNEBaum. (New York: Henry Schuman, 1951.)

The story of the main Muhammadan festivals from their origins to the present day.

*The Social Structure of Islam*, REUBEN LEVY. (Cambridge University Press, 1957.)

A sociological study of the effects which the religious system of Islam has on Muslim communities, noting the common features of their social structure with respect to social classes, the status of women and children, morality, law, etc.

*Introduction to Islamic Civilization*, R. M. SAVORY, editor. (Cambridge University Press, 1976.)

A profusely illustrated study of Islamic art, literature, science, etc., with special reference to the modern Muslim world.

*The Legacy of Islam*, J. SCHACHT and BOSWORTH, editors. (Second edition, Oxford University Press, 1974.)

An up-to-date edition of a standard reference volume which shows the significant influence of Islam on history, art, architecture, literature, law, science, etc.

*Pagan Survivals in Mohammedan Civilization*, EDWARD WESTERMARCK. (London: Macmillan, 1933.)

A valuable study by a capable anthropologist which provides the basis for understanding many common practices and superstitions p.73 which characterize popular Islam all the way from North Africa to Indonesia.

*The Influence of Animism on Islam, An Account of Popular Superstitions*, M. SAMUEL ZWEMER. (New York: Macmillan, 1920.)

One of Zwemer's early books, similar to Westermarck's study, which supplies keys to understanding the beliefs of ordinary Muslims regarding jinns, the evil eye, amulets, charms and exorcism.

## VI. ISLAM IN THE MODERN AGE

*Counsels in Contemporary Islam*, KENNETH CRAGG. Islamic Surveys Series No. 3. (Edinburgh University Press, 1965.)

A survey of the main currents of Islamic reaction to the modern world in the Arab East, Turkey, Pakistan and India.

*The Islamic World*, W. H. MCNEIL and M. R. WALDMAN, editors. (Oxford University Press, 1973.)

A comprehensive and penetrating study complete with documentation.

*Islam—The Straight Path, Islam Interpreted by Muslims*, KENNETH W. MORGAN, editor. (New York: The Ronald Press, 1958.)

A vivid and authentic description and interpretation of Islam for western readers by eleven competent Muslim scholars who represent each of the major Islamic areas from Egypt, Turkey and Iran to Pakistan, Indonesia and China.

*Islam in Modern History*, WILFRED CANTWELL SMITH. (Princeton University Press, 1957.)

A basically sympathetic, yet keenly critical view beneath the surface of events, providing perceptive insight into the tension between faith and history in the Muslim world.

(Note: No attempt has been made here to list any of the hundreds of contemporary books dealing with modern Islam in specific countries or geographic areas such as North Africa, Turkey, the Middle East, Iran, the U.S.S.R., the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, p.74 Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, etc. Christian workers interested in specific areas of the Muslim world can readily develop a special interest reading list of their own through consulting libraries and purchasing local publications while living and working in those areas.)

## VII. INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON ISLAM

*The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment*, RICHARD BELL. (London: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., 1968.)

A reprint of earlier lectures showing how Islam was shaped from the beginning by both contact with, and misunderstanding of, the Christian faith.

*The Bible and the Koran*, JACQUES JOMIER. (New York: Desclee Co., 1964.)

A brief comparison between the Bible and the Quran written by a member of the Dominican Order and translated from the French.

*Jesus in the Qur'an*, GEOFFREY PARRINDER. (London: Faber and Faber, 1965.)

A book intended for both Christians and Muslims. The author systematically collects quranic teachings about Jesus and his associates and discusses them in the light of parallels in the Bible.

*The Bible and Islam*, HENRY PRESERVED SMITH. (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1897.)

An old volume included here for its historic interest as an earlier study of the influence of the Old and New Testament on the religion of Muhammad.

*Islam and Christian Theology, A Study of the Interpretation of Theological Ideas in the Two Religions*, J. WINDROW SWEETMAN. (London: Lutterworth Press, 1967.)

A valuable, but copiously detailed, set of reference books comprehensively treating the interaction of Christian and Muslim [p.75](#) thought from the beginning of Islam through the Crusades and the Middle Ages.

## VIII. THE CHRISTIAN MISSION TO MUSLIMS

### A. History of Missions to Muslims

*The Christian Approach to the Moslem, A Historical Study*, JAMES T. ADDISON. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942.)

A survey of Christian contacts with Muslims during the first twelve centuries of Islam, followed by a more detailed analysis, by geographical areas, of missionary efforts in the last 150 years.

*Christian Mission to Muslims—The Record, Anglican and Reformed Approaches in India and the Near East, 1800–1938*, LYLE L. VANDER WERFF. (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1977.)

A recent doctoral study analyzing lessons learned in the mission to Muslims from the time of Henry Martyn to Samuel Zwemer.

### B. Christian Understanding of Islam

*Bridge to Islam, A Study of the Religious Forces of Islam and Christianity in the Near East*, ERIC W. BETHMANN. (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1953.)

An attempt to build a bridge of understanding and communication between the two religions. Valuable especially for the concluding chapter, “The Bridge and Its Builders.”

*The Call of the Minaret*, KENNETH CRAGG. (London: Oxford University Press, 1964.)

The first, and perhaps best, of Dr. Cragg’s many books. A penetrating and stimulating interpretation of Islam, based on the phrases of the call to prayer as given five times a day by the muezzin. He first analyzes what the call to prayer means to the Muslim, historically and doctrinally. Then he finds in it for the Christian a call to understanding, to service, to retrieval, to interpretation and to patience. [p. 76](#)

### C. Christian Message and Methods in Communicating the Gospel to Muslims

“Christianity and Islam” series, DAVID BROWN. (London: S.P.C.K.)

A series of books written by a former missionary, with Muslim readers in mind, attempting to explain to them God’s revelation of Himself through the Messiah and the Scriptures. The fifth and final volume, by another author. 1) “Jesus and God in the Christian Scriptures,” 1967; 2) “The Christian Scriptures,” 1968; 3) “The Cross of the Messiah,” 1969; 4) “The Divine Trinity,” 1969; 5) “The Church and the Churches,” by Gordon Huelin, 1970.

*How to Witness to Muslims*, JACK BUDD. (London: Red Sea Mission, 1976.)

Practical lectures by an experienced missionary in East Africa and the Middle East. Suitable for group study.

*The Practical Approach to Muslims*, JENS CHRISTENSEN. (North Africa Mission, 1977.)

A timely reprint of a stimulating study course first published serially in Pakistan by a Lutheran bishop who spent a lifetime working among Muslim Pathans on the northwest frontier. Bishop Christensen was an original thinker who held that the basic problem in the mission to Islam is theological and he calls for an honest rethinking of our approach to Islam which is both radical and practical.

*Christian Witness Among Muslims, A Handbook written especially for Christians of Africa (south of Sahara)*. (Accra, Ghana: Africa Christian Press, 1971.)

As the sub-title implies this manual is intended to help the ordinary Christian know how to behave towards his Muslim neighbors and then tells how to witness about Christ among them. (This book has also been published in India with some adaptations and an additional chapter on the integrity of the Bible for use in helping Christians witness to Muslims there.) p. 77

*Explaining the Gospel to Muslims*, JOHN CROSSLEY. (London: Lutterworth Press, 1960.)

A brief, simple manual written by a missionary lecturer in Nigeria to explain the Christian faith to Muslims and to assist Christians in answering basic questions which Muslims commonly ask.

*The Biblical Approach to the Muslim*, JOHN ELDER. (Houston: LIT International.)

Written by a long-time missionary to Iran as a course for Christian workers in a textbook format intended for study by correspondence.

*How to Lead Moslems to Christ*, GEORGE K. HARRIS. (Philadelphia: China Inland Mission, 1957.)

A concise manual originally written with the Muslims of China particularly in view but adaptable for use in any part of the world.

*Christianity Explained to Muslims, A Manual for Christian Workers*, L. BEVAN JONES. (Calcutta: YMCA Publishing House, 1952, Revised edition.)

A painstaking summary of Muslim difficulties and an attempt to provide help in answering their arguments with regard to Christianity. Intended for Christian workers rather than for direct circulation among Muslims. Somewhat oriented toward Indian Islam.

*Share Your Faith With a Muslim*, CHARLES R. MARSH. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975.)

Written against a background of forty-five years of experience among Muslims in Africa this book sets forth many valid principles and helpful suggestions for Christian witness to Muslims—or to anyone.

*A Christian's Response to Islam*, WILLIAM M. MILLER. (Nutley, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1976.)

The author writes out of more than fifty years of personal evangelistic experience among Muslims in Iran and in North America. His concern for the salvation of Muslims permeates the book. p. 78 The final chapter sets forth 16 reasons why there must be a continuing mission to Muslims.

*The Fortress and the Fire, Jesus Christ and the Challenge of Islam*, PHIL PARSHALL. (Bombay: Gospel Literature Service, 1975.)

Written from a biblical perspective reinforced by many years of Christian work in Bangladesh, the author deals with the chief religious and sociological obstacles that traditionally have prevented widespread acceptance of the Christian faith among Muslims and offers some radical, but workable, solutions.

*The Balance of Truth (Mizanu'l Haqq)*, C. G. PFANDER. (Beirut, 1974.)

A recent reprint of a classic reply to Muslim objections. Originally written in Persian it reflects an older apologetic approach but is still of interest and value.

*Reaching Muslims Today, A Short Handbook*. (North Africa Mission, 1976.)

A very practical and useful compilation. It first surveys the Muslim challenge, contrasting Christianity and Islam, and then outlines the Christian reply to fundamental differences and objections Muslims raise. The handbook concludes with a useful "how to" section outlining specific things to do, and not to do, in presenting the gospel to Muslims.

*Media in Islamic Culture*, C. CICHARD SHUMAKER, editor, (Wheaton, Illinois: Evangelical Literature Overseas, 1974.)

Report of an international conference of media experts in Christian literature and broadcasting held in France to focus on the cultural problems involved in active communication of the Christian message to the Muslim mind. Contains valuable resource materials not available elsewhere.

*Islam and the Gospel of God*, H. SPENCER. (Delhi: S.P.C.K., 1956.) A comparison of the central doctrines of Christianity and Islam, prepared as a useful tool for Christian workers, translators and writers among Muslims. Recently reprinted because of renewed demand.

p. 79

*The Christian Message to Islam*, J. CHRISTY WILSON. (New York: Revell, 1950.)

A manual of methods of approach to Islam by one who spent twenty creative years in missionary service in Iran and the Middle East. Written not for Muslims, but for Christian workers concerned with presenting the gospel of Christ in a Muslim context.

*Your Muslim Guest, a Practical Guide in Friendship and Witness for Christians Who Meet Muslims in North America*. (Toronto: Fellowship of Faith for Muslims, 1976.)

The purpose of this fifteen page booklet is clear from the sub-title. It is especially helpful for people meeting and entertaining Muslim guests for the first time.

(Note: Limitations of space have not permitted including here any of the fine biographies and autobiographies of Christian workers among Muslims from which many valuable lessons can be learned. Students of the subject are encouraged to read about missionaries of an earlier day like Raymond Lull of North Africa, Henry Martyn of India, Temple Gairdner of Cairo, Samuel Zwemer and Paul Harrison that are available.)

#### **D. Christian Literature Written for Muslims**

*The Life and Teaching of Jesus the Messiah (Sirat-ul-Masih, Isa, Ibn Maryam)*, DENNIS E. CLARK. (Elgin: Dove Publications, 1977.)

A carefully prepared life of Christ based on the text of the gospels, written with Muslim readers in mind, by one with long experience in living and working among them. In addition to English it is available in Arabic and several other languages of the Muslim world.

*Face the Facts, Questions and Answers Concerning the Christian Faith*, M. H. FINLAY. (Bombay: Gospel Literature Service, 1968.) Originally written in Singapore this compact



little manual is just what the sub-title implies. It specifically replies to common Muslim questions about the Bible, the person of Christ and the Trinity. [p. 80](#)

*The God Who Speaks to Man.* (Oak Park, Illinois: Emmaus Bible School, 1973.)

A 12-lesson Bible correspondence course written especially for educated Muslims.

*The True Path, Seven Muslims Make Their Greatest Discovery,* MARK HANNA. (Colorado Springs: International Doorways Publications, 1975.)

Testimonies by representative Muslims who have discovered Christ in a personal way. The book concludes with an extensive glossary of Christian terms and appendices presenting additional information about the Bible.

*Beliefs and Practices of Christians, (A Letter to a Friend),* WILLIAM M. MILLER. (Lahore: Masihi Isha'at Khana, 1972.)

An excellent brief guide to Christian beliefs, well written for Muslims in terms and categories which they understand.

*Ten Muslims Meet Christ.* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969.) Classic stories of the grace of God in operation in a hostile environment.

*Can We Know?* DALE and ELAINE RHOTON. (Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, 1972.)

An examination of the basis for religious knowledge and Christian commitment. Without any reference to Islam or the authors' years of experience in the Muslim world, the book is clearly written with the hope that Muslims—as well as others—will make the discovery of life in Christ.

(*Note:* It is apparent that there are more useful manuals about *how* to witness to Muslims than there are good books written especially for explaining the Christian faith to Muslims in ways they can readily identify with and respond to. In addition to the titles listed above there are, however, quite a number of tracts, leaflets, small booklets and correspondence courses published for Muslims in a number of languages. For further information about literature for distribution to Muslims contact the Fellowship of Faith for Muslims in Toronto, Canada). [p. 81](#)

## IX. REFERENCE MATERIALS

*Encyclopedia of Islam*, second edition. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954.) The first edition of this standard reference work was published in four volumes, 1911–1938. Three volumes of the almost entirely new second edition were published by 1975. An expensive set for institutional use and scholarly purposes.

*Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, H. A. R. GIBB and J. H. KRAMERS, editors. (Cornell University Press, 1953.)

Includes all the articles contained in the first edition and supplement of the *Encyclopedia of Islam* which relate particularly to the religion and law of Islam.

*Index Islamicus (Guide to Periodical Literature, 1906–1970).* J. D. PEARSON, editor. (Cambridge: W. Heffner and Sons, Ltd., 1972.)

A useful tool for serious students of Islam, periodically updated through the publication of supplements.

*Historical Atlas of the Muslim Peoples*, R. ROOLVINK. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975.)

Excellent colored maps depicting the extent of Islamic presence and influence during various periods of history. [p. 82](#)

# The Church and Social Transformation

## *An Ethics of the Spirit*

by LEON O. HYNSON

### I. LIMITATION AND CONTEXT

FIRST, I must make clear that this paper deals with a somewhat narrowly defined question in Christian social ethics.

Second, I view this essay not as exegesis but as systematic explication of the biblical ethics of the Spirit.

Third, I wish to distinguish between a theology of social transformation and a strategy for the same. I intend in this paper to wrestle with theology, not strategy. Strategy will be rooted in theology. The urgency of so many human problems may press us to strategy apart from theology. We should avoid the impatience of an activism which is theologically sterile, as well as a theology which belongs only in the classroom.

### II. TASK AND PURPOSE

It was Jesus who, having lived out most of His brief life of ministry, prayed concerning His infant community: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" ([John 17:15-18](#)). The force of these words seems clear enough. Christians belong in the world as Jesus belonged; Christians are models before the world, not copies of it—Jesus was that kind of example; Christians possess a moral dynamic, a perfectness which fits them to live in the world, not away from it as cloistered saints, like an aseptic lab culture (growing in artificial conditions) in a stoppered test tube. Jesus [p. 83](#) was a perfect man, a whole person, sent into this world to make it whole. Christians are sent to live where they may re-present Jesus in their lives of spiritual power.

When Jesus in this context prays for the sanctification of His followers, He is repeating essentially what He said in the Sermon on the Mount, "Ye are salt"; "Ye are light." Sanctification makes men and women inclusive, not reclusive. It means a life lived for many, not simply for one. To make this claim is not to deny that it is personal; to assert

that it is personal is to admit that it is social. Nothing personal is ever truly private, because it in some way will leap from one person to another.<sup>1</sup>

If the church, then, is to be a moral force in the world, it will become this as it is energized and driven by the Spirit. The church—a driven fellowship! How does the church live within that spiritual presence so that it may be the leaven that leavens the whole lump, salt to preserve the earth, light to illumine, energize, and heal? The answer will be found, I believe, in the biblical teaching concerning the Holy Spirit, in what I wish to call an ethics of the Spirit.

This essay is conceived as an exercise in constructive, theological ethics, parallel to James Gustafson's *Christ and the Moral Life*. Its purpose is the *creation* and *elucidation* of a *Christian social ethics* grounded in the biblical theology of the Spirit. I intend to avoid a monism of the Spirit or an ethics which is not truly Trinitarian. Much attention, however, has been given to the ethics of God the Creator (an ontological ethics, or an ethics of creation), and the ethics of Christ the Redeemer (a Christological ethics, an *imitatio* ethics, etc.). An ethics of the Spirit has been neglected as surely as has the entire theology of the Spirit.

### III. HISTORY OF THE ETHICS OF THE SPIRIT

An ethics grounded in pneumatology has been discredited historically. The struggle of the Church to define and explicate a Trinitarian theology has of course shaped the Church's ethics of the Spirit. The tendency in much Christian thought is toward subordination of the Spirit to the Son and the Father. **P. 84**

A theology of the Second Person often seems dominant, even as it is in the Apostles' Creed, or in the theology of Barath, according to some of his interpreters. Wherever that is the case, a Christological ethics becomes ascendant with such emphases as suffering, imitation, substitution, and the incarnational.

What is clearly required is a Trinitarian ethics, a complementary ethics which maintains the integrity of the inner-Trinitarian relationships. Such an ethics will be ontological (rooted in the doctrine of God the Creator), Christological (Redeemer), and pneumatological (Spirit); or, in other words, faithful to the biblical exposition of the work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is legitimate, I believe, to describe this complementary ethics as an ethics of Spirit, for God is Spirit ([John 4:24](#); cf. also [2 Cor. 3:17](#)). In delineating an ethics of the Holy Spirit, we may run the risk of a unitarianism of the Spirit, but the clear intention is to develop an ethics of the Spirit which we may integrate with ontological and Christological ethics. If that is accomplished, we may then begin to develop an ethics which is "circumcessionist," meaning that as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are ever One and ever interpenetrative, so Christian ethics will be integrative, unitive, holistic. We must preserve both unity and diversity (*procession* may be a better word) in the metaphysics and ethics of Christian revelation.

Perhaps the chief theological peril is a "unitarianism of the Third Person." An interesting expression of this may be seen in the charismatics, who remove the cross from the chancel or steeple and replace it with a dove. It is one thing to develop a Trinitarian theology which integrates a theology of the Spirit, and quite another to work with a theology of the Third Person which seems to make Him contemporary with the church while the work of Father and Son belongs to days past and gone. A theology of the Spirit is always Trinitarian; Father, Son, and Spirit are ever interpenetrative, and no work of God

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<sup>1</sup> John Wesley, *Standard Sermons*, ed. E. H. Sugden (London: Epworth press, 1961), 1 ; 382-89; "Sermon on the Mount," IV.

is ever compartmentalized. (Dispensationalism tends in this direction.) To be rooted in the testimony of the ancient faith, found in the Scriptures, one must always do justice to both the monotheism and Trinitarianism of the New Testament.

A Trinitarian ethic of the Spirit expresses the creative concern or outgoingness of God from the circle of His infinite completeness or perfection to the circumference of a living human community; the restorative concern or reaching forth of Christ to renew humanity p. 85 and bring it into the fulness of His life; it is the dynamism of the Spirit's concern to universalize and actualize this outgoingness of God and this reaching forth of Christ Jesus. The Spirit proceeds (or goes forth) from Father and Son.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it is the divine economy to be in community with man, making the human spirit self-transcending, like God's Spirit.

#### IV. DEFINING AN ETHICS OF THE SPIRIT

By an ethics of the Spirit, we specifically intend the *scientific* (meaning here the science of ethic) *analysis* of the manifestation of the Spirit in the sphere of moral life. When I suggest that the ethics of the Spirit is creative, I do not mean to attribute creativity to the ethical system. I rather submit that any analysis of the Spirit's moral influence will emphasize the creative dimension of the Spirit's work.

This ethics is grounded in the life of the Holy Spirit and human spirit. It asks: How does the Spirit influence the human spirit in the moral dimension? What are the ethical impulses of the Spirit? How is the Spirit related to the Christian's moral task? What difference does the Holy Spirit make in the moral life of the Christian community or the community of man? It indicates: Here is the way the Spirit works in the moral life, both personal and social, producing goodness, improvement, holiness, virtue.

##### A. Essential Aspect

We define the ethics of the Spirit as Christian, evangelical, social, and spiritual.

###### *Christian*

It is a Christian ethic. This means that the ethical content of the Holy Spirit's work and ministry is ever Christocentric. As the Western Church has maintained, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son, i.e., He is the personal "going forth" of God and Christ to man. Jesus said concerning the Spirit: "He shall p. 86 glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you" ([John 16:14](#)).

###### *Evangelical*

It is an evangelical ethic. Jesus taught: "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth ..." "And when he comes, he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment ..." Further, he declared, "But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, she will bear witness to me; and you also are witnesses ..." ([John 16:13, 8; 15:26](#), RSV). The ethics of the Spirit is infused with the mandate for witness to the good news that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" ([2 Cor. 5:19](#)). Concurrently we proclaim the good news that life in the Spirit means a life of moral power.

###### *Social*

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<sup>2</sup> Lucien Richard, "John Calvin and the Role of the Church in the Spiritual Life," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* (summer, 1974), p. 489, writes: "The Holy Spirit is God's personal presence among us in such a way that in the Spirit we attain God's own personal being."

Here we emphasize the social character of the work of the Spirit. His movement in the church and in the world is analogous to the communion of the Trinity. His work in church and world is toward unity and community. The Holy Spirit creates in the church a community of faith and through that community calls the world into that communion of faith and hope and love. The procession of the Spirit is ever social. Within the Trinity there is a procession of Spirit from Father and Son, toward Father and Son. With respect to the world, the Spirit proceeds toward the world and draws persons toward God and the other person.

### *Spiritual*

Here we emphasize self-transcendence, the essence of spirituality, the capacity of spirit for going beyond the self, participating in the other, taking the other into itself.

We recognize the self-transcending character of the Holy Spirit. This is true even of the human spirit, even though we do insist upon the consistent tendency of man to be curved inward. "Spirit" possesses the possibility of going beyond self.

The name and concept called "spirit" is frequently employed but often misunderstood. Wesley defined spirit as an expression p. 87 of the image of God, suggesting that the volitional, ethical, and rational are aspects of the spiritual dimension of man.<sup>3</sup>

John Macquarrie suggests that:

"Spirit may be described as a capacity for going out of oneself and beyond oneself; ... Man is not closed or shut up in his being ... To him there belong essentially freedom and creativity, whereby he is able to shape (within limits) both himself and his world. It is this openness, freedom, creativity ... that makes possible ... the formation of community, the outreach of love and whatever else belongs to ... the 'life of the Spirit.'"<sup>4</sup>

### **B. Operational Aspect**

To proceed farther, the ethics of the Spirit will consider the creative, sanctitive, liberative, dynamic, and permeative dimensions of the Spirit's work, with specific reference to their Christian social significance. In the earlier categories employed the emphasis was on *essence* or *nature* of an ethics of the Spirit, here we are dealing with the *operational* aspect. We analyze the Spirit's *action*, the *ethos* of the Spirit.<sup>5</sup>

A social ethics grounded in the theology of the Spirit will emphasize these five areas.

#### *The Creative Work of the Spirit*

The creativity of the Spirit is of crucial significance in an ethics of the Spirit. The Spirit's work possesses a structured, formative character; it includes both form and content. The ethics of the Spirit must consider this while emphasizing that "the wind bloweth where it will." There is both form and content, structure and ecstasy in the Spirit's work. The Spirit of God, we are informed in the Creation story ([Genesis 1](#)), moved upon the formless deep.

The ethics of the Spirit will emphasize the creativity of the Holy Spirit and the human spirit; the freedom of the spirit and its responsibility; the openness and development of the moral life of p. 88 Man. Ethics will interpret that developing moral life to the church and the world. This, it may be suggested, is what Paul is emphasizing in his charge "Walk

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<sup>3</sup> Wesley, *Standard Sermons*, 2:227–28; sermon: "The New Birth."

<sup>4</sup> John Macquarrie, *Paths in Spirituality* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), pp. 40, 44.

<sup>5</sup> Cf., John H. Yoder, *Karl Barth and the Problem of War* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1970), pp. 18, 23–24. Ethos has to do with action; ethics with a description of action.

in the Spirit” and in the challenge to reproduce/develop the fruit of the Spirit. In its social outworking, the life of the Christian community will be formative, creative, and unifying. It is the task of Christian ethics to explicate how this will be actualized.

### *Sanctitive Work*

A concomitant emphasis in the ethic we are analyzing is what we are calling the sanctitive. The Spirit’s operation in the moral life will be characterized by wholeness, sanctity, integration, purity of heart. In its social dimension, the sanctitive work of the Spirit will mean judgment, healing, growth in righteousness. Commenting upon the essentials of Christian social action, Nels Ferre suggests as the highest emphasis

*the explicit recognition of the direct activity of the Holy Spirit as the incomparably primary dimension of Christian social action—and of the Spirit of God for that matter, on the level of general social action. To keep institutions under judgement because of their sins is one important aspect of Christian social action.*<sup>6</sup>

### *Liberative Work*

The third point of emphasis in the Spirit’s activity is the liberative. Paul’s Roman and Galatian letters give particular attention to this work of the Spirit. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” ([Rom. 8:2](#)). Living in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit are perceived as the essence of liberty. Liberty for Paul is always truncated and barren except when held in place by the ethical obligation of love. “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another” ([Gal. 5:13](#)).

The liberative dimension of the Spirit’s work is bounded by ethical guidelines. This liberty is a fruitful ground wherein love, joy, and peace may develop. There is no law against love and p. 89 joy and peace. However, there is a law which enters into their growth. They will not mature where liberty has forfeited its ethical grounding.

The liberation emphasis is of crucial significance in much contemporary theology—Black liberation, women’s liberation, “third world” liberation—and of other revolutionary movements in our time. An ethics of the Spirit will not take us from these spheres of action. It will call us out into the world where slaveries of economics, human indignity and oppression, poverty and disease, hold persons under purgations as severe as the medieval fires were portrayed.<sup>7</sup>

Peter Hebblethwaite’s essay “The Politics of the Holy Spirit” warns against naive attempts to politicize the Spirit.<sup>8</sup>

### *Dynamic Work*

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<sup>6</sup> Nels Ferre, *Christianity and Society* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), pp. 114–51, especially p. 136.

<sup>7</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, Inc., 1968), pp. 143–45, likens the Nazi death camps to torments of hell.

<sup>8</sup> *Frontier* (autumn, 1975), pp. 143–45. Hebblethwaite states that the official churches have “institutionalized” the Spirit, the charismatic movement has “monopolized” Him, while the liberation theology, especially its Latin American expressions, has called Him to the revolution. “Thus the Holy Spirit enters politics.” The author rightly suggests that we must develop criteria for the avoidance of a politicizing of the Spirit, who “always lies ahead of and beyond our projects.” However, to argue that the Spirit is ahead of our projects, without seeing His presence in human efforts, is to miss the teaching of an ethics of the Spirit.

The fourth concept which we consider in the operational dimension is the dynamic. An ethic of the Spirit emphasizes the Spirit's empowering work. There is a moral force which the wind of the Spirit brings to the ethical spheres of life. Without this force creativity and sanctity remain lifeless concepts, structure without substance, body without breath. In the dynamic of the Spirit may be developed the creative and sanctitive characteristics in human community. In this empowerment—Ferre calls this the “trans-powering role of the Spirit”<sup>9</sup>—we may see believers undergirded to carry out the world-transforming mandate which has been given to the Christian Church. “Ye are the salt of the earth,” Jesus said. “Ye are the light of the world” ([Matt. 5:13–14](#)). We must resist the futility of hiding our lights under a bushel. *p. 90*

### *Permeative Force*

Finally, we must stress the permeative power of the Spirit in the church and the world. The influence of the Spirit is present throughout the earth. We may speak of this aspect in terms of common or prevenient grace. The Spirit is salt and light and water and wind. He permeates the sphere of spirit. The Spirit bloweth where He will.

In the history of Christian ethical thought and expression, several types of response to society have become manifest. H. Richard Niebuhr has been very influential in his discussion in *Christ and Culture*. His fivefold typology is highly useful and sometimes very subtle. A less complex typology may be employed which describes the Christian response to culture as the pattern of either domination, separation, or permeation.<sup>10</sup> The first pattern leads to political and triumphalist interpretations of the church. The second suggests a sectarian and pacific interpretation, a theology of the Cross. The third pattern entails a theology of the Spirit, a pattern of involvement in the world and penetration of its structures with the dynamism of love.<sup>11</sup> The ethics of the Spirit is an ethics of faith, hope, and love, offering the most scripturally balanced, holistic framework for shaping the world. While there are surely authentic scriptural elements in each of these responses, they lack the full orb of the transformist position.

## **V. THE COMMUNITY OF THE SPIRIT**

In the Acts of the Apostles, the Church is presented as preeminently the community of the Spirit concerned with all things spiritual. If we can agree that the spiritual is somewhat synonymous with becoming a person in the fullest sense, and if we can hold that in a Christocentric context, then we may argue that the Church must participate in all spheres of action which enhance personhood.

The community of the Spirit is a “driven” community, an ecstatic *p. 91* organism, a surging spirit. Driven from its sacred enclosures, its interior temples by the Holy Spirit, the spirit of the Christian man stands beside other human spirits. The spiritual community thus becomes a transforming community for man, dedicated to man, challenging and transforming spirit. The community of the Spirit is a community of faith and love. As Paul Tillich so pointedly writes: “If the Divine Spirit breaks into the human spirit, ... it drives

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<sup>9</sup> Ferre, *Christianity*, pp. 156 ff.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. George W. Forell, ed., *Christian Social Teachings* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1966), p. xi for his typology.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Hendrikus Berkhof, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964), pp. 102–3, where the author stresses a pneumatological change in which the “age-old structures of man’s life with their dehumanizing effects are replaced by the transforming powers of the Spirit....”

the human spirit out of itself. The 'in' of the divine Spirit is an 'out' for the human spirit. The Spirit ... is driven into a successful self-transcendence."<sup>12</sup>

In an ethic of the Spirit, the Church transcends itself, its hesitations, its clinging to prerogatives, and becomes in the Spirit a searching wind which tries the hearts of men and the structures of world community or discord. It is central to the biblical theology of the Spirit to say that even as God who is Spirit transcends himself (goes out from himself) and becomes the God who is with men, God in community, so the Church as community of the Spirit will be self-transcending, going out to human community (where in fact it always is). As John Wesley says: "There is no holiness but social holiness." "Holy solitaries" are no more genuine than "holy adulterers!"<sup>13</sup> The community of the Spirit is self-transcending by its very nature as a *spiritual* fellowship. "Spirit" means going forth from, proceeding from, self-overcoming. This is the theological basis for a Christian social ethic. Or, put differently, an ethic of the Spirit is the beating heart of a Christian social ethic.

The Christian community belongs in the community of humanity! What metaphors best symbolize the penetration of the world community by the Christian community? The Church as: island? peninsula? beach-head? river? ocean with tributaries?

None of these seem sufficient. The best metaphor is wind, breath, life-giving, vivifying. Here the Church is seen as the "community of the wind." The community of the Spirit, blowing in the wind, breathing upon the structures of the age, transforms. The life-giving Spirit in the Church reproveth of sin, creates right relationships, and warns of judgment to come.

The community of the Spirit alone is able in the Spirit to transcend itself and to become immersed in the structures of the world, p. 92 to be witnesses and martyrs, a sanctitive agency. Its forum is less the cloister or the sanctuary than the marketplace. Its redemptive work is carried out in full view of the world. He who said, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid," was himself slain, not in some remote dungeon but on a hill. The public spectacle of martyrdom challenges the pretensions of the world; the Cross casts its shadow across the ways of Caesar and denies his claim to lordship. Martyrs of the Church and living witnesses so penetrate the structures of the age that the dying Roman Empire summons its apologists to charge the Church with its declining health. The Church's rejoinder is given in Augustine's *City of God*. The empire's ill health is the result of its pride. It is striking that the Church should be credited with such an infiltration. That, however, is what the Church will be in the world. The living Church is bent upon personal and social transformation. Even if it deliberately avoided all themes except personal salvation, its concern for the community of humanity would break out everywhere. Christianity which does not begin with the individual does not begin. Christianity which ends with the individual, ends. The Church spends and is spent in creating righteousness and in challenging unrighteousness, in personal and community forms.

## VI. THEOLOGICAL CONTENT OF AN ETHIC OF THE SPIRIT

Here it becomes important to raise another question. What is the content of an ethic of the Spirit?

The answer to this question takes us back to our earlier suggestion that the ethic is creative, sanctitive, liberative, dynamic, permeative. This we may present as the form of

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<sup>12</sup> *Systematic Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 3:111-12.

<sup>13</sup> *Works* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958-59), 14:321-22.



the ethic. But what or who is it which is creative and sanctitive? The Holy Spirit who creates and sanctifies! The contents of His creative, sanctitive work is faith, hope, and love. Faith, hope, and love are theological virtues and spiritual virtues. Each includes inherently the spiritual or self-transcending quality, i.e., the person who possesses faith, hope, love, lives in the Spirit and goes forth from the enclosed circle of distrust to faith, from fear to hope, from self-love to agapeic commitment. Faith, hope, love are spiritual graces and are clearly ethical in content. [p. 93](#)

The ethic of the Spirit is an ethic of faith. This is relational in expression. It is characterized by trust, conversion, renewal, repentance, and justification. Each of these implies change. Trust means giving oneself away in dependence on another (or going out from one's self). Conversion is becoming a new person, a man for others. Repentance and justification are relational changes, the mind and attitude of God toward man and man toward God being transformed and brought into a unitive state.

An ethic of faith is personal and social. As applied to the social situation, it would imply that the Spirit is at work in the efforts which exist to bring change of mind among men. Attempts at healing the discords which rend human societies, the distrust between economic institutions and labour, the political alienations, the social gulfs, are the result when the Spirit works faith in the Church and the Church works out the ethic of faith in the world. The Spirit is at work in the world through the Church and even without the Church. The Church never works dynamically apart from the Spirit.

The ethic of the Spirit is an ethic of hope. Hope is a continuously restorative power, characterized by an ultimate optimism and balanced by a preliminary measure of both confidence and doubt about the completion of that which man sets out to do. What this means for Christian social ethics is the overcoming of the apocalyptic *pessimism* so prevalent in some current evangelical discussions. It is equally a corrective to the glorious but unrealistic dreams of progress espoused by some Christians in the nineteenth century.

Lycurgus Starkey, concerning the Wesleyan interpretation of the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification, asserts:

Just as God purposes to bring individual Christians to a holiness of heart and life, so through his church God works to bring about a person-in-community holiness to the whole of society as a foretaste and indispensable part of His coming Kingdom.<sup>14</sup>

A spiritual ethics is, an ethic of love. *Agape* epitomizes the work of the Spirit. As Paul so triumphantly announces to the Corinthians: "Love ... beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all thing." Love believes, love hopes. Love is the greatest [p. 94](#) of all because it actualizes faith and embodies hope. Paul sums up the essence of walking in the Spirit by asserting the ethical challenge to love ([Gal. 5:6, 13-14, 22-25](#)).

It is this central concern which represents the genius of the Wesleyan ethic. As Mildred Wynkoop has emphasized, the social ethics of Wesley is the ethic of love, social love which permeates the world and works toward its transformation.<sup>15</sup>

## VII. CONCLUSION

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<sup>14</sup> *The Work of the Holy Spirit: A Study in Wesleyan Theology* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), pp. 160-61.

<sup>15</sup> *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1972). See my "The Social Concerns of Wesley: Theological Foundations," *Christian Scholar's Review* 4, No. 1 (1974), pp. 36-42; and "Christian Love: The Key to Wesley's Ethics," *Methodist History* (October, 1975), pp. 44-55.

In his chapter “Spirit and Spirituality,” Macquarrie comments upon the positive possibility of spiritual achievement by an individual but questions whether groups are able to realize that elusive quality. Social conflicts abound, demonstrating how unspiritual the life of society is. Can this ever be changed ? he asks. Will social morality always be “a matter of power politics”?

But surely Christian spirituality envisages a broader strategy than the spiritualization of the individual. In calling the church “the community of the Spirit” we are implying that here there is ... a society with the capacity to go out from itself. It has been said that the church is the only society which exists primarily for the benefit of the nonmember.<sup>16</sup>

In conclusion, we may call the Church to a Christian discipleship in all spheres of life. If the Church, with its vision of righteousness and wholeness, is excluded from social involvement, then whom will the Church suggest for the task ? The sectors of power and influence, professions and business, labor and politics, have no adequate ethical ground from which to re-create, sanctify, and energize. These sectors of power all have particularized ethical norms for self-regulation, but lack an ethic equal to the depth of human demand and need.

George Forell, in answering the question: “Why did the church not speak up against Nazism ?” said, “Now, this church should have probably said more. But when all is said and done, the only p. 95 people that said anything were the churches. Certainly the legal profession said nothing. Certainly the medical profession said nothing. Certainly the schools and the university professors said nothing.” There was no university *Kampf*, or a medical association *Kampf*. The only *Kampf* in Germany was the *Kirchenkampf*.<sup>17</sup> This illustrates my claim that the community of the Spirit is able to speak because it possesses the moral force. The ethic of the Spirit offers both the structure and substance of a “categorical imperative” to humankind. The ethics of the Spirit offers the dynamic for its actualization. This ethics of the Spirit is the ethics of the Church. Even now in our apocalyptic time, the Spirit is moving over the face of the world; and through the community of the Spirit, God is commanding: “Let there be light”; and behold, light breaks forth, and God says, “It is good.”

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## Nervous Breakdown: A Patient’s View<sup>1</sup>

by ROBERT SMITH

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<sup>16</sup> Macquarrie, *Paths*, pp. 50–52.

<sup>17</sup> George W. Forell, “Luther and Conscience,” *Bulletin of Gettysburg Lutheran Theological Seminary* (winter, 1975), pp. 18–19.

<sup>1</sup> It must be emphasized that this is one person’s account of his condition and that one cannot generalize from a particular case.

DURING August-September, 1977, I was hospitalized suffering from acute anxiety and acute depression. This period was one of great confusion, compounded by the fact that I did not have any prior knowledge of nervous disorders and was terrified by the experience. In fact very little appears to have been written in the religious or the secular press concerning nervous disorders. As a result of these experiences, encouraged by family, doctor and hospital staff, I resolved to write of my experiences in an endeavour to help others to appreciate such disorders from the perspective of the patient. As I wish this to be a personal account, I have made no attempt to consult books dealing with the problem. Some works, however, have influenced my thinking, though not all in a positive sense: Tournier,<sup>2</sup> Miller,<sup>3</sup> Goffman,<sup>4</sup> and Little.<sup>5</sup> In addition the workshops and publications of John Mallison<sup>6</sup> had considerable impact on my attitude to participation in group therapy sessions.

Several times the question has been asked, 'How did your experience affect you as a Christian?' What follows is my answer to that question. *From the outset it must be emphasized that what follows is the account of my experience and that another person's experience may be quite different.* p. 97

#### 1) Background

From February, 1977, I was suffering from periodic unexplained symptoms which were initially diagnosed as the effects of sinusitis. It was not until after my hospitalization that I found I had been suffering from *panic attacks*. The psychiatrist explained that when a *panic attack* occurs the brain becomes confused and prepares the body either to fight, or to flee from, an imagined enemy. The blood flows to the legs and the brain, extra adrenalin is produced and the heart pumps faster to distribute the blood to the vital organs. He further explained that the patient, being unaware of the true nature of his complaint, becomes more and more worried. The attacks become frequent and a vicious circle is built up. The vicious circle has to be broken and the unwanted behaviour unlearned.

In spite of these attacks, I felt that my faith was becoming deeper. I spent part of my daily train journey to work in prayer, followed by a time of Bible reading for my correspondence theology course. In fact, I felt at peace with God, and happy in the fellowship of the local church. In addition, I was successful in my work and deriving considerable satisfaction from it. I was (and still am) respected and held in high esteem by both my superiors and workmates. My family life is stable, and I love and am loved by my wife and two young sons.

The day prior to my hospitalization, my mind began to become confused and I began to have 'unwanted' thoughts. I became afraid of the drugs in the house; I became apprehensive about crossing the local level-crossing to catch the train. As the day progressed things became considerably worse. I did not want to be alone. I kept on checking to ensure that the door from the office to the roof was closed. I felt voices calling me to 'do it'. I felt I could no longer cope and was losing control. The trip home was

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<sup>2</sup> P. Tournier, *The Meaning of Persons*, London: S.C.M. Press, 1957; idem, *A Place for You*, London: S.C.M. Press, 1968.

<sup>3</sup> W. A. Miller, *Why Do Christians Break Down?* London: Coverdale House, 1976.

<sup>4</sup> E. Goffman, *Asylums*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968.

<sup>5</sup> I. G. Little, *Nervous Christians*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1956.

<sup>6</sup> J. Mallison, *The Small Group Book Series*, Sydney: Renewal Publications, 1976, No. 1: *Guidelines for Small Groups in the Christian Community*; No. 2: *Learning and Praying in Small Groups*; No. 3: *Keeping Group Life Vita*; No. 4: *Calling Youth and Adults*.

horrific—would I jump from the moving car? I visited the family doctor who ordered me to take four weeks rest.

The following morning my wife left for work as usual. I suddenly became scared of the knives in the house. I tried to pray and read my Bible, but I could not concentrate. I rang my wife and asked her to come home immediately. I went outside and watered the garden to keep me out of the house. If necessary I would have locked myself out of the house. It was obvious that urgent psychiatric p. 98 help was required. I visited the local doctor and then a psychiatrist who had me admitted to a private psychiatric hospital. I was hospitalized for five and a half weeks, convalesced at home for three weeks, and have been returning to complete health ever since. Since my return to work, recovery has been consistent though at times fraught with difficulty. I have been aided by the loving concern of family, doctor, nursing staff and friends. While my church activities have been restricted, my Bible reading and prayer life have returned to their pre-hospital level, though I have not recommenced my correspondence course.

## 2) *The relationship between doctor and patient*

Time and again my thoughts returned to a passage of Shakespeare quoted in Tournier's *The Meaning of Persons*:

All the world's a stage  
And all the men and women merely players:  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts....<sup>7</sup>

Tournier considers how a person has many masks, uses different masks for different occasions and shows different masks to different people.

It is relatively easy for a patient to put on a suitable mask and to discuss with the psychiatrist only those facets of his life he wishes to reveal. My approach was that I would discuss all facets of my life, no matter how embarrassing or how personal, with the psychiatrist and hospital staff, so that they could follow up areas that they considered to be important. In addition, I also resolved to undertake any treatment prescribed. For the patient to be able to be responsive, the doctor must build up a relationship of trust with him. In my case this was developed from the time of the first consultation. This was due at least in part to my decision to be as co-operative as possible.

Little considers that Christians who seek psychiatric help fall into two groups: those who seek information about their condition and those who seek confirmation of their way of life.<sup>8</sup> While the response of the Christian should be the former, in practice the p. 99 response is dependent on the patient's mental condition and on the relationship with his counsellor. The reasons for the patient's response may not be understood or even apparent to the outsider, whether he be family or friend. My case was straightforward, and in most situations I am open and frank. My psychiatrist, too, was friendly, frank and open, and this encouraged a positive response. How a patient regards his own role while under treatment is important. In general, he can adopt one of two attitudes:

- (a) the patient can say to the psychiatrist, 'What are *you* going to do to help my recovery?', or
- (b) the patient can say to the psychiatrist, 'What are *we* going to do to help my recovery?'

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<sup>7</sup> Tournier, 1957, p 7, quoting *As You Like It*, II, vii, 139ff.

<sup>8</sup> Little, p 60.

It was obvious from remarks made by other patients during group therapy sessions, that some, at least, were responding in what they considered to be a frank and positive manner but which, because of their complaint was neither open nor positive. To some extent, the only person I believed was myself. Often patients misinterpreted statements made by others or read into situations more than they should have. I learned to become somewhat sceptical about what the other patients said. During one of my sessions with the psychiatrist, I asked him about a patient whom I had tried to help in hospital, and who had been subjected to an apparently traumatic experience in the army. I asked him whether what the patient said was true. This question was not meant to be inquisitive, but asked so that I might be more responsive in helping her. The doctor's answer was 'Well, she says it is true'. In other words, Little's comment needs elaboration. While Christians, and others, may be seeking information about their problem, they may not be able to respond positively to it.

Because of the confidential relationship between psychiatrist and patient, it is possible for the patient to discuss areas of his life which he would not discuss with others be they close friends or family. Another reason that such discussion can take place is that the psychiatrist is able to interpret the comments made, whereas the untrained person may respond in a negative or ill-informed manner. This aspect is critical. While my friends and parents were compassionate and loving they really did *not* understand. (My wife, however, understood more than they). The psychiatrist may spend many hours with his patient to improve his understanding p. 100 of the needs and problem of the patient. These sessions are also used to encourage the patient and to allow him to express and rationalize his fears and thoughts.

As part of his treatment, the patient may be required to take drugs. This should not be looked on as a spiritual failing on the part of the patient. Rather, it is using the treatment that is considered most appropriate to the patient's condition. The patient should take medication strictly as prescribed and see this as an aid to complete recovery rather as an end in itself.

There is one other important factor in the doctor-patient relationship. That is the inclusion of the family. In my case, the local doctor pointed out that it was both my wife and I who were consulting the psychiatrist and not I alone. In fact, my condition was not related to the family situation. Nevertheless, each important decision—whether I was to be admitted to hospital, when I might be discharged, and finally the date of discharge—was made by the three of us together, namely, doctor, patient and spouse. The inclusion of my wife in the decision-making was a very important aspect of my counselling. My wife spoke privately with the psychiatrist on at least two occasions and, because of the importance of the doctor-patient relationship in my recovery, he then spoke either to both of us together or to me privately and outlined what had been discussed.

It is quite common for the children to suffer because they cannot understand what has happened. Children often require some counselling, mainly from the parents. In our case, this was aided by the actions of the doctor and nurses who spent a few moments talking with them. These talks were not 'counselling' sessions, but showed the children that the staff recognized them, and gave them the assurance that 'daddy' was being well looked after. If one word were used to describe the relationship between doctor and patient it would be *integrity*—integrity on the part of all persons concerned.

### 3) *The role of group therapy*

At the hospital, one of the compulsory activities for all patients (except those on bed rest) was attendance at 'group'. There were two groups: a therapy group under the guidance of either a psychiatric-trained sister or the social worker; and a social or discussion group under the guidance of a member of the hospital staff. Attendance at the therapy group was

restricted to those patients whose doctors had advised the staff that they *considered that they could cope with what was often a very threatening and emotion-charged experience*. Staff meetings were held every afternoon, and relevant points raised at the group therapy session were discussed.

Because of my experience in small groups, including sessions run by Mallison based on those described in his Small Group Series of books,<sup>9</sup> I was able to adapt readily to group sessions.

The more obvious role of group therapy is to enable the patient to verbalize his experiences through discussion with other members of the group. Patients at times felt threatened by the group sessions, and sought leave of the group because they could not cope with the situation. The less obvious, yet in many ways more important, aspect of group therapy is one's response to the experiences of another group member. The effect of one's response can be considerable. In this regard, let me quote my own experience. When I first joined the group, I was asked to explain the reasons for my admission to hospital. I was able to explain in detail the circumstances surrounding my admission, to answer all questions asked of me, and to explain my work and home situation. This experience was not particularly threatening. On another day, a group member was discussing her problem, and stated that if her family situation did not improve she would commit suicide—this was no idle threat. In response to this I stated how my own life was affected by the suicides of a close family friend fifteen years ago. This was one of the events that finally led to my hospitalization. The full impact of this experience did not become apparent until this particular group session. Once aware of the effect of this experience, I was able to discuss it with both the doctor and the group.

Group therapy also serves another very important function in the rehabilitation process. On admission to hospital the patient is, among other things, confused. His thoughts wander. How can the doctor really understand my problem? He has not been through what I have been through. The members of the group—well I can put a little more trust in what they say. Maybe they have had similar experiences, and they do try to encourage, but [p. 102](#) probably they do not really understand either! Gradually you become more confident and begin to realize that they really do understand and that you really will overcome what appear to be insurmountable obstacles to recovery.

If group therapy is to be effective, it requires a trained leader and suitable feedback to other hospital and medical staff, so that they can act upon the information and thus aid the patient's recovery.

#### 4) *The need to relate*

One of my real needs, and indeed, the expressed need of many of the people suffering from depression or anxiety with whom I have spoken, is the need to relate. I wanted to show people that I was 'normal' and not 'mad'. This was one of the greatest needs I experienced. Because I did not understand, I was also certain that my family, friends and workmates did not understand my condition. I wanted them to visit me to see for themselves that I was 'normal' and 'rational' with a nervous disorder that was temporarily afflicting me.<sup>10</sup>

Because nervous disorders are not understood by most people, it can be difficult for them to relate to the patient. This immediately creates a communication barrier as the patient attempts to discuss his problem with family and friends. What is said by the patient may distress or even shock them. They probably will not completely understand, but they should at least try to understand and encourage. It is important to the patient

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<sup>9</sup> See above, fn. 6.

<sup>10</sup> At no stage did I lose touch with reality. I recognize, however, that many psychiatric patients do lose touch with reality, and others suffer from chronic ongoing conditions that do not appear curable.

that he be able to discuss his problem with his family and friends on the clear (unstated) understanding that he should initiate the discussion and be able to terminate it when he sees fit. The visitor should not try to change the topic of conversation.

While family, friends and workmates did not fully understand my condition they aided my recovery as they stood by me and encouraged me, both when I was hospitalized and when I returned to work. It must be remembered that, like the surgical patient, the patient suffering from a nervous disorder will probably take many months to recover fully. After all, it took him many years to learn the behaviour he now has to unlearn! p. 103

My wife and I did not try to hide the problem from our two boys, aged five and six. The boys visited me at least twice a week while I was in hospital. My wife and I consider this to have been one of the important factors in my recovery, and it was also very important for them. It is difficult for a child to understand how someone can be in hospital when they do not appear to be suffering from any obvious sickness. At times it was difficult for them, even when I returned home, because I was not able to participate in activities with them or because I required rest and hence quietness. The experience obviously affected the children, but in their own way they have encouraged me and we have tried to be supportive to them.

During my hospitalization the role of the local church was one of a praying, concerned community. Visitation was restricted because of the distance between hospital and church. On my return home, loving concern was expressed by many members of the congregation. Much of the concern was expressed by persons who were members of small groups or the family cluster with which I was associated. The concern did not end there; people whom I hardly knew came up and spoke to me. One lady came up to me and said, 'I know how you feel. I had the same problems three years ago'. After further discussion, she stated that when she was in hospital no one understood and no one really seemed to care. I was able to discuss my problems with both clergy and friends, and they were able to encourage me, and at the same time I was able to aid their understanding of the cause and effects of some nervous conditions.

Regardless of the type of group in which a person is involved, it is important that each member be aware and concerned for the other members of that group. Small groups allow more freedom for self-expression but often a member's problems do not become apparent unless you are perceptive.

##### 5) *How did this experience affect me as a Christian?*

As stated in the introduction, I set out to discuss nervous illness from my own experiences rather than survey the literature on the subject. Nevertheless, during this period two books were drawn to my attention: Little's *Nervous Christians* and Miller's *Why do Christians Break Down?* Little's book is negative, and is based p. 104 on the premise that the psychiatric patient is seeking release from the satanic bondage of fear, anxiety and worry. He considers that the doctor prescribes drugs which do not alter the emotional problem but only dull the mental thinking, so that the patient is not alert to his fears. A Christian believes that evil comes from Satan and that Christ is the final answer. But man is not perfect. I cannot accept Little's comments concerning drugs. Drugs *do* have a place to play, and I doubt if anyone including members of the medical profession would argue that they were *the* solution. Rather, the role of drugs is to help the person through the crisis, and then, through the media of group and individual therapy, the cause (or causes) can be brought to the surface so that they can be further discussed. Once one knows the cause then therapy can be directed at the problems. My general feeling is that Little's book was written for a different era and should not have been reprinted.

Miller, on the other hand, writes in a positive and compassionate manner. He commences with the premise that breakdowns can be caused by a variety of factors, some

obvious, some obscure. He argues that Christians do, in fact, break down, that spiritual faith does not guarantee immunity, and that this fact is statistically verifiable. Miller considers four factors that can cause conflict: what I *am*, what I *want* to be, what I *ought* to be, and what 'they' *expect* me to be. In many cases, the Church has reinforced the conflict and has caused people to suppress their feelings, leading to tension and stress which can lead to a breakdown. Miller does not argue that man should be allowed to express his thoughts by action. Rather, he argues that he should verbalize his fears and discuss them with others. While Miller refers to the church, what he says can be applied to society in general. The individual is taught to behave in certain ways and to suppress his feelings; for example, he is told 'big boys don't cry'; 'you shouldn't say things like that'; 'Christians shouldn't express anger' ... the list is endless. Each of these sayings causes the individual to repress such feelings, and in the end he may 'break'. Prior to reading this book, my doctor and I had discussed such topics and felt that my problem was very much related to factors beyond my control. The trauma of the suicide related earlier had had a much greater impact on me than my parents or I could have possibly imagined. Miller's book p. 105 had direct application to my case. I recommend it without reservation.

Although my mind was confused during this period (i.e., I was well aware of what was going on but could not understand the reason for it), at no stage did I question my faith or consider that the 'breakdown' was the result of a lack of faith. Indeed, my faith, and the approach I took to my complaint, combined to make my hospitalization a positive learning experience. I have learned to become more compassionate and understanding, and because of this I feel more able to help others, whether on a personal basis or by making them more aware of the problems faced by those suffering from nervous disorders. I now feel able to offer more informed advice to other people. It is amazing the number of people who have discussed their problems with me because they realize that I will probably understand.

Because of my experience, I can see similar problems beginning to manifest themselves in other people, but until they are at their point of need it is difficult to make them realize that they are on the road to a 'breakdown'. This type of a ministry is a challenge. It involves a greater understanding of nervous disorders and greater perception of people and the stresses that are operating in their lives. Much could be achieved by the development of sharing groups in the church.

Another important aspect is a recognition that Christians are not perfect, even though they are striving for perfection. As well as sharing high points of their lives, Christians should also be willing to discuss their problems. If, however, the cause is external and not conscious to the mind of the person, as was my own situation, little can be done at that stage. Rather, we should be aware of how suppressed feelings can have long-term consequences, and should allow our children to verbalize their feelings and not encourage them to suppress them. In addition we should be aware of the possible effects of trauma on a person's life and discuss the situation with them.

My experience showed me the need to be responsive to the needs of the body and the mind. My return to health was brought about by the use of drugs, group therapy, counselling, learning to relax, physical exercise, encouragement and concern expressed by family p. 106 and friends, my faith, the love for my family and their love for me, and my wife's concern and understanding.

#### 6) Conclusion

It must be remembered that everyone's condition is different and therefore that different drugs and treatments may be prescribed for different individuals. The church has a very important place to play in the patient's recovery in its functions as a praying, caring community. It must never be assumed that mental illness signifies spiritual decadence.



With proper understanding and counselling, the experience can be a very positive one. The church must become more involved in understanding nervous disorders and the congregation must encourage and sustain rather than shun the person who suffers in this way.

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# **Marxism and the Church in Latin America**

*by* J. ANDREW KIRK

## **INTRODUCTION**

BY now the celebrated words of Ernesto “the” Guevara concerning revolutionary Christians have echoed round the world: “When Christians dare to give a total revolutionary witness, the Latin American revolution will be invincible, seeing that until now Christians have allowed their teaching to be manipulated by reactionaries.” Echoing the same thoughts Fidel Castro is no less forceful: “A Christian who adheres to Christian preaching in its purest form, will not side with the exploiters, nor with the bourgeoisie, nor with those who cause injustice, hunger and misery”. (Ernesto Cardenal y Fidel Castro, *Cristianismo y Revolucion*, Buenos Aires, Ed. Quetzal, 1974 p. 36).

These words are not pronounced in a vacuum. They reflect a dramatic change of consciousness which has taken place in certain sectors of the Latin American Church within the last 15 years. It is no longer impossible to imagine that the Church, or at least a large section of it, may one day fulfil the expectations of these two renowned Latin American Communist leaders.

The purpose of this paper will be to try and give a personal account of this change, describing briefly its historical development and attempting to ask a few questions concerning the implications that might be drawn from it for the present and future direction of the Church’s mission. Naturally, I hope that the practical and theological fervour which has characterised Latin American Christianity in the last decade and a half may be of some value to p. 108 the Church in Africa (especially in Southern Africa) as it seeks to obey, in the midst of its own contemporary historical circumstances, the call of the same one Lord.

## **A PERSONAL SLANT**

In the preface to his book, *The God of the Oppressed*, James Cone does what I believe every theologian ought to do at some stage in the course of his theological development: give an account of his own cultural and social background and the prime influences which have moulded his thought. If this were conscientiously carried out, theological discourse would

be much less opaque and much more honest. The task runs the risk, of course, of pedantry and sentimentalism. On the other hand, it takes seriously the now acknowledged fact that theological reflection is by no means immune to strong historical forces which mould its method, content and conclusions sociologically. It is one of the merits of Liberation Theology that it takes historical conditioning seriously into consideration and makes no pretence at being neutral. But more of that later. The brief autobiography which follows is intended to explain why and in what way I have come to study Marxism, and how Christian thought should grapple with the particular challenges it represents.

I went to live in Latin America at the beginning of 1967 when I was 29 years old. I was convinced that God was calling me to become engaged in some form of theological education on that continent. The first opportunity which opened up was to join the staff of the United Theological Seminary in Buenos Aires whose rector at the time was Jose Miguez-Bonino. I was invited to participate in the N.T. department, beginning to teach in the second half of 1967.

My theological studies up to that moment had been done at London University (B.D.) and Cambridge, where I specialised in New Testament studies. This being the basic theological training I had received it was inevitable that I should begin by communicating what I knew:—European biblical exegesis with a distinctive British flavour and the characteristic evangelical reservations about some of the methods and conclusions of its more radical exponents. [p. 109](#)

For a couple of years, in spite of the problems of teaching in a language new to me, my courses progressed reasonably well. However, I soon discovered that the highly theoretical and abstract approach to exegesis which marks European academic study simply does not fit into the Latin American situation. It would seem, from hindsight, that just as soon as Latin America produced some theologically articulate Christians some kind of confrontation with European-style theological thinking was bound to occur.

There are two reasons in particular for this confrontation which, I believe, help to explain why some Latin American theologians seem to oppose so strongly established theological discourse in the First World. Firstly, there is a considerable cultural and historical gulf between the Latin and mestizo races and the Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic ones. This may be seen in many ways, amongst others in the processes of thought by which people in the different cultures arrive at conclusions and decisions. At the risk of oversimplification, we can say that the Latin American temperament is more intuitive than methodical. It is often impatient with what has come to be called “vast erudition”, and much more ready to risk short-cuts to knowledge on the basis of experience and personal and group dialogue. In this respect there is no biblical reason, that I can see, for preferring the North European to the Latin American style of reflection—indeed Paul, for example, quite often takes short cuts in his arguments which leaves the logical purist gasping for breath!

Secondly, there has arisen a growing rejection of the possibility that theology can be thought and taught in isolation from the reality of the ordinary daily living of the majority of humanity. Especially when the life of the Church and, even more, theological language is as remote to them as reality in the furthest galaxy. The pretense that theology can be studied objectively, without a definite and positive commitment to the real-life situation of sweating, toiling, suffering humanity, is dismissed as a cynical, ideological smoke-screen intended to rationalize and defend comfortable privileges and a prolonged missionary inertia.

Both these ways of looking at theology were almost entirely new to me in 1968—the “year of the young rebel”. The first expressed the reflex action of a centuries-old culture; the second which began to take form at the beginning of the 1960’s, a new awareness of

p. 110 man's historical situation. On both scores I felt ill-equipped to teach theology in Latin America.

Since about 1969 I have been trying to learn (trying to discern) how far these new approaches to knowledge (often referred to as 'action-reflected') are in harmony with a biblical world-view of God and man. This has caused me to be particularly fascinated with the subject of theological methodology as such. To borrow the title of Miguez-Bonino's book (*Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Age*, Philadelphia, 1975) how ought we to "do theology" today, given the two fundamental facts that the ideal of pure objectivity in theology has been shown to be largely the result of 19th century positivism (hardly a hand-maid of the Gospel) and that biblical theology (prophet and apostle) is 100% committed to the truth of God's revelation in history. Above all, by what process can we be sure that a particular methodology, or the content of a particular theological position, is in harmony, or not, with the biblical world-view?

These questions have taken me into the intricate field of hermeneutics. In 1970 I attempted a first approach to the question in a paper presented to the inaugural conference of the Latin American Theological Fraternity (LATF). In this I discussed recent attempts by Protestant thinkers to reflect on the hermeneutical problem in the context of Latin America, (cf. P. Savage (ed.) *El Debate Contemporaneo Sobre la Biblia*, Barcelona, 1974). This was followed three years later by the initiation of a doctoral thesis on the 'Use of the Bible in the Theology of Liberation', (completed in 1975 and published by Marshall, Morgan and Scott (London). I soon realized that it was impossible to understand Liberation Theology without a much more detailed knowledge of Marxism, so in the middle of 1973 I began a systematic study of Marx and Engels which I later developed into a paper for a sub-commission of the LATF and which was subsequently published in *Themelios*. Later on I also realized that to understand properly the challenge of Marxism one needed at least an elementary grasp of basic Economics. Therefore, in 1975 I made a tentative, though often interrupted, beginning to a study of this complex social science. This intellectual pilgrimage, if it warrants the name, has convinced me that theological reflection today must be carried out in dialogue with other disciplines, and that the Church badly needs to create opportunities p. 111 for theologians to be exposed to and challenged by Christians who are grappling with problems related to their own 'secular' fields of study and action.

But hermeneutics is not, according to our Latin American perspective, a matter of intellectual gymnastics. It is a practical question related to the Church's daily ministry. From a totally different angle, that of Theological Education by Extension (TEE), classical theological methodology has come under fire, because of its implicit assumption that the communication of theological knowledge is destined for a small elite group of the Church, called pretentiously 'the Ministry'. Partly as a result of a growing conviction that the traditional concept of ministry is both theologically and practically indefensible I left the United Seminary at the end of 1973.

The opportunity arose, at that moment, to join a small group of Christian leaders involved in discussions over a new project in theological training. The project (the Kairos Community) was eventually born in 1976. It is dedicated to the evangelical formation of Christian graduates in Latin America through interdisciplinary research and practical action.

This brings us up to the present. The purpose of recounting this personal history is to give a brief theological perspective for the task of measuring and responding to the challenge of Marxism. The Church, I believe, will be unable to give an adequate response, unless it discovers a renewed way of reflecting theologically upon the present world crisis.

## CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE CHURCH'S SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT

For 350 years the Catholic Church was the only representative of Christendom in Latin America. With notable and commendable exceptions it reflected the theocratic ideal of the Spanish Crown and the intolerance and autocracy of a faith threatened for generations by the Islamic invasion of the Spanish Peninsula.

When the New World was discovered and its colonization projected, the leaders of Church and State in Spain, weary with the struggle against Islam, convinced themselves that they were about to begin anew the experiment, already severely tarnished in Europe, of "creating the Kingdom of divine Justice on earth". Spain, like [p. 112](#) ancient Israel, considered herself to be an elect nation, destined to save the world. Propagation of the faith in the new virgin areas of America would be carried out, therefore, by the Church's missionaries, under the direct auspices of the State.

The theocratic ideal of Spanish Catholicism has penetrated deep into the consciousness of the creole peoples and the whole cultural fabric of the society which they created. It still continues to influence, in part, the Catholic Church's approach to the issues of social involvement.

This approach can best be summed up by reference to the traditional Catholic moral category of natural law. Natural law points to the givenness of the moral ordering of the universe which is basically discoverable by the natural light of reason, but needing the seal and sanction of the truth of revelation which has been committed to the Teaching Church. This latter gives the Church the right to pronounce on social issues (as in the Pope's Social Encyclicals and the Latin American episcopate's Medellin documents on Peace and Justice) but even more, actively to try to ensure that the right moral principles are implemented.

The theocratic (Constantinian) notion of the Church's role in the ordering of the social life of Latin American mankind has been worked out in the following ways:

i. Latin America is a Christian continent which has embraced and practises the Catholic faith; all other beliefs are foreign to the essence of the continent's self-identity; therefore Catholicism alone can be the rightfully established religion.

ii. All political leaders should be good, obedient sons of the Church. It is their duty and privilege, therefore, to put into practice the Church's moral teaching.

iii. Natural law shows clearly that human society is based on the principle of authority which should be benevolently exercised by Christian governors on behalf of the Christian governed. The greatest crime that man can commit is to revolt against this (divinely instituted) authority, thus breaking the essential harmony of creation, hierarchically structured, and the underlying unity of the peoples.

Consistent and, at times, fanatical adherence to these principles led, after Independence (1812–1824), to severe stress in the relations between the Church and the state. Many political leaders, determined [p. 113](#) to undermine the Catholic Church's monopoly on moral teaching, embraced the new English positivist creed (Spencer and Mill) or looked with fascination and expectation at the positive effects of Protestantism, which they judged to be in large part responsible for the dynamic, expanding society of North America. By the last quarter of the 19th century many of them (most notably the Argentine President, Sarmiento) had welcomed the first wave of protestant missionaries.

The total impact of Protestantism on the Continent has not been very great. Although the pioneers became deeply involved in the political struggle for full religious freedom (e.g. civil marriage and lay education), their children and grand-children became comfortably settled in society amongst the lower middle-classes, always predisposed to defend the legitimacy of what they possessed. In this respect, like the traditional Catholic,

their social position led them unconsciously to accept the belief that the present stratified society was basically unalterable, even if its worst excesses should be mitigated in the interests of Christian charity. Like the Pentecostals, who emerged as a rapidly growing force in some countries at the beginning of the present century, they unhesitatingly and unreflectively adopted the dualistic scheme of salvation which subordinates (and effectively eliminates) concern for social renewal to individual spiritual change.

During the first half of the 20th century the Church's attitude (both Catholic and Protestant) to social change can probably be divided into either one of two basic viewpoints:

a, the role of the Church is to support the present system (i.e. obligarchical rule) both in theory and practice;

b. Though the present system is good in principle, it has certain defects, and therefore needs to be changed and perfected at certain points. The Church is responsible for stimulating these changes (e.g. in the conditions of work) and for meeting those needs which the State has been either unable or unwilling to meet itself.

By mid-century a third view-point had arisen under the influence of the concept of 'theocentric humanism' as it was elaborated by the French Catholic philosopher, Jacques Maritain. This approach, which has been called 'progressive', has been incarnated in the political philosophy of the Christian Democrat Parties and practised [p. 114](#) by Frei's Government in Chile (1964–1970) under the slogan 'Revolution in Freedom'.

'Theocentric humanism' is much more critical of the status quo than the other two view-points. It believes that present social systems no longer correspond to the demands of rapid development and hence of social justice. There should be a new, decisive and egalitarian ordering of the socio-economic sphere inspired by Christian humanist principles of compassion, concern and the demand for social righteousness. These will lead to a pluralist society, the swift mitigating of glaring injustices (such as land-reform), state ownership of more than half the shares in the main exporting industries (such as copper) and strong government control of the private sector of industry.

## **THE RISE OF A CONCERN FOR REVOLUTION**

Spokesmen for the 'progressive' view-point are prepared to use the idea of revolution in a positive sense, meaning by it: fundamental reform of institutions, the overthrow of feudal structures and widespread social equalising. They do not believe, however, that the economic factor is necessarily the most basic element in revolution. Rather, they stress that social change is still a prerequisite for economic advance, or at least that economic development can take place simultaneously with structural change and social justice.

In spite of this unprecedented advance in the Church's social concern (more or less paralleled by the social thinking of ISAL, the Protestant Church and Society group, from its inauguration in 1961 till about 1966), other groups within the Church began to arrive at a decidedly different interpretation of the meaning and implementation of revolution. The decisive factor was the discovery and use of the Marxist theoretical tools for analysing historical forces.

It is difficult to date what we might call this qualitative leap from a progressive to a revolutionary ideology within the Church. Possibly the first to be convinced that certain Marxist categories (such as the class-struggle and international economic imperialism) provided the only real and non-ideological interpretation of the causes of misery was Camilo Torres, the Columbian priest. At the beginning of the 1960's he studied sociology

in the University of [p. 115](#) Louvain and later decided that only the revolutionary violence of the elite guerilla groups (on the Cuban model) could be effective in establishing a total change of power.

The discovery of Marxism had all the attraction of a newly-found faith—many “Christians for Socialism”, as these revolutionary Christians later denominated themselves, have spoken of their “conversion” to Marxism—however, what seemingly drew them to a passionate commitment to the Marxist analytical tools was the objective and ideologically disinterested account given by Marxism of the causes and cure of the fundamentally unjust economic order prevalent in all Latin American countries.

Only the Marxist account could demonstrate that it was not influenced in any way by economic vested interests. It appealed to the notion of objective laws of historical change inherent in the dynamic of actual economic processes. These laws demonstrated that justice would be achieved, not because it expressed moral ideals, but because it was the inevitable consequence of the revolution of the exploited classes by which they began to redirect history in their own interests. This account of a given situation was both total and also in absolute conflict with the ‘official’ one, in the sense that it began from the premise that the present situation was rotten from top to bottom, impossible to justify on any grounds, and impervious to any reforms which did not set out to change the entire economic, political and legal structures concerned.

The lack of ideological defense-mechanisms and the appeal to the discovery of economic laws which explain the development and consequences of international monopoly-Capitalism has led Marxism to claim for itself the status of scientific certainty. The revolutionary Christians (both Catholic and Protestant) accept the scientific nature of Marxist analysis without qualification. Nevertheless, with few exceptions they vehemently deny that they are consistent Marxists. In order to stress the importance of making proper distinctions they prefer to speak about being ‘for socialism’.

There are two basic reasons for this fundamental distinction. In the first place, they believe that modern Marxism, as concretely practised in contemporary Communist societies, has gone much further than providing a scientific basis for resolving the intolerable problem of human inequality, installing itself as a dogmatic, totalitarian, intolerant system of beliefs. When a society declares itself [p. 116](#) to be Marxist-Leninist it is usually the first step towards the implementation of a uniform, non-pluralist system. When this happens a set of creeds are given preeminence over man. A Christian, however, must be radically for man (in every case of his exploitation); he may and must use Marxist analysis, but not the entire Communist world-view, to this end. In the second place, the question of what, or who, is a Marxist today is still very much open. Revolutionary Christians are not disposed to accept the party-line definitions (the Russian-Chinese dispute about authentic Marxism-Leninism is, for them, both remote and sterile). Nor are they automatically attracted by the apparently new vision of Eurocommunism, or any other ‘revisionism’ for that matter. Their basic stance is that Marx should be used as a valuable, indeed unique and indispensable tool applicable in different ways to different situations. Latin America needs to find its own, autochthonous path to a new society and not rely on out-moded and irrelevant models drawn from outside.

## **SOME LESSONS TO LEARN AND SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK**

What follows in this final section are some very brief personal impressions which have become formulated in my mind as a result of discussion and reflection on the global phenomenon of Christianity and Revolution in Latin America. I offer them here as a

possible basis for further discussion, hoping that certain 'insights' may make a valuable contribution to the difficult debate you yourselves are undertaking on related subjects and realities.

At this stage of the question in Latin America it would seem to me that there are at least six important issues which need further clarification:

1. The fundamental difference between 'reform' and 'revolution'. Is it not true that the radical polarization which has taken place between partial solutions and total solutions has led on the one hand, due to the 'success' of repressive forces, to frustrated expectations, and on the other hand, as a direct consequence of the polarization, to a more conservative stance on the part of groups formerly advocating far-reaching change? The losers in this process have been the exploited who have often become the casualties of bitter intellectual polemics which they can hardly be expected to p. 117 appreciate. The lesson from immediate history, therefore, seems to be that *something* (achieved for example by Frei) is better than *nothing* (achieved by Allende), seeing that *everything* is a pious illusion. This does not mean, however, that repression should not be exposed and resisted in all its forms.

2. Because the Church is concerned to interpret and live by its foundation documents (principally the Bible) it cannot do without theological reflection as part of its analytical armour. Liberation Theology cannot be reduced to Liberation sociology. Moreover, because of its reference-point in God (whom Dussel refers to as the 'absolutely other') it is eternally uneasy about absolutising any historical process. The reason, then, for the distinction between Marxism as analysis and Marxism as dogma is the need to keep the future permanently open. The difficult question is at what point in revolutionary commitment should this "eschatological reserve" be introduced.

3. The Latin American revolutionary Christians should probably be more aware that their commitment to the struggle for total liberation is also conditioned: firstly by the cultural heritage (inclined to over-dramatize problems and look for ultimate solutions) and, secondly, by historical factors (the New World in contrast to Europe which prefers the security of what it now possesses to the risks involved in opening up new liberating processes, contains the permanent challenge and call of a virgin territory—consider Brazil's jungles or Argentina's Patagonia—ever ripe for new experiments). The question is, how do we discern the positive and negative elements in these conditionings?

4. There are good reasons for suggesting that it is easier for a Catholic than a Protestant to accept certain elements in Marxism. I will suggest two, though without developing them: firstly, the tradition of natural law in Catholic theology can easily be synthesized with the Marxist notion of the laws of history; secondly, the idea of the progressive unfolding of revelation within the Church leaves open the possibility that new insights into man's situation in history be given the status of revelation as 'signs' of God's ever new acts in his world. The question is epistemological: why do we give preeminence to some texts and not others in our hermeneutical task?

5. Nevertheless, in the light of the dramatic shift from the anti-communist crusade mentality, still operative in the 1950's, p. 118 to the positive evaluation of Marxism's revolutionary potential, it is necessary to stress that there are also un-Catholic elements in the revolutionary Christian stance. Amongst them we find rejection of any privileged position for the Church in relationship to the State; the acceptance of the complete autonomy of the use of scientific tools of analysis, and a strong emphasis on change rather than order and stability as constituting the essence of man's history. Are these elements incompatible with the substance of Catholic thinking as it has progressed over the centuries or only corrections to certain of its deviations?

6. Why has Protestantism in Latin America made little or no creative contribution of its own to these issues? Should there be a distinctively Protestant evaluation of the value of Marxism to theological reflection?

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## **New Styles in Theological Education**

*by* SAMUEL AMIRTHAM

*This excerpt from the report of the Principal of the leading ecumenical seminary in the state of Tamil Nadu, South India, comes as a healthy challenge to the comfortable isolation of many evangelical theological schools. Apart from regular or periodic evangelistic commando raids into the neighbourhood, and preaching in local churches they have little identification with the world of human suffering and inequality.*

*The charge that our training programmes are irrelevant is often justified. The spirit of the report represents a genuine response to a situation of poverty and oppression and stands in sharp contrast to many reports from seminaries training for ministry in middle class suburbia in affluent communities. It is clear that the context where training takes place affects the structures and even content of theological education.*

*However the report raises questions of other issues important to evangelicals which need to be discussed. In the concern for contextualisation how is the authority of the revealed text preserved? Involvement in society and understanding how the world sees the Church will certainly force our faculty and students to re-examine their own understanding of the message of the Bible. But how should we maintain the discipline of careful exegesis of the text of Scripture using biblically sound hermeneutical tools? How should students relate their biblical theology to the dynamic interaction of action and reflection?*

*Further, what relationship does training students in methods of evangelism directed towards conversion, baptism and church growth have with training for service to the poor and oppressed? What should be the place of training in spiritual piety, church renewal and revival? These fundamental questions need answers. Response in the form of articles or letters will be welcomed.*

(Editor)

The style of theological education that is being attempted at the Tamil Nadu Theological Seminary, Arasaradi, Madurai, South India, includes the following four aspects: p. 120

*A New Style of Learning*

*A New Style of Ministry*

*A New Style of Living*

*A New Style of Spirituality*



## A. A NEW STYLE OF LEARNING

An effective style of theological learning must be *student oriented* and *praxis oriented*.

1. In *student-oriented* learning, lectures and monologues by teachers are reduced to the minimum. Students in general prefer private study, seminar and discussion methods of learning. Of course some will always want to be dependent on the teacher and are not willing to put forth maximum individual effort. The final year B.D. students have worked into late hours with their N.T. teacher, the Rev. Dhyanchand Carr, and have produced a commentary which brings together their own reflection and material from available books. This will be the best contextualised commentary for future students. We try to make the students the subjects in the learning process.

2. Theological education must also be *praxis oriented*. Praxis is not just activity or action but a dynamic interaction of action and reflection. Involvement programmes are built into the curriculum so that students can relate themselves to the realities of life situations.

a. A first observation to make here is that in theological work the unity of theory and practice is vital. The rarefied atmosphere of theological scholarship must be related to the real life of the churches at the grassroot level. We are consciously attempting to avoid “self-centred pursuit of academic theology” and to gear the training towards the needs of the Church. Students get opportunities to preach, conduct worship, lead youth groups, teach Sunday Schools, etc. in churches in and around Madurai, thanks to the cooperation of the churches. From the first year onwards each student is assigned 4 or 5 families in the city whom he is expected to visit three times a year and keep pastoral contact for the whole period of his stay in Madurai. The friends in Madurai welcome gladly this ministry of our students and thus also participate in the training of their future pastors. In November students p.121 and staff visited many of the churches in the diocese. With the encouragement and the blessing of the bishop this has become a very effective means of contact with the churches and of interpreting the seminary’s thrusts.

The finance development department’s work must be seen in this context not mainly as raising funds that we so badly need but as building contacts with the members of our churches. We have about 6000 loyal Friends of Arasaradi, who help us with their gifts and uphold us with their prayers. They write to us their appreciation and criticism.

The teaching mission, under the imaginative leadership of Rev. Thomas Thangaraj, is in great demand and provides a unique opportunity for weekend concentrated teaching in congregations and living with the people. A group of students and teachers go and live in a parish for week-ends and, using light music and new songs, give basic biblical teaching on baptism, salvation and mission, etc. Through these experiences students and teachers also come into a creative dialogue with “parish theology”.

A new programme to encourage Congregational Commitment for Reading was started this year with the help of the World Association for Christian Communication. Mr. Samuel Mathuram, one of our external students, visited churches and helped to run small parish book shops, encouraging readers’ circles and persuading pastors to introduce a book every month in the sermons. This was received well in the churches.

Theological Education for Christian Commitment and Action is another programme that involves us in the life of the churches. This is a programme for theological education of the laity. After the unexpected success of the first programme, the Rev. Honest Chinniah caught the vision of TECCA by TECCA, i.e. that the students of TECCA start their own groups for theologically educating other Christians. We did raise questions whether this is in keeping with the original vision, whether this will help persons to take their vocation of being Christian in the world seriously, and whether this will not make them slip into the easier task of becoming theological teachers (!) and forget their primary vocation. But

we were persuaded otherwise. Honest's report says that the response of the churches reveals nothing less than a movement of the Holy Spirit. p. 122

b. I would like to make another observation regarding *praxis* in theology. Usually, we understand theology's task as interpreting what the church says and believes, or how the church sees society. A new perspective is now emphasised. According to Choan-Seng Song, "In order to do theology Christian thinkers are now obliged to see, understand and interpret how the world sees the church and how society challenges the church within its own context to re-examine the message of the Bible and to restate the nature of the Christian faith."

If this is a valid point of view, the only way to gain this perspective is to be involved in the society around us. Through work in the Subramaniapuram and Mahaboopalayam and Heera Nagar slums, through involvement in rural development at Avaniapuram, we hope at least to be able to listen to the questions that society poses to us, so that we can discern afresh the meaning of the Gospel.

We have established sufficient rapport with people to make this involvement meaningful. Mr. Gandhi Yesudian, the slum coordinator, and the volunteers and students spend a lot of their time with the people, listening to their needs, such as indebtedness, land rights, community health, children's education, unemployment etc. and have together with the people themselves been able to find solutions to some of these. The rural development institute with Mr. Sivalingam, another of our old students, is doing a good job in farmer's education. Students are organising evening classes for adults to foster social awareness and make them literate. They have drawn up a new curriculum for this. Plans are prepared at Chinnaodaippu to deal with caste animosity and in Kusavankundu to redeem the jasmine growers from the exploitation of middle men. Having built up adequate involvement projects, we are now struggling with the question, "How can this lead on to theological productivity?"

Two things, I believe, are essential. First, it is necessary to move beyond involvement to a sharing of the agony of the people. C.S. Song puts it beautifully, "Aching of heart is the beginning of theology," for, he continues, "God's heart aches." An empathetic participation in people's suffering is one factor. Secondly, minds must be trained to be critical and articulate. Where these two are present, there theology is born. I have had some occasions this year to be thankful for in this respect. p. 123

One was a sermon in chapel the other day. The theme was the knowledge of God. The student preacher expounded the knowledge of God as an intimate personal relationship. This meant, he said, knowing the heart of God, the heart of God for the world. The Church often fails to know God in this respect, to perceive the depths of God's heart. He went on with an illustration. The scene is that of a bereaved family. The darling daughter is dead and lies dressed-up in the coffin; the bereaved father sits silent, deeply immersed in his grief. The little son comes, sees the beautiful dress on his sister and asks the father for a similar dress for himself, not realising the grief of the father, nor the seriousness of the situation. The father with a wry smile looks at the child, pitying its naivete and failure to perceive the depths of the father's heart. So does the church find itself, often not being able to know the agony of God for a dying world. And there stands nearby the older brother, the theological seminaries, spanking the child and chiding the little fellow, for failing to fathom his father's heart. But the father is grieved yet more now at the incapacity of the older son to understand his father's smile or the level of understanding of the little son. Grief upon grief for the father. So, the young theologian went on, unlike the older brother, we are called upon to know the heart of our Father at both levels. Here was theology blossoming out.

## B. A NEW STYLE OF MINISTRY

Our theological education must enable students to be engaged in a new style of ministry. This new style which we would like to foster is:

1. First of all, a *people-oriented* ministry. It is not pastor-centred but people-centred. It must be a ministry that helps the lay person to minister to other Christians and to the world. The pastoral ministry must become an enabling ministry. The pastor is not primarily the benefactor or an administrator but an enabler.
2. Secondly, it is a *communication-oriented* ministry. It must help the Christians to communicate the Gospel effectively. The Mission Institute at the Seminary is training students in different forms of evangelism through their evangelistic campaign programmes. The training in dialogue and the meetings for religious friends, [p. 124](#) revived this year again by Dr. T. D. F. Francis, are helpful in learning how to communicate the Gospel to the intellectuals. There is also a programme of training for mass communication.
3. Thirdly, it is a *need-oriented* ministry. The seminary has been involved in identifying areas of need and starting new ministries. The jail work that Bill Harris started and the Adaikala Arulagam for girls exploited in immoral traffic that Margaret Harris started are our response to specifically felt areas of needs. The Unemployed Young People's Association at Thirunagar, for which Rev. D. Carr has spent much of his energy, and the recently started Inba Illam for old people who are destitute are also expressions of our concern.

But I would not like you to think that the style of ministry we advocate is an institutionalised one. What we hope is that students will be able to identify areas of needs on their own and find adequate solutions for these. A student came to me the other day very sad and angry. He lives off campus and eats in a hotel. One day when he threw the leaf (customarily used as a plate) in the dust bin he saw a boy trying to redeem it from the mouth of a cow! He had seen so far only boys quarrelling with dogs. It was a revolting sight for him. He was disturbed to the core, and as he related the tale to me his eyes became full. He is now organising something for these boys and is challenging our community to do something for the hostel dust-bin-boys at Arasaradi. While my heart grieved with him at the poverty in our society, I was overwhelmed with the satisfaction of training a future minister who has open eyes to identify areas of need around him.

4. Fourthly, it is a *justice-oriented* ministry. Christian ministry, if it is a ministry of love, must work for structures which promote justice both in the country and in the world. So in our slum and development programmes self reliance and people's organization for participation are emphasised very much. Dr. Karl Reus-Smit of Australia and his family spent two months with us. He gave special lectures on urbanism and helped us to evaluate the content and style of our involvement work from this perspective. We hope that our students will take this perspective into the pastoral ministry also and plan programmes of social and political action. I was glad to hear recently that one of our old students in Ramnad District has started a movement against untouchability, which is an acute problem there. [p. 125](#)

Achieving self-reliance and people's participation in decision-making is an extremely slow and difficult process. I had a happy moment when the friends in Ellis Nagar slum among whom we have been working for some time met us the other day. They make beautifully painted clay models and sell them in Madurai markets. The State Bank was willing to give loans, and we were also prepared to do so. In conversation with them the leader said that they would hesitate to take loans because this would make them debtors and might also break the relationship with us. I was struck by their refusal to take loans.

I wonder how many of us would refuse loans if somebody offered! These men were growing beyond levels of dependence to levels of self-reliance. They only wanted our help to get land rights from the government. It would be too tall a claim that this self-reliance is the result of our work. But I did feel that by God's grace we are to see some results of our attempts.

### C. A NEW STYLE OF LIVING

Personal styles of living on the campus vary a good deal. In dress, one finds tight pants and veshtis, guru shirts and safari slacks! In appearance, you will find clean shaven faces and long grown beards! In standards of living, different levels of simplicity and affluence are manifest. I am not referring to these! What we are seeking is a style of living at a deeper level for community, conducive to theological enterprise and in accordance with our theological convictions.

In a community where incomes vary among students, servants, and staff, we ask ourselves, How can we be a sharing and caring community? In addition to the different projects to care for the less privileged of the community, we have this year introduced the community-shared meal on Sunday evenings. All members pay three percent of their income and participate in a common meal once a week on Sundays. Once a week is only a token for real sharing, and we eventually want to extend it to one meal every day. But the purpose is clear; we want to develop a style of community life where inequalities are reduced to the minimum.

Five of our students have chosen to live in the slums more or less in the same style as the friends who always have to live there—no p. 126 cots, no tables, no electricity, no comforts. We hear complaints from churches that trained candidates do not like to go to villages because of the less comfortable environment there, compared to that of urban settings. This is no more totally true. The other day a list went up calling for volunteers for slum work for next year, and more than 30 students signed up. Some members of staff are contemplating to go and live on the farm, where students now live and work among the villages. These students cycle up every day about 15 kilometers to come to the classes. One student lives with the poor people in the Inba Illam and another at the Unemployed Young People's Association, both projects partly sponsored by the Seminary.

Students of the second year have been living outside the campus for a whole year. While this promotes a style of living that identifies them with other people in Madurai, the main purpose of the programme is to let the society outside the campus exert an impact on the students and on their theological thinking. In the words of the staff advisers, Mr. E. Ramani and Dr. Bas Wielenga, this scheme facilitates:

- a. *their maturity in discerning the forces in the society which are instrumental in changing and creating new structures and whose impact affects human development;*
- b. *to build up a feeling of security in the absence of such a security that a seminary campus would provide;*
- c. *to help make responsible decisions on stewardship, matters of time and money, etc.;*
- d. *to build up relationships with neighbours in "life-situations";*
- e. *to develop a style of life of their own;*
- f. *to take the seminary insights into the society and to bring the feedback into the seminary in matters of identification, gaps, etc.;*
- g. *to experience the felt needs of a community for specialised ministries.*

The campus is open to the community outside. The children from the nearby slum come to the creche. The hostels accommodate students and young working persons from

outside. At the slum development office one finds always many friends who have come to discuss some problem or other. The fair price shop *p. 127* extends its service to the whole community. We do not want to foster a ghetto style of community living. Even the eggs and fruits and chickens from the campus farm sold at the gate have some theological significance from this perspective!

#### **D. A NEW STYLE OF SPIRITUALITY**

Christian spirituality has recently become a vital theme for study and discussion. “Combat spirituality” and “involvement spirituality” are terms coined at the Nairobi Assembly of the World Council of Churches. Since Nairobi there has been great interest among theological circles for evolving authentic forms of Christian spirituality. A truly Christian spirituality is one that enables Christians to be firmly rooted in Christ, integrally related to the fellowship of the church, and redemptively involved in the world. It is a commitment spirituality which seeks total obedience to Christ and therefore receives a total freedom to be involved in the world. It is the spirituality which gives us sustaining power through the struggles and uncertainties of involvement and at the same time the joy and freedom that belongs to God’s children.

Therefore we have included commitment as one of the four basic areas in the curriculum. For commitment and reflection do go together. Without reflection commitment can deteriorate to fanaticism and dogmatism, and without commitment reflection can wander on to scepticism and speculation. Students come to the seminary with a certain amount of commitment to Christ and with a sense of call. The seminary encourages them to grow in this commitment through programmes of regular morning worship (begins with quiet time at 6.30 A.M.) and evening worship, daily intercession, weekly communion service, fellowship groups, prayer cells, quiet days and retreats, personal counselling, and discipline.

Attempt is also made to discover a specifically Indian Christian spirituality, appropriating certain devotional exercises and values in the Indian tradition. Bishop Sundaresan’s seminars on Christian Yoga have created sufficient interest that some students continue to use these for their personal devotions. Along with such attempts our emphasis continues to be training students to be leaders in the worship and congregational life of their own church traditions. *p. 128*

## **Training Christian Workers**

*by* ELIZABETH R. JAVALERA

THE late Dr. Clate A. Risley, former Founder-President of the Worldwide Christian Education Ministries, once said, “Humanly speaking, the greatest need of the church has always been and is today the need of trained leaders. The churches today that are making the greatest strides are those who are making time to train leaders.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth O. Gangel, *Leadership for Church Education* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1940), p. 336.

## THE NEED FOR TRAINING ALL GOD'S PEOPLE

The duty of the ministry is laid on all believers because all have been redeemed by Christ and have been given gifts by the Holy Spirit. Just as professional workers such as pastors, evangelists and missionaries are gifted for certain offices and functions within the body of Christ, so laymen have their individual gifts to be used in the ministry. Not all are apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers but all are ministers of God and have an important place in the building up of the body of Christ. Three great chapters of the New Testament, [Romans 12](#), [I Corinthians 12](#) and [Ephesians 4](#), picture for us this universal ministry in action.<sup>2</sup>

Before involving laymen, however, we must remember to first train or equip them for “the work of service.” For as Norbert V. Becker aptly put it, “An army of soldiers is powerless without weapons. So also an army of laymen cannot be effective unless they are properly equipped for their priesthood and ministry.”<sup>3</sup> p. 129

Paul traveled about preaching and teaching the Word. To conserve the fruit of his ministry he made it a practice to select, train, and appoint faithful, and able men to take leadership in every congregation he organized. He balanced his strong evangelistic efforts with effective leadership training program.<sup>4</sup> Toward the later part of his ministry, he sent letters to these churches leaders. Among other things, he reminded them to carry on an effective and continuing training program to insure the continuous growth of the church. Thus he wrote to Timothy: “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also” ([II Timothy 2:2](#)).

Our churches suffer from a lack of trained workers. Many churches are seriously handicapped by a lack of trained workers. It is estimated that most churches are run by 10 percent of their membership.<sup>5</sup> While analyzing this problem Kenneth O. Gangel discovered the following reasons:

- Many Christians are indifferent to their responsibility.
- Some workers lack confidence in their ability to teach or lead.
- Some workers lack consecration to Christ and are unwilling to put the work first.
- Many potential workers misunderstand the task they are asked to perform.
- Poor organization of the church's program may hinder teacher recruitment.
- Some have never been asked.<sup>6</sup>

Our few church leaders get strained almost to the breaking point. There are many church leaders today who are committing what Robert Bower termed as administrative sins: “(1) exhausting oneself with work detail, and (2) depriving others in the body of Christ from exercising their gifts and responsibilities in the ministry of Christ.”<sup>7</sup> p. 130

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<sup>2</sup> Norbert V. Becker, *Laymen: Hope of the Church* (Quezon City: R.P.: New Day Publishers, 1974), pp. 15–16.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58

<sup>4</sup> Josue Ganibe, “The Imperatives of an Effective Leadership Training Program” (unpublished term paper, Asian Theological Seminary, 1977), pp. 7–8.

<sup>5</sup> Lois E. LeBar, *Focus on People in Church Education* (Old Tappan, N.J.: F. H.

<sup>6</sup> Gangel, *Leadership*, pp. 325–327.

<sup>7</sup> Robert K. Bower, *Administering Christian Education* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), p. 72.

The needs throughout the world and particularly in Asia are so great that professional workers doing the job alone can only begin to meet them. It is imperative that we train all believers so that they can help accomplish this awesome task.

## THE TRAINING OF CHRISTIAN WORKERS

Training within the church should include both presently engaged workers and potential workers. We should train church members at every level of the organization.

The training of Christian workers is never a one-time effort, or even a yearly effort. Churches with well-developed programs in leadership training have found that only through hard work and persistent work over a great many years can satisfactory results be obtained. In fact the training of Christian workers is a continuing and unfinished process. It will never be completed because experience, as well as success and failure, will constantly challenge them and call them on. The Holy Spirit will always lead them on to greater things.<sup>8</sup>

When preparing a training program careful attention should be given to the content. Gangel suggests that the following ten specific lines of curricula be included in local church training programs; Scripture content, theology, church history, missions and cults, human behaviour, philosophy and principles of education, organization and administration teaching methods and media, visitation and evangelism, church music, training for specialized agencies.<sup>9</sup>

There are at least seven types of training that are practicable for both big or small congregations.

*Leadership Training Classes.* One way of doing leadership training is for the churches to cooperate in setting up training classes. Sometimes all the churches in a community may unite in organizing a training class at a central place. The churches of a single denomination may decide to have their own training program.

A local church can offer training courses to its own group. It may have a regular training class during Sunday school time, p. 131 offering a new course every three months, or it may offer training courses for five or six successive days during a long holiday.

*Workers Conference.* These conferences offer a unique opportunity for training workers. There could be a combination of conferences in which all the workers of a local church may gather for an evening, may be to eat together and discuss their own particular tasks as they are related to the total work of the church. In addition to giving instruction, the workers conference helps in building an *esprit de corps* among the members. Those who come feel that they are a team as they discuss their problems together.

*Conventions and Conferences.* Regional and national conferences of interdenominational or denominational nature provide much help for church workers. In specialized groups the workers are allowed to ask question and share experience about their immediate situation. Newer procedures are also being introduced such as film presentation, panels and forums.

*Apprenticeship.* In this system new workers are trained by watching and helping experienced workers. An apprenticeship should involve some guided study. The coaching may be quite informal. Simple suggestions can be offered in advance. After the work is completed, necessary commendations or cautions should also be given to the workers.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Weldon Crossland, *Better Leaders for Your Church* (New York: Abingdon Press 1955), p. 69.

<sup>9</sup> Gangel, *Leadership*, pp. 347-349.

<sup>10</sup> Ralph D. Heim, *Leading a Church School* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1968), p. 125.

*Directed reading.* This plan is closely related to a worker's library and calls for a reading promoter or secretary who introduces new books and magazine articles.<sup>11</sup> A church library should provide commentaries (both critical and devotional), Bible atlases, Bible dictionaries, and encyclopedias, church history and mission texts. There should also be standard texts available in the field of Christian education, apologetics, counselling, Christian biography, evangelism, hymnology, administration, and recreational and social programming.<sup>12</sup>

*Correspondence courses.* These are "uniquely appropriate to churches that cannot carry on a regular program of training p. 132 classes."<sup>13</sup> These courses can be done by any one on the basis of his own time schedule. Some denominations offer their own correspondence courses.

*Supervision.* Supervision is defined narrowly as "the personal guidance of workers on the job, for the improvement of their work and results."<sup>14</sup> The modern notion of supervision places a supervisor in the role of consultant rather than of boss. The supervisor-supervisee relationship is "a helping relationship, characterized by mutual respect, a spirit of cooperation, and a joint decision making."<sup>15</sup>

## TRAINING PROGRAMS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Despite freedom of religion, the Philippines has remained very much a Roman Catholic country, with a minority of its population professing all other religions. In the census of 1970, Roman Catholics represented 84.97 percent of the total population, Muslims, 4.32 percent, and Aglipayans (Philippine Independent Church), 3.91 percent. The Protestants ranked only four and accounted for only 3.06 percent of the total population.<sup>16</sup>

To help meet this tremendous need the Philippine Association of Christian Education, better known as PACE, was organized in 1966 and duly incorporated in 1974. For the past twelve years PACE has been actively engaged in several different ministries, all stressing leadership training.

*Teacher-Trainers camp (TTC) and Advanced Program for Trainers (APT)* One very rewarding ministry of PACE is the Teacher Trainer's Camp which was launched in December 1974 and the Advanced Program for Trainers which was started in April 1976.<sup>17</sup> At these camps, a group of competent Christian p. 133 education specialists (12 to 15 instructors from different Bible colleges and seminaries) seek to assist qualified Christian leaders: (a) to grow in personal maturity in Christ, b) to develop skills in training leaders, and c) to prepare a definite plan for training leaders in his own group.

For ten consecutive mornings we study together the Bible in search of leadership principles which we believe should be our guidelines in training others. We also come

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<sup>11</sup> W. Curry Mavis, *Advancing the Smaller Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1957), p. 75.

<sup>12</sup> Bower, *Administering*, p. 125.

<sup>13</sup> Mavis, *Advancing*, p. 75.

<sup>14</sup> Heim, *Leading*, p. 127.

<sup>15</sup> Malcolm and Hulda Knowles, *How to Develop Better Leaders* (New York: Association Press, 1955), p. 27.

<sup>16</sup> *Philippine Yearbook 1977* (Manila: National Economic and Development Authority, 1977), pp. 87-90.

<sup>17</sup> The Asian Theological Seminary, recognizing the validity of the training offered in these camps, grants credit for 3 units to every graduate student for completion of all requirements at TTC and another 3 units for completion of all requirements at APT.



together for seminars to discuss what our objectives should be in training leaders, what program we should plan, what courses we should offer, and other vital topics that have to do with training leaders. There are also special workshops on music education, creative handicraft and recreational leadership. Individual instruction is likewise provided through private consultation of the participants with their respective advisors. The participants are also given opportunities to meet in small groups with their advisors for instruction, for interaction and for fellowship. In addition, the participants are each given time to do a special library research project on a subject which he plans to offer in his own training program.

To encourage everybody to start training others as soon as the Camp is over, each participant is required to work out, with the assistance of his advisor, a one-year leadership training plan which would be ready for implementation upon returning to his church. And to prove to them that they could really begin training others now, they are each given opportunities to practice training others at the Camp. Then, too, one Sunday morning at the Camp is set aside for observing and evaluating the educational work of nearby churches.

After ten days of intensive training at the Camp the graduates are commissioned to train others who will be able to train others also. Two camp graduates who are leaders from the Foursquare Church of the Philippines have been traveling extensively conducting training classes in at least 20 churches.

Since after their participation at our camps three volunteer workers of a church called the United Church of the Good Shepherd have been holding regular training seminars three times a year during summer, during semestral break and during Christmas vacation not only for their own church but for other interested churches as well. [p. 134](#)

For three consecutive years now they have been running five-day training camps in the month of April. During the first year they were able to train more than 40 teachers. The following year more than 30 participated in their camp. The third year close to 50 came. And because there is this on-going training program the church is able to meet the increasing demand for workers both inside and outside.

*Standard training course (STC).* One of the purposes of PACE is “to help churches and denominations in training and developing teachers and leaders of Christian education.” Therefore it offers a curriculum plan for nine different courses for volunteer leaders: Preliminary Teacher Certificate Course, Advanced Teacher Certificate Course, Trainers’ Diploma Course, Bible Study Leaders Training Course, VBS Staff Training Course, Women Leaders Training Course, and Youth Leaders Training Course.

Each course is suitable for local church and inter-church training classes. Each one includes six units of study, three in Bible and three in methodology. For each unit of study, a trainee is required to attend from 10 to 12 hour-long sessions.

A PACE credit card is granted upon completion of each unit in any of the above courses that is taught by an approved PACE trainer.<sup>18</sup> When all the required units for a course have been completed, a corresponding PACE certificate is awarded.

While the Standard Training Course is primarily designed for use in formal training classes, some units of study are being done through the use of self-instruction materials such as those produced by the Philippine Association of Theological Education by Extension (PAFTEE). Because this plan seems to be more practicable for certain groups PACE gives due credit to self-studied courses that are also approved by PAFTEE or by the denominational TEE group.

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<sup>18</sup> Graduates of PACE Trainers Camps are among the approved trainers.

This curriculum plan is being used extensively in the Philippines, particularly by the graduates of our Teacher Trainers Camp and Advanced Program for Trainers. To date over 500 credit cards and over 50 certificates have been issued by PACE.

*Learning Center.* In our desire to be of service to Christian schools and churches in the Philippines year-round, we established on March 20, 1975, the PACE Learning Center. Geared to meet [p.135](#) the needs of Christian workers and students who are handicapped by lack of books and other teaching tools, the Learning Center has three sections.

The first section is a library where one finds excellent books on Christian education, on the Bible, on theology and other areas. Our library is appreciated by our local Bible schools and colleges. Many CE instructors and students borrow books and other materials from us.

The second section of the Center has hundreds of mimeographed notes on over 800 different topics which are of immediate concern to Christian workers. These notes are also popular among CE students.

The third section of the Center is our Audio-Visual Room. The teaching aids in this room are either copied or else borrowed by Christian workers from surrounding churches. A set of flannel-graph or other lessons could be borrowed by Christian workers for two weeks at a time. It has plenty of filmstrips and tape-recorded messages also. And to make the Center truly a learning center, we conduct periodical day-long seminars-workshops for church groups and other special groups.

One such seminar is the day-long Christian Education Seminar which is open for pastors, Board of CE members, Directors of CE, educational agency leaders and administration students. Again this is intended to be an appetizer. And then there is the Creative Arts Workshop. Sunday School workers, Vacation Bible School Workers, Extension Class Workers and other educational workers who come to this workshop learn not only through hearing and seeing, but more through doing. Occasionally CE instructors bring their class to the Center, for special sessions. So popular have these seminars, workshops and institutes become that group after group from far and near come to the Center to participate.

*Camp Counsellors Training Institute (CCTI), Church Youth Leadership Institute (CYLI) and Other Institutes.* Started in October 1977 already three Camp Counsellors Training Institutes have been conducted by PACE. The first one was attended by over 30 camp counsellors sent in by the World Vision, Philippines. By December of the same year these counsellors whom we trained for six days served in four different children and youth camps with an average attendance of 250 per camp or a total of 1,000 for the four camps. [p. 136](#)

As has always been our practice in PACE we stress learning by doing in this Institute. And so when we offer seminars on topics like Counselling Techniques we also provide opportunities for the participants to practice counselling with each other. A demonstration on How to lead Bible study is therefore followed by a practicum in leading a Bible study group, a lecture demonstration on First Aid by practicing how to apply first aid and so on.

Another well attended Institute is the Church Youth Leadership Institute which was held for the first time last October 16–21. Originally we were to invite only 30 selected youth leaders but we found ourselves training 60 instead. Aimed at drawing together only the youth leaders of the churches in the Greater Manila Area, the Institute emphasizes such important topics as “Understanding Youth,” “Organizing and Administering Youth Groups,” “Youth Programming,” “Leading Youth Activities,” “Teaching and Counselling Youth.” To make the sessions both interesting and profitable various methods are

employed such as panel discussion, buzz groups, role-playing, case studies, demonstration and filmstrip presentation.

*Total Involvement Program Seminars (TIPS).* We strongly believe that if the church in the Philippines is to grow, every Christian believer should be involved. For this reason, we conceived of another special ministry, the Total Involvement Program Seminar or TIPS. Designed to help churches grow through the involvement of the total church membership, these seminars are conducted for two and a half days in a local church. The pastor and no less than eighty percent of the leaders and officers of the church are urged to participate in all sessions.

Today TIPS has been conducted in more than 20 different churches and most of these churches, according to first-hand reports, have grown both spiritually and numerically. Some have even doubled in one year's time.

*Special Services to Schools and Churches (SSSC).* While we do sponsor Christian education seminars and other CE conferences ourselves, we do not hesitate to participate as speakers and teachers in seminars and conferences sponsored by other groups. One time we were in an inter-church teacher-training seminar which was attended by representatives from seven different churches. Another [p. 137](#) time, we were at a Teacher Training Camp attended by delegates from more than 10 different churches.

Recently a most interesting arrangement has developed between PACE and certain denominations in the country. For the last several years Christ to the Philippines has been calling on us (usually during their week-long annual denominational conference) to give their workers (over 150 of them gathered from all over the country) in-depth training in Christian education, and administration in particular.

We also want to encourage and assist Bible schools and seminaries in their Christian education program so we gladly accept invitations to teach Christian education courses in Bible colleges and seminaries.

## **PROGRAM POSSIBILITIES FOR ASIAN CHURCHES**

The training programs described in this paper, particularly the ones we have tested in the Philippines, are presented merely as suggestions. They may work in churches of other Asian countries or they may not. I leave it to the resourceful church leaders of each country to adopt whatever might meet their particular needs. If they wish they may adapt any of the programs presented. Otherwise, they may develop additional or alternate programs which are more effective in their particular situations. Certain experimentation, new approaches, and daring devices have their place in the planning for the all-important task of training Christian workers.

But whatever program or programs they may choose to use the following guidelines should prove helpful.

*Set an example.* Here is another place where the leader must lead. His reading, study, attendance at conferences, camps, schools, classes, and the like will be contagious.

*Help convince workers of their need.* This sense of need may begin with a conviction about the importance of the educational work in the church. It passes on to a recognition of need for progress in that work. Finally the individual worker should see a definite point at which he needs help.

*Show them that they can grow.* While some workers may think they have already attained their maximum competence, others [p. 138](#) may doubt their capacity to be helped. They must be enticed into experiences that really serve their practical needs.

*Assure them they will not be embarrassed.* This assurance may require a promise that they will not have to take an examination, make long talks in public, or give answers that may

be wrong. Yet the time should come when they can appreciate the help realized through full participation.

*Help them see that the work can be interesting.* Leadership education is not necessarily dull. Many people love to sharpen their wits in a study experience. Here is a challenging field for self-realization.

*Help them develop a hunger for such a program.* An outstanding camp is an ideal place to catch the spirit. Perhaps the more hesitant can be taken to visit a camp or at any rate meet enthusiastic campers. Visiting a superior class or school may be helpful too.

*Make the means practicable, readily within reach.* Place, amount of work required, and the time schedules are important consideration. In some cases, too, financial problems must be eliminated.

*Make sure that the experience will be satisfying.* It should be planned to help the worker have larger satisfaction in his work. This requires especially that he have opportunity to deal with practical problems on specific points of felt need.

*Plan for appropriate recognition of progress.* Course completion cards, credits, certificates of progress or diplomas and recognition services have this purpose in view.

*Build workers into the fellowship of the course.* Association with important leaders will have value for this motivation. Each one should see himself as part of an important movement in which honored persons are working.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, let us all be reminded that even the best of training programs could fail if carried out in the energy of the flesh, for as the Psalmist says, "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it" ([Psalm 127:1](#)).

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Abridged from a paper presented at First Pan Asian Christian Education Seminars, Oct. 10–15 1978 at Singapore. [p. 139](#)

## Book Reviews

### FAITH AND CHURCH

#### **Jesus and Paul: Paul as interpreter of Jesus from Harnack to Kummel**

by J. W. FRASER.

(Abingdon, England: Marcham Manor Press, 1974. Pp. 244, £8.00).

Abstract of a review by COLIN BROWN, *Themelios*, May 1977, (Vol. 2, No. 3.)

THIS book is not, as the sub-title might suggest, a descriptive catalogue of who said what. The opening chapter sketches the views of the major interpreters, noting the

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<sup>19</sup> Heim, *Leading*, pp. 128–129.

psychological and liberal schools, the history-of-religions school, eschatological interpretation and salvation history of the existentialists. But the remaining chapters are devoted to the crucial points of interpretation, each of which is examined in the light of modern scholarship from Harnack onwards. Dr. Fraser argues that many of the themes and ideas in Paul which are commonly regarded as having their roots in Hellenism actually have their origins in the O.T., Judaism and Jesus himself. The bulk of the book is devoted to a defence of this thesis.

Did Paul actually know Jesus? [2 Corinthians 5:16](#) is ambiguous. Dr. Fraser believes that Paul did not know Jesus in the flesh, but that he knew the risen glorified Jesus who called him into his service. His conversion experience gave him a new experience of Christ, himself and the world. Paul handed on what he received from the Church and which the Church received from Jesus himself. In the frameworks of eschatology and liturgy Paul was in a horizontal and vertical relation at the same time. 'He could not have been linked with the Lord apart from the church, or with the church apart from the Lord and his Spirit' (p. 84). Kerygma and didache are inseparable. What Paul did was to restate and apply them in the light of his own experience and reflection.

Dr. Fraser sees many parallels between Paul and Jesus in their teaching on eschatology, worship, christology, the church, the service of others and the world. It is because the teaching of Paul goes back to that of the historical Jesus. Paul's proclamation [p. 140](#) centred on the cross and resurrection. But Paul was not concerned (as Bultman argued) simply with the facts they presented; for him they presupposed the history that lay behind them. This study is not only a very fruitful way of getting into the mind of Paul; it throws new light on many familiar passages in both Paul and the Gospels.

### **New Testament Interpretation: Essays On Principles and Methods**

I. H. MARSHALL, Editor

(The Paternoster Press, WM. B. EERDMANS, 1977. Pp. 404, £6, \$12.95)

Abstracts of Reviews by J. VOLCKAERT SJ. in *Vidyajyoti*, April 1978, p. 189 and CLARK PINNOCK, *Scan*, October 1978, p. 15.

PART one is the background to interpretations and makes the point that over-concentration on tradition and form-or source-criticism must be avoided for it could obscure the work of the evangelists themselves. Part two studies the use of these critical methods in interpretation. The third section considers how the New Testament uses the Old, especially as quotation and midrash and the pre-supposition for this interpretation is based on typology and its corporate dimension of man. In approaches to New Testament exegesis the author rejects the dogmatic approach, and the existentialist approach which seeks to find out what the biblical author might have said or meant if he had written in our own days. He insists on the grammatico-historical method for elucidating the message in its original setting and in its literal sense. The fourth part, on the New Testament and the modern reader consists of four essays on the problem of myth, its new hermeneutic, the authority of the New Testament and expounding the New Testament.

Two contributors in this final section come in for criticism from Clark Pinnock in *Scan* October 1978, p.15. J. Volckaert reports the contents of these essays as follows. On the problem of myth the author begins by noting that the New Testament presents events essential to Christian faith in language and concepts which are often outmoded and meaningless to 20th century man. He examines the problem of miracle, the influence of Jewish and Hellenistic myths and the problem of objectifying God. The point is that each must tackle for himself "the problem of how I express my faith as a Christian" (p. 301). [p.](#)

[141](#)

The key question of the new hermeneutic is “how the New Testament may speak to us anew. A literalistic interpretation of the text cannot guarantee that it will speak to the modern hearer.” The topic is examined mainly in relation to the writings of Fuchs and Ebeling.

Pinnock finds the author on myth adopts a position far too close to Bultmann’s for a huge majority of conservative evangelicals: the author on interpretation he finds incomprehensible for ordinary evangelicals. Other authors Pinnock notes give good quality, well documented intelligent reports on critical issues which tend to confirm the full authority and full trustworthiness of the Bible.

### **The Discovery Of The Open Tomb In [John 20:3-10](#)**

by ANDRE FEUILLET

in *Hokma*, No. 7, 1978. Article in French.

Reviewed by CHRISTOPHER SUGDEN.

FEUILLET discusses alternative translations of [John 20:7](#) to discover exactly what the beloved disciple saw that provoked faith. He proposes this translation (which is very close to the Vulgate) “S’étant penché (l’autre disciple) aperçoit les linges affaissés; cependant il n’entra pas. Vient donc aussi Pierre qui le suivait, et il entra dans la tombe. Il voit les lignes affaissées et le soudarion (head bandages) qui avait ‘etc’ ajusté à sa tête, non pas affaissé avec (comme) les linges, mais distinctement enveloppe et enroule à sa place.” The point is that the head bandages were rolled up on the headstone where Jesus, head had lain. Feuillet also discusses the place of the empty tomb in Paul’s thought and why [Luke 24:12](#) records how Peter saw the grave clothes but does not draw the same conclusion as is drawn in John.

## **THEOLOGY AND CULTURE**

### **Testing Christianity’s Truth Claims**

by GORDON R. LEWIS

(Chicago: Moody Press, 1976. Pp. 347, \$8.95)

Abstract of a review by R. B. MAYER MARRADES, *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society*, June 1977, p. 182.

LEWIS examines the approach and framework of contemporary evangelical apologists in their logical starting point, points of [p. 142](#) contact with non-Christians, the criterion of truth, the role of reason and the basis of faith in God as revealed in Christ and the Bible. Lewis prefers the verification approach (hypothesis testing) of Edward Carnell covering Carnell’s orientation to facts, values, psychology and ethics—that is both inner and outer experience is most adequately and consistently explained on the basis of Christianity. The introductory chapter defines the primary task of apologetics as the presentation and defense of the historical revelatory truth claims of Christianity. Five approaches are dealt with in detail: Buswell, Clark, Hackett, Van Til and Barrett. An appendix synoptically evaluates Schaeffer, Montgomery, Ramm, Pinnock, Geisler, Mairodes, Holmes, McDowell and C. S. Lewis.

### **Francis Schaeffer’s Apologetics: A Critique**

by THOMAS V. MORRIS

(Chicago: Moody Press, 1976. Pp. 128, \$2.50)

Abstract of a review by R. B. MAYER MARRADES in *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society*, June 1977, p. 181f.

SCHAEFFER'S assumptions are: 1) Everyone has presuppositions, defined as assumed ideas or concepts that are the foundation of one's view of the world and of his criterion of meaningfulness or judgement; 2) Christian presuppositions correspond with the internal world of man's complexity; 3) No non-Christian can be consistent with the logic of his presuppositions or, if he is consistent, he must be an atheist in religion (metaphysics), an irrationalist in philosophy (epistemology), and completely amoral (ethics). Schaeffer then shows the truth of Christian claims by noting the way the universe is and the structures of human life within it. The presupposition with the greatest explanatory power is the truth.

Morris argues that the *reductio ad absurdum* argument used by Schaeffer is inadequate unless Schaeffer is sure there are no alternatives. Also, by failing to distinguish between contraries and contradictories Schaeffer does not demonstrate the necessity of Christianity, but can show its possibility.

For example, in metaphysics Schaeffer establishes a theism basic to Islam, Judaism and Christianity but goes beyond his argument to claim only the truthfulness of the latter. He further implies the necessity of such a personal God, the doctrine of infinity and Triunity which are not logical extensions of his argument. Schaeffer's p. 143 conclusion that only the Christian presupposition of a personal infinite God provides the answer to the metaphysical problem of existence is unwarranted by his argument.

The danger is that faith starting points of all epistemologies have a non-logical element; if present in all knowledge frameworks, such a criticism is not damaging to any one in particular. Therefore, Schaeffer cannot attack non-logical moves in others at exactly that point he makes them himself.

Schaeffer also makes a leap of faith, jumping the logical gap from possibility to necessary actuality. He moves too easily from "Christianity is reasonable to Christianity is necessarily true".

For Morris, apologetic is pre-evangelism as it is to Schaeffer, but belief is the result of a logically and evidentially justified process that culminates in the non-logical step that goes beyond the evidence and the witnessing to truth by the Holy Spirit that leads to saving knowledge. "Christian faith can be described in the language of confirmation theory by a model of cumulative probabilities."

### **Christ The Liberator**

by JOHN DESROCHERS

(Centre For Social Action, Bangalore 46, Pp. 296, Rs. 12 or \$4.00)

Reviewed by CHRISTOPHER SUGDEN

FATHER Desrochers draws on Barclay, Dodd, Jeremias, Hengel and Dufour to present a scholarly and relevant account of the ministry of Jesus from the synoptic gospels. Jesus' ministry to the people of Israel was political and prophetic. He challenged the religious, social, political and economic realities of Israel's life by reinterpreting her constitution, challenging the leaders of the nation, taking sides with the outcasts and attacking the roots of oppression sanctioned by religion. His message of the kingdom, his ministry of healing, his revolutionary project of beginning a new people of God were all good news to the materially and socially poor. His open resistance to the leaders and their religious ideology and his championing those they rejected were the cause of his own rejection and death. That death was the death of the servant for the forgiveness of sins, as is discussed

in a fine section on the last supper. Jesus' bodily resurrection is God's vindication of the way of Jesus and assurance of the final transformation of everything. p. 144

This thoroughly orthodox account takes the insights of the theology of liberation, of the dimensions of structural evil, and necessity for praxis, and excitingly interprets Jesus' ministry for Christian obedience and suffering with the poor against oppression in India.

## MISSION AND EVANGELISM

### **I Believe in Evangelism**

by David Watson.

(London: Hodder and Stoughton; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976. Pp. 188, £2.75 or \$2.95.)

Abstract of reviews in *Eternity Magazine* (June 1978), *Christianity Today* (May 19, 1978), *Themelios* (January 1978), *The Churchman* (July 1977), and *Theological Renewal* (November 1977).

REVIEWERS especially welcome David Watson's emphasis on the life and worship of the congregation. "He expects a living church to be throwing up more than enough opportunities for personal evangelism without spending hours peddling faith to the sceptical" TR. "Proclamation of the Gospel cannot be done in a vacuum, it must be demonstrated in the context of action and mighty deed, suffering with humanity in the social arena of life" Et. "Each member of the local congregation shares in the work of Christ according to their gifts, worshipping and praying in one accord, and together forming such a community of compassion that outsiders want to come in" Et. "All are not called or equipped to be evangelists though all are called to be witnesses ... *I Believe in Evangelism* encourages each reader to discover and use those gifts the Spirit has given him as a part of the Body locally where he is" TR.

David Watson highlights "the need to set the proclamation of the Saviour within a genuinely God-directed worship (i.e. not using hymns or solos to preach ideas at the congregation, but involving all who come in a warm sincere experience of praise and prayer). In a world 'starved of love, suffocated with words and lacking in peace', living Spirit-filled worship can awaken in men and women a sense of God's presence and reality as nothing else can" TR.

Watson does not identify the word of God with Scripture alone, though Scripture remains the supreme objective authority. "God p. 145 communicates evangelistically through signs and miracles, a loving church, worship and praise, service and suffering" Th. The performing arts also have a role to play "Seeking to reach people in their cultural medium he has enlisted a dedicated group to sing and dance outside his church before services during the summer months" Et.

The book begins "with a series of word studies ("evangelism", "gospel", "proclamation") which are academically sound and immensely readable ... In his final chapter there is as clear, profound and moving a discussion of the work of the Holy Spirit in evangelism as I have ever seen" CT. "What we have here is an excellent book which captures the mood of evangelism among the middle classes of Great Britain. But it leaves other sections of our culture largely unconsidered" Th.

### **Let My People Grow**

by MICHAEL HARPER

(Hodder and Stoughton, 1976, Pp. 254, £2.95)

Abstract of a review by IAN BUNTING, *The Churchman*, July 1977, P. 279 f.



MINISTRY is treated in the context of the priesthood of all believers and underlines the five spheres of ministry given to the Church in [Ephesians 4:11](#), apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and didactic. It is not reasonable to expect to find all these gifts in one omniscient ordained Christian. The Church needs an every member participation and therefore much greater flexibility in her patterns of ministry. Women have gifts which complement those of men, and therefore should be included with them in a group leadership, though Michael Harper agrees with the Anglican's General Synod's decision that the time is not yet ripe for the ordination of women.

In the last part of the book Michael Harper defines ordination as 'essentially a recognition of abilities already evidenced in the life of a person and the authorization of that person to exercise his gifts in the body of Christ. They are leaders who exercise together the five total ministry mentioned above together with the added charisma or gift of leadership. We should only ordain those who are already manifesting this kind of leadership in the Church. Michael Harper is critical of existing patterns and is concerned to [p. 146](#) exorcise the demon of professionalism which oppresses the modern Church by exploiting the divide between ordained and unordained Christians. His proposals about the necessary leadership of bishops, theologians and others are the most valuable contribution of all.

## **ETHICS AND SOCIETY**

### **Evangelicals and Liberation**

ed. by CARL E. ARMERDING.

(Nutley, N.J. *Presbyterian and Reformed*, 1977, Pp. 136, \$4.50)

Abstract of a review by SVEN K. SODERLUND, *Journal of The Evangelical Theological Society* (Vol. 21, No. 3 September 1978, p. 260f)

THE book under consideration is a collection of seven papers, all of which—with the exception of one—were presented at the Toronto annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society of Canada, April, 1976, convened under the title, "The Theology of Liberation." Contributors, in their order of appearance in the book, are K. Hamilton, S. C. Knapp, C. E. Armerding, H. M. Conn and C. H. Pinnock. Although not originally presented with a view to publication, the papers make worthwhile reading as examples of various North American evangelical responses to the challenges of liberation theology.

Hamilton in his short opening chapter, "Liberation Theology: An Overview," seeks to place the emergence of liberation theology in its chronological setting as a logical successor to the theology of hope and the theology of the death of God, as well as to expose its philosophical roots, which are traced to the atheism of the young Hegelians of the last century and their more recent heirs, H. Marcuse and E. Bloch of this century. Insofar as this theology grows out of the biblical concern for the poor and the downtrodden of the world it is to be taken seriously. Also salutary is the reminder that we cannot remain politically neutral and still inhabit a politically organized world. Nonetheless, any absolute trust in politics—especially of a Marxist orientation—to solve man's basic needs is misplaced. Ultimate liberation can only be achieved in the spiritual realm.

Chapter two, "A Preliminary Dialogue with Gutierrez' *A Theology of Liberation*" by Knapp, is the only part of the book not actually [p. 147](#) read at the Toronto Conference. In a well-documented yet very personal paper, Knapp shares with us some of his reactions to Gutierrez' book via his own pilgrimage "from fundamentalism to a more biblical and social Christianity." While clearly sympathetic with much of Gutierrez' thought and emotionally involved in the issues, Knapp nonetheless points out two areas of vital

disagreement with Gutierrez' approach: the lack of Biblical controls, and the untenable identification of the Biblical notion of salvation with the struggles for social justice.

The editor's contribution, "Exodus: The Old Testament Foundation of Liberation," is also concerned with the way Scripture is handled in liberation theology, both Latin and Black. While he finds some examples of serious exegesis being done by its exponents, notably in the work of Jose Miranda, he likewise calls attention to two areas where liberation theology is to be challenged, these being its situational starting point and its hermeneutic method in which the theme of the Exodus is taken as a kind of "inspirational paradigm" for contemporary oppression-liberation struggles.

Two chapters follow by Conn: "The Mission of the Church" and "Contextualization: Where Do We Begin?" In the first of these, Conn sympathetically considers the implications of liberation theology for evangelical missions practice. Citing various examples of sacred/secular, spiritual/material dualism in the evangelical Church, Conn calls on us to reject any mission theorizing that "rends the seamless robe of kerygma and diakonia" and to exorcize any mission practice that tends to docetize the comprehensiveness of the kingdom's demands. In his second paper Conn gives helpful background information on the origins of the contextualization debate, deplores the lack of an informed evangelical response to it, and finally himself proposes some guidelines for an evangelical theory of contextualization in which the covenant model is appropriated and applied in a most interesting way.

In the final chapter of the book, "A Call for the Liberation of North American Christians," Pinnock with conviction and vigor urges North American Christians—and it does not apply only to them—to liberate themselves from the bondage of mammon. This must be done individually, congregationally and nationally, for the dire consequences of perpetuating the grossly unfair levels of consumption and waste by the privileged few rich countries in relation [p. 148](#) to the poverty of the rest of the world are staggering to contemplate. A copy of this address may also be found in the magazine *Sojourners* (September, 1976. It is a paper worthwhile pondering—and practicing.

### **History And Theology Of Liberation**

by ENRIQUE DUSSEL.

Mary Knoll, NY.

Abstract of a review by DAYTON ROBERTS, *Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research*, April 1978, p. 61.

HISTORY is the handmaiden of theology. Dussel affirms that the only locus of revelation is history, and that "if we do not discover the sense and import of history, we will not be able to comprehend God's revelation to us either." He undertakes an original and fascinating analysis of Latin American history, whose basic heritage has always been oppression, and the wars of independence from Spain which were not people's revolts like their North American Revolutionary counterpart. They were led by the ruling class which were the elite of colonial society in contrast to the indigenous masses. The masses simply exchanged the oppression of their Spanish conquistadores for that of Great Britain's industry and commerce and eventually for the economic domination of the United States. Dussel's insights help to explain why a theology of liberation is indigenous to Latin America. But his RC doctrine of revelation, whereby God continues to reveal himself authoritatively through the history of the Church, makes him ascribe almost as much importance to the analysis of contemporary history as to the exegesis of the biblical history of God's people. He is here in need of the corrective of Jose Miguez Bonino, who calls upon the Christians to stand with one foot in contemporary history but with the

other solidly placed in biblical history, because the Bible is God's universal revelation and is normative.

**Good News to the Poor: The Challenge of the Poor in the History of the Church**

by JULIO DE SANTA ANA.

(Geneva: The World Council of Churches, Pp. 124, \$4.95; India: C.L.S.P.O. Box 501, Madras 3, Rs. 4.)

Abstract of a review by CHRIS WIGGLESWORTH in the *Light of Life*, Bombay.

ORIGINALLY written in Spanish by a Methodist from Uruguay this p. 149 is the first of three studies planned by the W.C.C. Commission on the Church's Participation in Development. The opening chapters cover The Poor and Poverty in the Old Testament and Jesus' ministry, the Call to the Rich to Follow Jesus, and the First Century Church including Paul's view of poverty. Ana concludes: "the expectation of the justice of God and the Kingdom announced by Jesus motivates men to assist the poor, the weak, the orphan and the widow. By this means they practise and not only proclaim the word—true faith, true piety" p. 51. The author then surveys attitudes to poverty in the church up to the 13th Century, for example that of St. John Chrysostom. "Those who occupy the fields and extract the wealth of the land. They make continual and unbearable demands on those who are wracked with hunger and spend their lives working, and force them to do the hardest work" p. 71. Santa Ana concludes with guidelines of action. "Solidarity with the poor means not only being open to them but accompanying them in their struggles against the injustices which they suffer and those who generate them. It also means we must cease solidarity with those who oppress the poor and denounce their injustice" (p. 106). Chris Wigglesworth, reviewing in the *Light of Life*, Bombay, promises the reader a searching challenge, even if he does not agree with everything the book says.

**PASTORAL MINISTRY**

**Basic Communities: Towards An Alternative Society**

by DAVID CLARK

(SPCK, Pp. 329, £5.50)

Abstract of reviews by DR. R. CURL in *Third Way*, 22/9/77, P. 20 and JOHN GUNSTONE in *Theological Renewal*, March 1978, P. 38.

AN Oxford D. Phil. in Sociology, with a thesis on Christian Communities, describes this as "the best book on communities I have read." Defining community as a feeling of solidarity and significance which people have about each other, Mr. Clark analyses the different ways in which these feelings are given form. He devotes attention not only to the 'intentional community' the members of which actually live together, but also to the 'group' where those who share communal feelings still live apart and to the 'networks' which unite intentional communities and groups. They are 'basic' groups p. 150 in that they form a base whose people can live and work while attempting to return to the roots of being human. He discusses matters such as spirituality, environmental and economic aspects of community, teaching and caring ministries. He considers authority, personality and interpersonal relationships.

A member of a community similar to those surveyed notes the author believes that the Church as an institution is unaware that these communities challenge Christian bodies established on classical lines. What matters in a community is how you get on with

another person because of who he is—not because he happens to belong to the same denomination as you.

### **The Barefoot Counsellor, A Primer In Helping Relationships**

by JOE CURRIE S.J.

(Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, Pp. 191, Rs.13.50)

Abstract of a review by P. MESHAGER S.J., *Vidyajyoti*, November 1976. p. 478.

A barefoot counsellor is a non-professional counsellor. By building deep and genuine personal relationships with others he is able to understand them, help them to grow and grapple with and handle their emotional problems. Thousands have the potential to be helpful in this way. The author restricts himself to the “listening, empathetic” technique of Rogers and Carkhuff. The book is easy to read and understand and avoids technical jargon. It concentrates on the counsellor, the counselling relationship, the process of counselling, the counsellee and what causes emotional disturbances in a person: group counselling and counselling within the context of business relationships, e.g. manager to employee is covered also. I recommend this book very highly. Though it will not create counsellors by itself, persons with natural gifts for counselling will be greatly helped. I would make this obligatory reading in any course on counselling where there will be supervised training.

### **Contemporary Occultism. Evangelical Thrust**

P.O. Box 3627, Manila, Philippines. A series of articles

by EDILBERTS V. BANZUELO, June 1978 onwards.

Reviewed by CHRISTOPHER SUGDEN.

PART of the reality of many societies is the tangible grip of occultism p. 151 on large sections of the population. In Madras, India queues begin outside the spell-caster’s shop from early morning. E. V. Banzuelo analyses many forms of occultism including magic, fortune-telling and witchcraft. The biblical injunctions against these practices illustrate two principles of the demonic, namely 1) the desire to control supernatural power or spirits, and 2) the desire for knowledge that cannot be obtained by ordinary means. The enchantment of magic is essentially procedures whereby gods, demons, angels or other powers are manipulated to the desired ends.

## **THEOLOGICAL AND CHURCH EDUCATION**

### **Accreditation Manuals**

**Africa:** *A guide to Institutional Self-Evaluation for Accreditation at Post-Secondary Levels.*

Published by Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (P.O. Box 20 Igbaja via Ilorin Kwara State Nigeria) Pp. 14.

Covers the nature and the method of self evaluation and the requirements of the self evaluation report. A valuable guide for schools seeking accreditation with ACTEA.

**Asia:** *Accreditation Manual for Residential and non-Residential Schools.* Published by Asia Theological Association (P.O. Box 73, 119 Shihlin, Taipei, Taiwan ROC 111) Pp. 21.

Covers the objectives, criteria and structure of the accreditation scheme for schools in Asia and South Pacific, seeking accreditation with ATA.

*Self Evaluation Questionnaire for ATA Association.* Published by Asia Theological Association.

Covers 140 questions to guide schools evaluating their own performance.

1978 *Directory of Theological Schools in Asia*, Published by ATA Lists 500 theological schools with statistics of 176 schools.

1979 *Directory of Theologians in Asia*, Published by ATA.

Short bio data on 350 evangelical theologians and teachers drawn from 60 evangelical and individual members of ATA.

#### **CORRECTION**

In ERT April 1978 p. 138, J. A. Thompson, the author of a Commentary on Deuteronomy is confused with R. J. Thompson, the *p. 152* Principal of the Baptist College, Auckland, New Zealand. The Editor pleads guilty of misplaced nationalism. J. A. Thompson is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Melbourne, Australia. *p. 153*

## **Journal Information**

### *Publications Referred to in this Issue*

#### **1. Accreditation Manual for Residential and Non-Residential Schools**

Published by: Asia Theological Association. P.O. Box 73-119 Shihlin, Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C. 111.

#### **Self Evaluation Questionnaire for ATA Accreditation**

Guide to Institutional Self-Evaluation for Accreditation at Post-Secondary Levels.

Published by : Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa, ACTEA Coordinator, P.O. Box. 20, Igbaja via Ilorin, Kwara, Nigeria.

#### **2. Bibliotheca Sacra : A Theological Quarterly**

Subscription Rates : One year, \$5.00 (\$5.50 foreign). All subscriptions are payable in United States currency. Address : 3909 Swiss Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75204.

#### **3. Christianity Today**

*Published fortnightly*—\$15 (add 60c postage in USA, \$2 overseas), from Box 3800, USA. Australian Agents: S. John Bacon Pub. Co., 12-13 Windsor Avenue, Mt. Waverley, VIC. 3149.

#### **4. Churchman**

A Quarterly Journal of Anglican Theology, published by: Church Society, 4, Wine Office Court, Fleet Street, London EC4A 3DA. Annual subscription £4.50 in the U.K., £5.50 Overseas (prices include postage)

#### **5. Eternity**

*Published monthly*—in USA one year \$9, two years \$15, three years \$20 (else where \$1 extra per annum), single issues \$1 each, from Eternity, 1716 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, Penn. 19103, USA. *p. 154*

#### **6. Evangelical Thrust**

Published by : Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches, *published monthly*: Ordinary Mail \$5.00 for one year, \$8.00 for two years. By Air Mail, \$10 for one year, \$18 for two years. Single copy, P.1.20.

**7. Hokhma** (Journal of Theological Reflection published in French)

Publication Address: Revue Theologique, Case Postale 242, 1000 Lausanne 22. Annual Subscription : Swiss Francs 18.00, Single issue : S.Fr.6. Published three times a year.

**8. Interchange**

Published by the AFES Graduates Fellowship, 129 York Street, Sydney 2000, Australia. Subscription rates: A \$4.00, UK £6.00., US \$6.00 (for two issues) Address for UK payments: Rev. N. S. Pollard, St. John's College, Chilwell Lane, Bramcote, Nottingham NG9 3DS.

**9. Journal of Evangelical Theological Society**

\$8.50, single issues \$2.25, from Mr. S. J. Kistemaker, Reformed Theological Seminary, 5422 Clinton Boulevard, Jackson, Mississippi 39209, USA.

**10. Light of Life**

Subscriptions in India: 1 yr. Rs. 10; 2 yrs. Rs.18. Subscriptions from Overseas : USA \$3.50; UK £2.00; Australia \$6.00. Address for subscriptions: Light of Life, 21 Club Back Road, Bombay-400 008.

**11. Missionalia**

Annual subscription rates : Southern Africa (including Zambia and Malawi) R5.00, elsewhere R6.00, single copies R2.25. (published *three* times a year) Subscriptions may be sent to : The Editor, Missionalia, 31 Fourteenth Street, Menlo Park, 0081 Pretoria, South Africa (in South African currency). **p. 155**

**12. Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research**

Subscriptions on a calendar year basis only—\$6 (\$3 for new subscriptions, also bulk rates on request), single issues \$3, from Publications Office, Overseas Ministries Study Center, P.O. Box 2057, Ventnor, New Jersey 08406, USA.

**13. Occasional Essays**

Published by: Latin American Evangelical Center for Pastoral Studies (CELEP), Apartado 1307—San Jose, Costa Rica.

**14. Scan**

*Published bi-monthly* by : Partnership in Mission, 1564 Edge Hill Road, Abington, PA. 19001, USA. Subscriptions run with the calendar year, beginning with February. Rates : One year, \$9; two years \$16. Delivery via 'Air other' outside North America, without extra cost. Student rates available.

**15. Themelios**

Published *three* times a year—£1.20, \$3, DM7, S.Fr. 7.50 or f.9. UK orders to TSF, 38 De Montfort Street, Leicester LE1 7GP, UK. North American order to TSF, 233 Langdon Madison, Wisconsin 53703, USA. Orders in Holland to : Administratie Themelios Nederland, c/o. Rijksstraatweg 28, Baambrugge post Abcoude, Netherlands.

**16. Third Way**

*Published fortnightly* by : The Thirty Press, 19 Draycott Place, London SW3 2SJ. Single copies : £0.30p.

**17. Wesleyan Theological Journal**

Publication Address : Wesleyan Theological Society, c/o Armor D. Peisker, Box 2000, Marion, Ind. 46952. Subscription rates : Single copies—\$1.50.

**18. Programme on Theological Education: A Quarterly Newsletter**

Published by : World Council of Churches, P.O. Box 66. 150, route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland Subscription rate : US \$5.00 per year. **p. 158**

## Acknowledgements

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  - 'Evangelism in a Latin American Context', *Occasional Essays*, English Edition, Jan. 1977.
  - 'A Selected Bibliography for Christian Muslim Workers', Taken from LCWE North American conference on Muslims. Jointly sponsored by World Vision. Oct. 1978.
  - 'The Church and Social Transformation', *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, Vol. II, 1976.
  - 'Nervous Breakdown: A Patient's View', *Interchange*, No. 24, 1978.
  - 'Marxism and the Church in Latin America', *Missionalia*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Aug. 1978.
  - 'New Styles in Theological Education', *Programme on Theological Education*, April 1978.
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