Mission and Mammon

What are Western missionaries to do with the highly pliable, contextually framed, but still deadly sin of greed—the insistence on personal entitlement to more than enough, in contexts where neighbors have less than enough—when by most prevailing standards of adequacy they bear conspicuous personal witness to the Good News of plenty? In this issue of the *IBMR* we explore this question and others, all arising from the complex interstices of mission and mammon. Can the good intentions of an end user sanctify or at least mitigate the moral taint of a benefactor’s ill-gotten gains? Can one generation be held accountable for the sins of its ancestors, from whose evils it is a direct beneficiary? And what is the relationship between material possessions and one’s personal, ecclesiastical, or cultural identity? There are no easy answers to such questions.

The relational, communicatory, and ethical dynamics of gross material inequity among persons in close social proximity have challenged and bedeviled Western missionaries from the beginning. According to estimates appearing in the January 2007 *IBMR*, since 1900 the income of foreign missions globally has grown from an estimated US$200 million to $22 billion, today financing the work of some 453,000 missionaries. This figure does not include the cost of sending the tens of thousands of North Americans who each year venture forth on short-term (two weeks or less) mission trips.

When a North American missionary family relocates to another country, it can seem as though they had suddenly inherited a peerage. The missionary vocation—being paid to be religious in someone else’s culture—can appear by local standards to be an extraordinarily lucrative way to make a secure and comfortable living. In 2005, for example, a typical support package for an American evangelical missionary couple serving in southern Africa was approximately $60,000 per year, exclusive of funds for travel and special projects. However reasonable $5,000 per month might be for sustaining minimal levels of American social and material entitlement for a family living abroad, it guarantees them a place among the privileged in their host country.

seventy-two organizations reported overseas-designated incomes of $10 million or more.

**U.S. mission agencies with annual income of at least $50 million (2005)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Income for Overseas Ministries (US$)</th>
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<tr>
<td>World Vision, Inc.</td>
<td>$752,348,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAP International</td>
<td>319,511,995</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern Baptist Convention IMB</td>
<td>242,140,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northwest Medical Teams International</td>
<td>225,202,506</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian Aid Ministries</td>
<td>190,608,201</td>
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<td>Assemblies of God World Missions</td>
<td>181,178,453</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compassion International</td>
<td>136,234,672</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samaritan’s Purse</td>
<td>121,842,371</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian Broadcasting Network</td>
<td>115,104,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunity International</td>
<td>112,064,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wycliffe Bible Translators</td>
<td>103,425,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus Crusade for Christ</td>
<td>98,321,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Habitat for Humanity International</td>
<td>95,475,655</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food for the Hungry</td>
<td>93,826,618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Methodist Church, GBGM</td>
<td>91,200,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church World Service</td>
<td>63,665,788</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blessings International</td>
<td>61,002,351</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heifer International</td>
<td>56,625,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church of the Nazarene, World Mission</td>
<td>56,606,056</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seventh-day Adventists General Conference</td>
<td>55,803,094</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian Churches / Churches of Christ</td>
<td>52,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gideons International</td>
<td>50,000,000</td>
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</table>

The same source reports that the total reported budget for North American overseas ministries in 2005 was $5,241,632,384, reflecting an annual growth rate of 6.7 percent (adjusted for inflation) since 1992 (p. 22). While such numbers do not translate directly into missionary incomes, they do indicate the scale of assets to which missionaries have access and from which they both derive and offer benefits.

In *American Mania: When More Is Not Enough* (Norton, 2005), biobehavioral psychiatrist Peter C. Whybrow notes that “as America’s commercial hegemony has increased and our social networks have eroded, we have lost any meaningful reference as to how rich we really are, especially in comparison to other nations” (p. 38). For us North Americans, there is apparently no dissembling from the one-way consumer escalator that raises one generation’s luxuries to the level of the next generation’s basic entitlements. To insist that Western missionaries be impervious to the powerful influences of their cultures would be unrealistic. David Hessgegrave’s question, posed in *Paradigms in Conflict: Ten Key Questions in Christian Missions Today* (Kregel, 2005), is thus well worth pondering: Despite impressive growth in personal and institutional income, “most missions and missionaries continue to report a serious need for support. What are we to make of this state of affairs?” (p. 228).

When Jesus sent out twelve and later seventy-two of his disciples, he advised them against taking money or material provisions of any kind (Luke 9:1–6; 10:1–17). Yet in the early church, unfortunately, there were charlatans who would “peddle the word of God for profit” (2 Cor. 2:17 NIV). In contrast, Paul, the paradigmatic missionary, often insisted on supporting himself through his own hard work (Acts 20:34–35). While the articles in this issue do not pretend to answer all the questions raised by the awkward conjunction of the temporal and the eternal, they at least provide some “meaningful reference” that enables us to locate ourselves and to wend our way with integrity through the labyrinth of issues surrounding mammon and Christian mission.

—Jonathan J. Bonk

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**INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN OF MISSIONARY RESEARCH**


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Missions and Money: Affluence as a Western Missionary Problem . . . Revisited

Jonathan J. Bonk

My interest in the relational dynamics flowing from material and social disparity in close social proximity was probably inevitable. As a child of Canadian missionary parents, I spent my formative years in Ethiopia, where I absorbed the values, assumed the entitlements, and confronted the burden of missionary material and social privilege. The boarding school that I attended stood as an unapologetic bastion of Western privilege, with Ethiopians permanently relegated to kitchen, laundry, garden, and custodial roles. At the tinkle of a small bell at the head table, a bare-footed servant would pattering in from the kitchen, white apron barely concealing his own threadbare clothes. The school was surrounded by a chain-link fence, intended to keep the entitled in and the unentitled out. Aware that we were members of a privileged superior class, we came to accept, expect, and sometimes demand the obsequious deference shown to us by “them,” including adults. In our play and discussion, Ethiopians were subjects of curiosity, sometimes the objects of ridicule, and occasionally admired for their stoicism in the face of poverty and persecution; but they were seldom friends, and even more rarely social peers.

Continuing my education in Canada, it would be fourteen years before I returned to Ethiopia—this time, in 1974, as a missionary myself. My wife and I were assigned to Tigre Province, in the north, where we administered a relief and development team trying to assist survivors of the famine that would soon precipitate the collapse of Ethiopia’s ancient monarchy. Highly critical of what I perceived to be the Western mission modus operandi, with its deeply engrained entitlement assumptions, I ensured that each member of the team—an international mix of some sixty-five medical doctors and nurses, hydrologists and water engineers, agriculturalists and mechanics, drivers and cooks, evangelists and interpreters—received an equal share of the financial pot. We worked and lived together both in the field and at the home base. I regret to recall that my not-always-subliminal attitude vis-à-vis fellow missionaries sometimes bordered on the pharisaical (see Luke 18:9–14).

Following the murder in 1975 of Ethiopia’s last emperor, the venerable Haile Selassie, there was a noticeable shift in media portrayals of Western foreigners. As the Derg, the military junta, began to move the country from oppressive feudalism to enlightened socialism, the euphoria of its citizens was palpable. For the first time in several millennia, peasant farmers could contemplate the prospect of owning their farms and reaping 100 percent of what they sowed. Absentee landlords were to be a thing of the past. Millions faced the happy prospect of being literate as students poured out of the cities and towns and into the countryside to teach reading, writing, and socialism. Students, in turn, would learn both to respect the peasantry and to do hard manual labor.

Following our stint in northern Ethiopia, we were assigned to Kaffa Province in the south, where coffee is thought to have originated. Here we worked with a number of established con-

gregations within several days’ walking distance of our home in Bonga. Our primary assignment was to support the work of evangelists serving under the auspices of the Kale Heywet (Word of Life) denomination. The church, sensing an ideal opportunity for service in the emerging stress on literacy, seconded Christian teachers and their families to assist in congregational and community literacy in the hinterlands of the province. Poverty-stricken local communities were encouraged to construct simple, single-room schools, for which the mission agency would supply corrugated roofing and blackboards, while teachers engaged by the Kale Heywet Church would provide instruction. As the presumably neutral foreigner, residing not far from a small town that boasted both a post office and a telephone, the foreign missionary was to be a liaison between the Kale Heywet Church and the literacy teachers, serving as their communications and financial conduit. The monthly stipend for each family was roughly equivalent to US$8, with no benefits. To our personal net monthly income of $1,200, in contrast, were added the benefits of medical insurance, a semifurnished house, travel funds, and educational opportunities for our children.

I derived quiet yet smug satisfaction from my self-perceived ability to work in fraternal, nonpatronizing ways with my Ethiopian colleagues. Our home was as open to them as theirs were to us. While vaguely disquieted by the conspicuous material inequities that marked our economically and socially disparate lives, I gave little thought to what could or should be done about it. An unwritten code among foreign missionaries obliged one to toe the line when it came to wages and other forms of remuneration for employees. To break rank would set a dangerous precedent, exposing colleagues to invidious comparisons and putting enormous pressure on the cash-starved Kale Heywet denomination to do the same. It was commonly understood and frequently observed, furthermore, that increased compensation would “spoil” Ethiopian employees, rendering them unsuitable for the rigors of pastoral or evangelistic duties.

Shortly after the departure of our senior (and, I must add, exemplary) missionary colleagues, government teachers initiated a national strike, temporarily paralyzing the regime’s literacy and socialization efforts. Although privately employed educators did not participate, several of the teachers with whom I worked were arrested and required to show proof that they were legitimately employed by a recognized organization. Since the Kale Heywet denominational headquarters was hundreds of miles away, where its leaders were absorbed with myriad revolution-related challenges of their own, I provided the beleaguered teachers with identification cards bearing the imprimatur of the mission society. At their request, ostensibly to reinforce their claim to be in active good standing as teachers, I also provided them with signed and dated receipts indicating the amount of their monthly compensation. These receipts, like their identification cards, bore the seal of my mission agency. With these documents in hand, the teachers returned to their various posts, more secure and apparently relieved.

Several weeks later the local bailiff served me with a lengthy indictment, initiated by the teachers. Charging that I was a “running dog capitalist and exploiter of the people,” the document
I was accused of lying. Sure enough, inspection of the filing cabinet revealed it to be empty. From all appearances, I had been pocketing the rest.

Facing the Issues

This, together with several similarly vexing experiences, drove me from Eden. Having until then concealed myself behind the scanty fig leaf of Western cultural entitlement, my material plenty in the context of relative destitution began to assume its rightful theological significance, and I stood exposed to myself in ways that had long been evident to my Ethiopian colleagues. The reassuring rationalizations to which I had once had recourse were stripped away. I understood as never before why the rich dare not risk living in close social or physical proximity to the poor, and why, when circumstances oblige them to do so, they must protect themselves and their possessions with walls, gates, bars, dogs, armed guards, the society of the similarly privileged, and—if necessary—lethal violence or even war.

This experience provided me with opportunity to regard myself from the vantage point of the poor among whom I lived and with whom I worked. My ruminations eventually resulted in the book Missions and Money: Affluence as a Western Missionary Problem, drafted during a 1987–88 sabbatical at Yale University and published by Orbis Books in 1991 as number 15 in the American Society of Missiology Series.

Exploration of the roots of poverty and elucidation of the supposed wellspring of affluence were not the purposes of the book then, nor are they the focus of the expanded and revised second edition, as important as these subjects might be. Nor was it, or is it, my intention to address the immensely complex, ideologically polarizing questions swirling around in missiological debates about dependence and interdependence. Rather, my attempt has been to show how both the effectiveness and the integrity of decent, well-meaning missionaries and mission organizations can be compromised when theory and practice are at demonstrable odds with those of the Lord they proclaim. The book is not about economic theory but about the challenge of living Christianly in contexts of dire economic deprivation and destitution. Its main points may be summarized as follows:

- Because of historical, economic, and cultural factors that cannot be replicated by the poor among whom they live and work, Western missionaries frequently discover themselves to be relatively wealthy.
- It follows that what the Bible says to and about the rich, it says to and about such missionaries. Wealth and poverty are among the most frequently recurring themes in our Christian Scriptures.
- Gross economic inequity in close social proximity poses complex relational, communicatory, strategic, and ethical challenges for missionaries. These questions emerge from scriptural teaching on the relationship between rich and poor, and between God’s people and their possessions.
- Since Christianity is above all a relational faith, missionaries who make a conspicuously comfortable living from their religion potentially subvert, obscure, or contradict the Gospel mandate by exemplifying, rather, the Good News of Plenty.
- Western missionaries living in contexts of poverty usually slip into some combination of four characteristic response patterns: (1) associating primarily with those of approximately equal social and economic privilege; (2) adopting a simple lifestyle that belies the conspicuous extent of their privilege, namely, the benefits of Western entitlement in critical areas such as medical care, transportation, education of children, and retirement; (3) shifting the debate from the ethical dimensions of missionary affluence to the realm of mission strategy, focusing on the relative advantages of church independence as opposed to dependence or interdependence; and, less frequently, (4) abandoning privilege and living as those among whom they live and serve.

While each of the four approaches in the last point can be defended, in the latest edition of the book I propose a fifth approach—a biblically informed and contextually delineated status of “righteous rich.”

A Missiology of the “Righteous Rich”

To the extent that my thinking on these matters has moved toward a more constructive conclusion than was possible when I first wrote on the subject, I am indebted to Jacob A. Loewen and his wife, Anne—missionaries, linguists, anthropologists, and true Christian pilgrims. Jacob Loewen has written helpfully about roles, a key factor in shaping human identities and relationships: “Roles are the traditional ways people act in given situations. They are learned within the cultural setting. Very frequently the missionary is quite unconscious of this inventory of roles which he brings with him, and so never questions their legitimacy. But we must point out that even the very role of a missionary—a person paid by a foreign source to live in a strange country and to preach a new religion—is quite difficult for most people to understand.”

For a missionary’s communication of the Gospel to be effective, teaching must be accompanied by personal behavioral and
character traits that are consistent with what is being taught. Role sincerity is absolutely crucial to missionary integrity. Those who make a living by means of their religion are often tempted to act and speak as if all the points they make are personal convictions, totally unrelated to financial constraints or considerations. When this happens, role insincerity projects a contradicting paramessage.5 As the old adage notes, “What you are speaks so loudly that the world can’t hear what you say.”

Loewen points out that until newcomers have been incorporated into the established network of relationships, members of a society will not know how to act toward them. For this reason early explorers and traders in North America often found it necessary to become blood brothers to individual tribesmen. Once such a link had been established, the whole group knew how to behave toward the newcomer, even though the newcomer might not yet know what was expected of him. While most societies allow for a period of trial and error for newcomers to learn to play their roles appropriately, if they persist in unpredictable or inappropriate behavior beyond the allowed limit, they will be judged to be unreliable at best, perhaps even false.

A related problem arises from roles appropriated by new missionaries. Inevitably, and unbeknownst to them, newcomers to a society will behave in ways that mark them as belonging to a given status. When missionaries fulfill only a part of expected behavior associated with their status and its accompanying roles, people can feel deeply betrayed or angry. For example, many missionaries, in an effort to help people economically, have unwittingly assumed the role of patron or feudal master. If they then refuse to fulfill the obligations associated with that role, the understandable result is confusion, frustration, and even anger. The sincerity and honesty of such missionaries are questioned.6

It is my modest proposal that Western Christians generally, including missionaries—whenever they either anticipate or discover that their way of life and its entitlements make them rich by the standards of those around them—embrace the status of “righteous rich” and learn to play its associated roles in ways that are both culturally appropriate and biblically disciplined. Expectations will vary from culture to culture, but people normally make a clear distinction between rich people who are good and rich people who are bad. Missionaries should aspire to be on the good end of the culturally delineated continuum. In turn, these culturally defined ideal statuses and their accompanying roles need to be informed biblically to ensure that the missionary’s life measures up to his or her teaching.

Our Christian Scriptures describe sharp behavioral differences between the righteous rich and the unrighteous rich, distinctions most conspicuously evident in their respective relationships with the poor. It follows that Western missionaries should make careful biblical study of this subject an essential aspect both of their preparation for mission and throughout their missionary careers. Although more than 100 pages have been devoted to this theme in my book, here space permits listing of only five representative texts—three from the Old Testament and two from the New.

Deuteronomy 15:1–11. If the principles, ideals, and objectives outlined in this passage (see also Lev. 25:8–17) have any kind of legitimacy across time and cultures, one may well ask whether any nation today—on the basis of its treatment of its poor—could pass this biblical litmus test for righteousness. Whatever the shortcomings of Western nations, descended from a Christendom that was and is far from Christian, the people of God, especially missionaries, must explain how the relationship between rich and poor is to be addressed in culturally appropriate and practical ways today.

Nehemiah 5:1–13. For those of us who are wealthy, it should be a matter of some seriousness to find in our Scriptures scarcely any record of repentance on the part of the materially well established. Here in Nehemiah is one heartening instance, a reminder that no matter how complicated the issues or how deeply entrenched and personally vested the self-interests, it is possible to repent. What would repentance look like from the vantage point of powerful mission organizations in contexts of poverty? This is difficult to say, since the righteous-rich missionary or mission agency, while informed biblically, must be defined contextually. In this text we can observe the difference between mere legality (the privileged were not breaking their own laws) and justice (what God required of the privileged). This is an important distinction for Christians to make, since the laws of nations are often framed or simply evolve to protect the vested interests of the powerful. But while the law is almost always on the side of the rich and the powerful, God’s standards of justice frequently require that oligarchic laws be broken.

Job 29:11–17; 31:16–28. Whether one subscribes to the “hidden hand of the market” as the source of all good things or whether one detects in the regional, national, and global marketplace the not-so-hidden hand of the economically and politically powerful, it is clear that Job regarded himself as duty bound to play a proactive role in the material well-being of poor people in his orbit. At the very least, a wealthy missionary will need to be prepared to explain why God-fearing Western missionaries should be considered exempt from this ancient standard, and whether God has changed his mind in these modern times.

1 Timothy 6:6–10, 17–19. Texts such as this one are damning to the rich and difficult for Christian teachers to obey. It is clear that from the perspective of the poor among whom a wealthy person lives, this text needs careful rationalizing by most rich people if they hope to escape its censure.

1 John 3:16–20. This passage and many others like it make acutely uncomfortable public reading when wealthy missionaries sit and worship in congregations of the poor. Clearly, rich Christians are called upon to be energetically proactive and economically generous in their expression of concern for the poor.

Such texts are only suggestive and are supplemented in my book by the more careful studies of the righteous rich provided by Christopher J. H. Wright and Justo L. González.7 But the texts mentioned contain the minimal guidelines—“righteous rich templates,” in a manner of speaking—that should guide and characterize the righteous rich, whatever their time or place. That such texts will be applied to wealthy missionaries by the poor among whom they live and work is certain. The challenge for any missionary will be to make sure that he or she is seen to be righteous both by local standards and by Christian revelation.

I have been involved in the training and nurturing of mis-
Missionaries for much of my adult life. For the past ten years it has been my extraordinary privilege to serve Christian leaders and missionaries from around the world at the Overseas Ministries Study Center, assisting them in their quest for spiritual, professional, and intellectual renewal through our community life and programs. It is natural, then, that I should propose that Western missionary training and retraining curricula and on-field orientations should include courses and forums for serious, sustained discussion of this troublesome issue. To my knowledge, systematic exploration of the missiological implications of economic inequity in close social proximity is not usually a part of either preliminary or ongoing missionary preparation. Surely every mission studies curriculum should include at least one seminar exploring biblical teaching on wealth and poverty, the rich and the poor, with implications drawn and applications made for Christian missions and missionaries.

Mission by Interruptions

Living out a missiology of the righteous rich means, at its core, a willingness to be useful in terms defined by people in their local contexts. For this we have no better exemplar than our Lord himself. With a mission more sweeping in scope and magnitude than those of even the most daring mission strategists, his commission was to save the world. Oddly, by the standards of Western missions, he spent his adult life as a laughably parochial figure, never venturing beyond the borders of his own foreign-occupied country. By the standards of even the most forgiving mission administrators, he proved to be frustratingly deficient when it came to actually fulfilling his mission. His major difficulty had to do with the interruptions that constantly intruded into the larger mission to save the world.

Almost everything written in the Gospel accounts of his life relates directly or indirectly to the wrenching, with implications drawn and applications made for Christian missions and missionaries.

Notes

1. This article is an adaptation of material from Jonathan J. Bonk, Missions and Money: Affluence as a Missionary Problem . . . Revisited, revised and expanded edition (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2006).


3. Jacob A. Loewen, one of the most self-transparent missionaries it has ever been my privilege to meet, wrestled in deeply insightful ways with problems of missionary roles. Particularly helpful is his essay “Missions and the Problems of Cultural Background,” in The Church in Mission: A Sixtieth Anniversary Tribute to J. B. Toews, ed. A. J. Klassen (Fresno, Calif.: Mennonite Brethren Church, 1967), pp. 286–318. See also two articles coauthored with his wife, Anne: “Role, Self-Image, and Missionary Communication” and “The ‘Missionary’ Role,” in Culture and Human Values: Christian Intervention in Anthropological Perspective: Selections from the Writings of Jacob A. Loewen (Pasadena, Calif.: William Carey Library, 1975), pp. 412–27 and 428–43.


5. An interesting example is an incident Loewen relates of the healing of Pastor Aureliano’s wife, who was ill with malaria. The missionaries claimed that they believed James 5:14–15 (“Are any among you sick? They should call the elders of the church and have them pray over you, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up”), but their prayer for her was not effective. Later, the Indian pastors prayed for her healing, this time with the desired result. When the missionaries asked why they had not been invited to participate in the prayer, Pastor Aureliano explained that it had been evident that they did not really believe, and that according to the text the Loewens had shared with them, their prayers would be ineffective. See Loewen, “Missions,” pp. 289–92.


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Possessions, Wealth, and the Cultural Identities of Persons: Anthropological Reflections

Sherwood G. Lingenfelter

The practice of mission and how we use money in missions flow fundamentally from the identities and values of persons engaged in ministry. In this article I argue that missionary identity and values are derived from the socioeconomic systems in which they were born and nurtured. I approach this topic from three distinct perspectives: a comparative economic framework, a comparative sociological framework first articulated by Mary Douglas, and some reflections on social and personal power. The article moves from a global economic perspective to considerations of particular social and individual values and behavior. The purpose of these reflections is to provide a framework from which to understand how the link between material possessions and identities bears on the ethical and practical issues of gross material inequity and the uses of money for the mission of the church in the twenty-first century. It will not be possible here to do more than to sketch the framework in outline. See my Transforming Culture for examples and case studies of ways the framework can be applied to enlarge missiological understanding.

Levels of Economy, Possessions, and Identity

To understand the roots of global material inequity, it will be helpful to review the diverse ways different cultures organize economic life. Cultural life depends upon production—the creation of food, clothing, material culture, and services of value for human life. To produce these things, people engage in activities that we commonly call work—expending physical and mental energy to produce something of value. Anthropologists have distinguished between work as an individual activity and labor understood as people working together in some organized way for the production of food or other things of value. Labor and production are the fundamental elements in all human economic life.

In the comparative and historical study of society and economic life, anthropologists have documented phases of growth and change in productive activities, commonly grouped under the headings of the kinship mode of production, the tributary mode of production, and the capitalist mode of production. Eric Wolf, for example, analyzed the vast differences between European peoples and the rest of the world in the early twentieth century by focusing on their very different systems of production. For Wolf, the critical difference was the development of capitalism in Europe, first through the accumulation of capital wealth and implementation of investment strategies by Dutch bankers in the seventeenth century, and then through investments that spawned the industrial revolution and the demand for a large labor force in the eighteenth century. These two major innovations led to what Marx and others have called the capitalist mode of production.

Wolf identifies three critical changes wrought by capitalist labor and production. The first and most important is that the capitalist owns and controls the land, raw materials, tools, machinery, and essential means required to produce food, material goods, or energy. The second change, a consequence of the first, is that laborers have limited or no access to the essential means of production and must sell their labor to the capitalist. While “hired laborers” have existed for thousands of years, the vast majority of producers in earlier eras had direct access to land and the other essentials for production. Only the “widows, orphans, and foreigners” were ordinarily excluded from ownership of productive resources. Third, the capitalist also owns the products of labor, the “harvest,” so that workers control only their labor. Modern industrial companies and corporations have developed around these fundamental principles. The corporation owns both the means of production and the products and negotiates with laborers to work at every level of production, compensating them according to corporate standards regarding the value of their contribution.

The capitalist system of production defines human value and identity according to its goals. The primary aim of capitalism is profit—to augment the surplus wealth of the company and its owners. Capitalists define personal value and identity according to their success in accumulating great wealth. Laborers, who are by definition of lower social and economic status, own only their labor and whatever resources they may acquire with their wages. The corporation defines the value of laborers, paying higher wages to management and skilled labor and lower wages to unskilled labor. All of these practices have significant implications for the assigning of personal value and for creating social and cultural identities.

Wolf notes that before 1600 the world was characterized by tributary economies in which a ruling elite controlled the strategic elements of society—water works, military, and a governing bureaucracy—and exacted surplus from the primary producers in the population. In this tributary mode of production, the primary producers—farmers, craftsmen, artists, and builders—have direct access to and control of the means of production. To illustrate simply, an English peasant works on a farm he has inherited from his father. This farm is part of the estate of an English lord to whom the farmer pays a specified share of his crop. If the farmer works hard and has a good year, he and his lord enjoy their respective shares of the surplus. In a bad year, he and his lord live with less. The peasant has rights to the harvest of his labor and to the land and equipment that he uses for production. Similarly, the English weaver owns his loom, buys his wool from local farmers, and sells the cloth he weaves in his cottage in the village or town marketplace. This form of production is evident in the earliest civilizations of the Middle East, Asia, and the Americas.

Merchants emerged as a special class of middlemen in tributary systems. They provided a significant service to rulers and primary producers, buying goods and grain in one location and transporting and selling them in another. Merchants accumulated wealth as middlemen in these exchanges, owning neither the means of production nor the goods produced. By serving the producers and the elite, they emerged as a distinctive social class. Some scholars, such as Max Weber and Immanuel Wallerstein, see the merchant class as the forerunners of modern capitalism. To the extent that the accumulated wealth of the Dutch banking
system was the result of mercantilism, mercantilism financed the advent of the industrial and capitalist revolutions.

In tributary systems, the clear presence of class and occupational distinctions created patterns of identity and significance for people. Peasants worked for landlords, craftsmen for rulers or merchants, specialized producers for the market, and bureaucrats for their rulers. The societies were most often structured in pyramid fashion, with the supreme ruler at the top. Tribute flowed bottom up, with the ruling elite taking vast quantities of surplus to run their governments and households (e.g., see 2 Chron. 2:3–10; 10:4–14). One’s identity was linked to one’s place on the chain of being, with orphan, widow, and foreigner at the bottom, and ruler at the top.

Missionaries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who pioneered in the vast tribal areas of Africa, Oceania, and Southeast Asia encountered peoples following what Wolf and others call the kinship mode of production. In these societies, kin groups corporately own the land and other productive resources and distribute to individuals or families the right to use selected parcels of those resources. People organize labor for farming, fishing, building, or other enterprises around domestic groups or extended family ties. Kinship sets the limits of social labor, with members of the kin group controlling the means of production. In some of these societies, chiefs or religious leaders may mobilize kin groups for public activities and interests, but accumulation of material wealth is not typical. Rather, leaders have power to collect surplus food and other products and to redistribute these in public feasting and other displays of their power and generosity. A few accumulate symbolic wealth, such as the stone money of the Yap Islands in Micronesia. But this special-purpose wealth is often given away in public displays of the honor and prestige of a given leader and his close kin.

The kinship mode of production allows a broad range of status and identity differentiation. Across central Africa, for example, many farming societies formerly defined themselves exclusively in terms of segmentary kinship groups without chiefs and without any material or social differentiation other than clan. Yet scattered throughout this same region, one finds kingdoms with royal clans and lineages that display ranking of social and political prestige. Even in the kingdoms, however, rulers did not mark their status through the accumulation of material possessions. Rather, their power resided in cult practices and spiritual symbols and paraphernalia. If they did gather surplus food or other goods, they redistributed this wealth in public festivals that enhanced their prestige and won the favor of other leaders and their respective communities.

From this brief review I posit the following generalizations. First, material possessions emerge as markers of identity and of individual and social value in tributary and capitalist economic systems. Kinship systems do not produce the surpluses needed for the accumulation of wealth common to the tributary and capitalist systems, and where surpluses exist, leaders generally give them away in prestige-enhancing events. Kin-based productive systems most often mark social status and prestige with ritual objects that have special cult or historically defined value. One’s personal and cultural identity is inextricably linked to one’s kin and only peripherally to possessions that one might acquire.

Second, the capitalist and tributary systems differ in two significant ways. Capitalism buys up the means of production (land, tools, materials), denying laborers access and forcing them to sell their labor in an open market. Capitalism also supports the emergence, first, of a new economic elite, which acquires vast wealth through the control of the means of production, and, second, of large classes of laborers (professional, technical, manual). Laborers lose personal freedom, are subject to market cycles, and can be replaced by others who will work for a lower wage. These differences have consequences for identity: wealth becomes the highest symbol of personal achievement and status; people mark their social and economic progress by the presence or absence of material possessions; personal significance is separated from kinship and heritage and becomes linked primarily to economic variables (job, house, possessions, advancing career).

Yet it would be false to imply that identity in possessions occurs only within capitalism. In her novel The Mill on the Floss, George Eliot portrays an English “feudal” family whose identity is tied up solely in their possessions. Both the tributary and capitalist systems fuel the fires of desire for accumulation, and people gain recognition, acceptance, and prestige through acquiring and holding scarce material possessions.

Social Games, Possessions, and Identity

At this point we turn to the question of variability within economic systems and the social factors that lead to differing patterns of value and identity. Mary Douglas’s theory of grid and group has contributed in a significant way to the study of society and the application of that study to missiological work. Steve Barber and James Mbuva have found Douglas’s model to have significant application and explanatory power for issues that affect the work of cross-cultural literacy training and education. Alan Weaver and Jinseok Park have found Douglas helpful in their exegesis of the cultures of congregations and patterns of leadership.

The power of Mary Douglas’s model lies in its simplicity. Douglas identifies universal features of social relations—grid and group—that are visible, can be measured, and can predict certain kinds of social and value outcomes. Grid refers to the degree to which societies define a person’s identity by role and rule. Weak grid societies have a limited number of roles, and most are open to all persons in the society (for example, father and mother, farmer and herdsman). Strong grid societies have elaborate role and rule systems, and these positions are open only to a limited few (e.g., electronic engineer or president). Group refers to the degree to which a person’s identity is linked to belonging and meeting the group’s rules for membership. Weak group societies have many voluntary associations, but membership is not a critical feature of a person’s identity (e.g., Sunday school class
entrepreneurial career. In the same house and community where they launched their success. Once they have achieved their goal, they may reward themselves of possessions that others consider necessities to achieve. Often they will deprive them of hard possessions are profiled in figure 1. People value hard work, businesses, and local communities. The values held about mate

The individualist social game. The individualist social game occurs in all three modes of production. During research among Deni Indians in the Purus River region of Brazil, I was astonished to find highly individualistic practices of food production and labor in a hunting and slash-and-burn farming village of eighty-six people. While people lived in this small village for personal safety, households could leave at will, and the code of conduct for the community can be summed up in the words of Judges 17:6, “All the people did what was right in their own eyes.” In this jungle economy, however, possessions were utterly utilitarian. People worked occasionally for Brazilian farmers to buy clothing, pots, and other useful goods, but these items seemed to have no symbolic or identity value. Individuals’ identity focused on their personal stories of life and survival in the jungle. Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky suggest that people who choose this way of life believe that nature has abundant resources and that both needs and resources can be managed up or down.

People may and often do work and play in more than one social game in the course of their daily lives.

In North America the individualist game occurs in churches, businesses, and local communities. The values held about material possessions are profiled in figure 1. People value hard work, see possessions as tools to get the job done, and risk whatever they have to achieve their goal. Often they will deprive themselves of possessions that others consider necessities to achieve success. Once they have achieved their goal, they may reward themselves with material benefits, but these are not essential to their identity. Some accumulate significant wealth yet remain in the same house and community where they launched their entrepreneurial career.

In the world of missions, the founder-driven, independent, entrepreneurial mission, staffed by the founder’s family and perhaps a small, personally recruited team, illustrates the individualist social-game prototype. The social game of the founder follows the individualist profile in figure 1. Usually motivated by a particular ministry vision, the founder sacrifices money and possessions for the vision. The founder works exceptionally hard to share this vision with others and invites them to invest their resources for the cause. Possessions in this game have only one purpose—to further the vision—and the founder risks everything to achieve it. Self-esteem comes from success, that is, the achievement of the vision, and not from the material possessions the founder holds.

The authoritarian social game (bureaucratic, with weak group identity). In capitalist and tributary economic systems, the authoritarian (bureaucratic) social game plays a very broad role in government and business life. People who work in middle levels of authoritarian organizations feel that their needs and their income are defined by the bureaucracy and are thus out of their control. They share common material aspirations and values (see figure 1) as they cope with both accountability and helplessness to change their material well-being. I have observed this social game firsthand while working in state and Christian universities. The most common concern of my faculty colleagues was how, on their salaries, they could acquire an appropriate house in a location near schools deemed appropriate for children and within a price range that was economically feasible. The privately owned house, with its implied social-class affiliation, was a major factor in the self-perception of faculty and their families, and most considered it a “right” earned when they completed doctoral studies and achieved a faculty appointment.

College faculty, business managers, and government employees work in environments that emphasize a moderately strong bureaucracy and reject group control over personal economic life. As such, many of these people place a very high priority on possessions and emphasize their intrinsic value for personal identity and ascribed status. Most work to preserve their holdings and maintain them carefully, since they represent a significant dimension of their personal status. People share concerns for saving, conserving, and protecting their individual interests against those who would undermine or destroy them. Part of that protection is to live in “middle-class neighborhoods” in relative isolation, yet surrounded by people who share their material values and identity.

Many large mission organizations operate with similar bureaucratic structures and embrace authoritarian social-game values. Mission executives have the largest offices with quality furnishings, lesser executives have smaller offices with more modest furnishings, and so on. Missionaries on field locations often acquire homes that are equal to or even superior to ones they could afford in their hometowns, and maintenance of mission and personal property has high value for them. They have a difficult time understanding why nationals do not share their priority for maintenance and the appearance of possessions, which are intrinsic to missionary identity and self-esteem.

Nationals in many countries, however, also have broad experience with bureaucratic structures and the authoritarian social game. While they may not share the middle-class values of North Americans, middle managers in governments and businesses in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have their own definitions of possessions appropriate to their status and role. They too pursue possessions for their self-esteem and symbolic representation of self to others.
The hierarchist social game (corporate, with strong group identity). The social values of the hierarchist social game are also expressed in all three modes of production. I observed the hierarchist social game at work among the people of the Yap Islands in Micronesia expressed in both kinship and capitalist systems of production. Since the kinship economy is agricultural and only a small portion of the thirty-eight square miles of the islands is arable, land is both scarce and valuable. The Yapese allocate traditional positions of public authority, ritual authority, and economic obligation to particular “landed estates.” They define wealth and poverty, strength and weakness in terms of control over specific parcels of land. The group allocates land and resources to individual members, who are in turn obligated to provide labor and produce from their fields for group activities. In 1980 many Yapese men also worked for the state government or local businesses. They shared their wages and other purchased possessions with the members of their kin groups in the same manner that they shared traditional products and labor.

Property defines a Yapese person’s place in society. Yapese individuals must maintain a significant degree of self-control in this social setting so that their personal interests do not appear to be in conflict with the group’s interests. They respond to pressure from the group to be generous, sharing that which they control for the benefit of the corporate estate. Yet they plot and execute strategies for acquisition of land and valuables for which they have even a marginal claim, since a man gains power and prestige by controlling the land estate to which authority and title are ascribed. Inevitably, people criticize the powerful for being grasping and stingy, while denigrating the poor who cannot produce wealth to give to others. The hierarchist worldview allows persons to use whatever means possible to expand their resource base so as to gain the social status and recognition that accrues from it.

In capitalist settings such as urban Japan or the United States, the respective corporate social games look different economically, yet they share similar underlying values and principles. A corporation is owned by shareholders or a governing board and operates according to state laws and the bylaws of the organization. The primary responsibility of the board is to oversee the use of corporate resources for its business or mission objectives. Since most corporations have a governing hierarchy, most of the values outlined within the authoritarian game for bureaucratic systems (e.g., size of offices, salaries, housing) apply to corporate employees, with the addition of group mechanisms that encourage climbing the social ladder and achieving the material perks and obligations of membership and social honor. Rank and honor always have material rewards and privileges attached to them, so that possessions are indicative of significance.

The egalitarian social game (collectivist). The egalitarian social game is most common in the kinship mode of production, but it also occurs in tributary and capitalist economic systems. For example, Hutterite farmers in Canada own and operate their farms using egalitarian social and economic principles, yet they incorporate the most modern technology and marketing principles of agriculture. Apple Corporation began business as an egalitarian corporation focused upon innovation in computer technology. It was characterized by the absence of hierarchy and by the power of teamwork.

Key features of egalitarian communities are their emphases on the utilitarian value of resources and economy in the application of resources for the goals of the group (see figure 1). For example, in the early Apple Corporation the founders worked in the same space as their employees, people dressed in jeans and T-shirts, and the resources for creative work were available to everyone. They shared a common goal, creating original computing systems that transformed the industry, and they made Apple products the state of the art. Rewards emphasized equality and mutual significance of all members of the Apple team, which was an antihierarchical organization. Personal identity and significance were attached to corporate membership and meanings rather than to material symbols of achievement.

In the kinship mode of production, most egalitarian societies hold a worldview that Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky have described as a world in which you “can manage your needs, but not your resources . . . and nature is a zero-sum (or even a negative-sum) game.” If, therefore, you acquire more material possessions than another person, you have taken what rightfully belongs to that person. Most egalitarian communities in kinship systems of production operate on the principle that sharing is mandatory and generosity is the highest value. If a kinsman asks you for a possession, you must give that item or lose face as a decent and responsible member of the group. In such egalitarian societies it is impossible to accumulate wealth unless you do so in absolute secrecy. Furthermore, your personal significance comes through generosity and sharing rather than acquisition. In these kin-dominated agricultural economies, this principle is not onerous, since most people have exactly the same kind of land, tools, house, and other material possessions. When, however, these people begin to purchase manufactured goods, many experience frustration when kinsmen ask for and take these new possessions, unless they are seeking to build a reputation of generosity in the community.

The pilgrim alternative. I have proposed elsewhere that each of these social games creates a distinctive cultural bias that leads the participants to cultural blindness and behavior that rejects the values of others.17 People are prisoners of their cultural bias, which is both a cultural and a spiritual state (see Rom. 11:32; 1 Pet. 1:18–19). Furthermore, we are helpless in this regard, in that we cannot live and work apart from the economic systems and social games that surround us.

Yet the Scriptures give us hope that on the cross Christ broke sin’s stranglehold on the human race and set us free from the bondage of sin and death. Peter testifies that in Christ we are now a people of God, which enables us to live in the world as “strangers and pilgrims” (1 Pet. 2:11 KJV). Placement of the “pilgrim option” in the middle of figure 1 signifies that the pilgrim option is available in every social game. The players, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, live in the game yet hold its values and preferences lightly and act out of the will of Christ and his “kingdom values” of love and obedience to God and love for our neighbor as ourselves. With reference to material possessions, Jesus’ words in the great love text of the Gospels, Luke 6:27–38, elaborate these values for practical work and living.
Social Power, Possessions, and Identity

The third dimension of my reflection focuses upon the relationships between money, possessions, and social power. Richard Adams contends that people have power to the extent that they control elements of the environment, material or immaterial, sought by others. Adams argues that power differences, based upon control of material resources, are an inherent characteristic of all social relationships. For example, a pastor and a group of elders control the budget of a church and therefore the resources that support diverse ministries; a missionary on support controls both the relationships with supporters and the use of funds for ministries; a project funding agency controls the nature and type of ministries it supports and makes decisions to continue or not continue support based upon performance. In each of these relationships, one person or a group of persons controls concrete aspects of the environment that are valued by others. Adams suggests that “power transactions” are those reciprocal exchanges between persons of unequal power that result in each obtaining some measure of self-interest.

From Adams’s perspective, control of material resources that are valued by someone else is the basis of power. So the elders of a kin group that control access and use rights to land have power over those who seek access. The Hindu high-caste father who disinherits his son who becomes a Christian has power only if his son wants to inherit property. The church board that decides to support a particular mission ministry has power if the ministry needs that support. The foundation that makes decisions to fund projects has power if the project depends upon those funds. Most people do not like to think about these exchanges as power relationships with others. They prefer to reflect on and describe their activities as mission focused, with an interest in quality, assuring that things will be done well or properly, protecting those who are unable to protect themselves, or fulfilling one’s responsibilities. They do not think about such action as being power-seeking or power-exercising activities. Yet, in fact, they are actions that at the core are intended to control the outcomes of an event in accord with the interests of the persons retaining control.

Marguerite Shuster, a Christian psychologist and theologian, moves our discussion from the social to the psychological aspects of power. Focusing on power as a dimension of personal identity and action, she defines power as “the ability to produce intended effects in the world.” As soon as a child is old enough to understand that communication produces intended effects, the child will seek power in his or her relationships. Shuster suggests that a person’s existence becomes linked to the kinds of things that he or she produces. Some find significance in work, others in wealth, still others in wealth. A person who does not find his or her life leading to at least one significant end feels impotent and even hopeless. Shuster suggests that our meaning and existence are in a large degree linked to our sense of power in producing effects in our world.

Both Adams and Shuster help us to understand ways that power has significant implications for our identities as persons and for our personal interests as we engage in social relationships. Our natural inclination is to seek power (and therefore control over possessions and relationships) to assure that we have meaning and significance in our lives. Furthermore, our personal interests motivate us to engage in reciprocal exchanges with others that satisfy both mutual interests and our need to control events to achieve valued ends.

Power Exchanges and Will

If Adams is right that all social relationships have power distinctions embedded within them, then the normal course of social life results in numerous power exchanges. A power exchange occurs when someone who controls something of importance to another uses that control to obtain compliance or conformity of the other to his or her will. Oftentimes these exchanges are so routine that people do not recognize the implicit issues of control. The missionary who employs a language assistant may view the relationship as one of mutual assistance, when in fact it is a power exchange in which the assistant complies. The short-term mission team that comes to build a wall around a national church compound rarely sees its presence as a display of its corporate power to render or withhold support. The project funding board views its mission as advancing the cause of the Gospel around the world yet rarely sees the power-exchange dimensions of its policies for granting and accounting for funds.

While Adams is correct in his assessment of the inherently material basis of power relationships, Shuster helps us understand that our exercising of power in these relationships ultimately focuses on an aspect of our inner person, on our will. The structuring of power relationships as Adams describes them is a normal part of the social structure of society. We can hardly avoid these power differentials, nor should we try to do so. They are an essential part of how we work together in society. Yet at the same time, each of us has a will that we bring to our relationships with one another. Our will emerges from inner motives, often from our personal need to seek power or to avoid impotence.

Shuster suggests that evil is a result of “disruptions of structure and/or will—the Devil spoiling what God has made.” These disruptions lead people to distort the structures of human relationship and exercise their personal will in the pursuit of power. Perversion of the structures of relationship most often comes from our obsession to achieve a particular good, such as planting two hundred new churches or translating Scripture into five related languages. In view of that good, we may construct false paths (keeping control in our hands) to achieve the desired end and make our way the absolute and only way to that end. When we accept the deceptions of Satan and assert our wills to pursue a good in the wrong way, the end is misery both for us and for the people we seek to serve. Disruptions of will flow from choosing lesser goods (e.g., two hundred churches instead of obedience to God), as well as rigid adherence to our own worldview and blindness to and rejection of the perspectives of others.

Conclusion

It should be clear that the subject of possessions and identity is exceptionally complex. We participate in and are products of macroeconomic systems that shape the world around us. In the United States, Europe, and parts of Asia, people enjoy a privileged position in the global capitalist economy, with vast sums...
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of global wealth controlled by people in Christian congregations. At the same time, this economic system and the resulting possessions have become foundational to how we think about our personal and corporate well-being and how we mediate our material and social interests in relationships with one another.

Christians and non-Christians also form preferences—values that reflect familiar and comfortable patterns of social relationship—and these preferences define how we manage our personal possessions and how we think about money and ministry. As participants in exceptionally diverse church and mission networks, we differ in the social games we prefer, and we act out our faith decisions and ministry practice in accord with those games.

Finally, each person and group must play the games of ministry with reference to differential issues of control and power. Those issues are rooted in the control of possessions of one kind or another, and then in the will of the participants to act. A fundamental question, “Whose will—mine or God’s?” touches every social exchange.

Notes
1. Eric R. Wolf, Europe and the People Without History (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1982).
5. Wolf, Europe, pp. 77–79.
12. Alan R. Weaver, “Toward a Cross-Cultural Theory of Leadership Emergence: The Hungarian Case” (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Intercultural Studies, 2004); Jinseok Park, “Pastoral Leadership Succession in the Presbyterian Church of Korea (Tonghap)” (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Intercultural Studies, 2005).
14. For a more comprehensive discussion, see Lingenfelter, Transforming Culture, and Lingenfelter, Agents of Transformation (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996).
15. Thompson, Ellis, and Wildavsky, Cultural Theory, pp. 46–47.
16. Ibid., p. 44.
17. Lingenfelter, Agents of Transformation, pp. 231–33; Lingenfelter, Transforming Culture, pp. 15–22, 34–38.
20. Ibid., pp. 94–95.

New Priority for Churches and Missions: Combating Corruption
Edward L. Cleary, O.P.

The International Conference on Combating Corruption, sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, was held at Rome in June 2006. Eighty experts from around the world attended, as did seventeen ambassadors of various countries accredited to the Holy See. It was the first such conference, but it was not the opening bell in a new fight. Rather, it was recognition of what has been going on for the last few years at the grassroots and national levels.

I attended this conference, which gave me an opportunity to compare efforts at combating corruption taking place in other regions with those in Latin America. I came away believing that Latin America has made good progress in this effort. Furthermore, corruption clearly is an issue at the top of the agenda for groups and churches devoted to concern for the poor.

Corruption has become a priority for monitors of human rights violations in Latin America. This evil would not have been listed twenty years ago, when death and disappearance were the focus of human rights groups. This is not an isolated fight issuing only from the grassroots; Latin American governments acknowledge corruption as a key issue. Furthermore, the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the World Bank, and the Latin American Catholic Church have thrown their weight behind the struggle. In this article I address why this shift occurred and how the issue pertains to human rights.

Corruption has affected Latin America for centuries. But now, along with some other regions of the world, Latin American human rights groups have made corruption a special target. In a word, corruption has increased in scale because of new opportunities, but so too have efforts to combat it. Since the mid-1990s the Catholic Church—especially in the person of one of its main leaders, Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez, archbishop of Tegucigalpa, Honduras—has thrown its weight behind this struggle.

The New Intolerance for Corruption

During the 1980s and 1990s many Latin American countries were turning to democracy after military or other forms of authoritarian rule. It then became clear that it would not be corruption as
usual. In the largest country, Brazil, President Fernando Collor de Mello was impeached in 1992 on corruption charges, which led to his resignation. As far as one could recall, this was the first president in the history of Latin America to be removed through the impeachment process. Public opinion and human rights groups are credited with forcing a timid Congress to vote through the impeachment.

This act would have gone as a curiosity in history if similar proceedings had not taken place in 1993 against Jorge Serrano Elias in Guatemala and Carlos Andrés Pérez in Venezuela. Over the next dozen years Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia forced presidents to resign because of abuse of power. In the mid-1990s Mexico saw its once-strong president Carlos Salinas de Gotari go off into exile after it became clear that he and his family had enriched themselves through corruption. In Nicaragua, former president Arnoldo Alemán probably wished he had gone into exile in 2002 instead of fighting proceedings that in times past he would have won but in the new era brought him a twenty-year prison sentence for fraud and embezzlement. In Argentina, speculators say Carlos Menem guessed right by dropping out of the presidential race in 2003 after winning the first round, since there was evidence of wrongdoing in secret arms deals with Ecuador. The list of the disgraced presidents may grow, now that even Costa Rica’s typically clean presidents may turn out to be tainted.

How could even Costa Rica, which ranks so well on Transparency International’s ranking of corruption practices, have three former presidents be accused of corruption? Or how could Salinas and family in Mexico be thought to have gone off with something like US$120 million?

At the Rome conference, all agreed on the major point that the globalization of national economies in the form it had taken in the previous fifteen years had offered new opportunities for enrichment. Not only did a globalized economy in general bring large opportunities for illicit enrichment, but national institutional sources of corruption increased in postauthoritarian situations. Transnational sources of investment money and “favors” added new and often secret sources of enrichment. The size of development projects meant that billions of dollars were available.

Privatization was an especially vexing opportunity for enrichment. Latin American economies, for the most part, were statist. The state sold off public enterprises, such as television networks, phone companies, and public utilities, through a corruptible process of privatization. It was not always clear at what price and to whom they were sold. When governments divested themselves of telephone companies, airlines, television stations, and other enterprises, it was likened in Mexico to la piñata, a birthday party game with a papier-mâché figure. The figure, whose belly is filled with candy, is broken by a blow of a stick, and the goodies fall at the feet of the invited few, who scoop up the favors. So too were Mexican fortunes made by the favored insiders. At the level of the ordinary citizen, corruption takes shape of discretionary funds.

Latin American reactions in facing up to corruption, however, are also new. Most of the countries are recent democracies, forged out of reaction to military or authoritarian dictatorship. Latin America was part of what in political science has been called the third wave of democratization. Churches, Catholic and Protestant, were in the forefront of this effort to turn societies into democracies. So too were churches major advocates for human rights both during and after military dictatorships. Besides the involvement of some of the great figures of twentieth-century Christianity—persons such as Oscar Romero and Medardo Gómez, Catholic and Lutheran bishops of El Salvador—very large numbers of Christians filled the ranks of human rights groups formerly against military abuses and now against corruption.

In the process of democratization, major debates on the shape of future governance took place. Perhaps for the first time, many persons began to believe that a way forward with lessened corruption was possible. In part this belief was based on seeing what their own actions could accomplish. In the 1980s and 1990s they created better neighborhoods, forced the government to be more responsive to their needs, and advocated and advanced basic human rights. In a word, Latin America had become in

Privatization was an especially vexing opportunity for enrichment.

Viewing Corruption

What is now viewed as corruption, defined simply as the abuse of public office or trust for private gain, was often seen by Mediterranean cultures as entitlements. Even contemporary French government officials expected to have access to prime apartments in Paris for family or mistresses. Every month into the late 1990s a bank truck pulled up to offices of French government officials with bags of thousands of francs to be used as discretionary and nonaccountable funds by cabinet ministers. As the Crown often could not provide salaries in earlier days, officials kept themselves alive and well dressed by dipping into such funds. Likewise, contemporary Brazilian and other high-level officials expected to have a “black box” in their desks with discretionary funds.

Corruption is not a formless evil on the science-fiction channel. At the level of the ordinary citizen, corruption takes shape as the request, often implicit but well understood, for payment of a fee to officials for services rendered or penalties avoided. Police, school staff, and government bureaucrats receiving pov-
Church efforts that some may view as merely airy discussions, others see as useful in stimulating a national discussion about corruption.
Seligson’s results make clear the effect of corruption. In contrast to receiving fair and equal distribution of goods from the state and free and uncoerced delivery of service from public servants, citizens receive unjust treatment and coercion. Corruption thus strikes at the heart of the rule of law and due process, which are the foundations of democracy. Furthermore, corruption induces a fear that is a kind of low-level terrorism or at least a coercion that reduces the kind of trust needed to oil the workings of good governance. A case could be made that police and bureaucrats are also victims in the sense that they do not receive income from wages sufficient to support themselves and their families. Bribes, slightly similar to tips to waiters, are seen as part of their wages, perhaps rewarding the zealous officers more than the lazy ones. Beyond the interpersonal aspects, governmental corruption also reduces the supply of resources for all and hurts most the weak and vulnerable. The billions of pesos that have been funneled into private hands is indeed grand theft from the people.

The Fertile Ground

Framing corruption in terms of a violation of human rights has been a change for many Latin Americans, who have commonly accepted corruption as an inevitable part of the cultural landscape. Human rights discourse grounds newly found resistance to violations of various political and economic rights that are beyond the so-called first-generation rights. Many human rights activists, community leaders, and active participants in civil society have engaged in an examination of the cultural roots of corruption.

Among other institutions, churches have furnished compelling reasons to regard the culture of corruption as an unacceptable part of Latin American society. In several countries the church has attempted to present its point of view within a national dialogue about good governance, for countries as well as for the whole region. Anticorruption efforts will probably not gain ground until a dialogue among citizens about corruption takes place in the public square and until some consensus is reached about corruption as an evil. This approach contrasts with that of the World Bank, which, despite all its useful reports on corruption since the early 1990s, focuses fundamentally on treating symptoms. Informants in various countries told me that the church’s position in the national dialogue and its voice in national society were positive influences toward controlling corruption. In one of the few grassroots surveys, Bolivians rate the church rather high in anticorruption efforts (4.5 on a scale of 7).12

National dialogues about corruption are taking place. Positive public opinion toward anticorruption efforts has been a steady force of resistance in countries where corruption has been highlighted. One of the arenas in which the churches have been prominent has been debates over the use of natural resources, as has happened in central Africa. Such debates have also occurred in Latin America, concerning both water and mineral resources.

National discussions about corruption, though, tend to focus on elections. In 2006 Bolivians elected Evo Morales president, in part because of his being cleared of corruption charges and because of his anticorruption platform. As noted, Brazilians forced Collor de Melo from the presidency because of graft. Twenty years later, their current popular president, Luís Inácio Lula da Silva, won on a platform of political reform and then in 2006 won reelection to a second term. With some 190,000 civil society organizations13 and a well-developed human rights discourse, Brazilians have established among themselves the foundations of a society in which the rule of law and resistance to graft and other forms of corruption may be reaching a critical level, a tipping point at which the rule of law becomes firmly rooted. Brazilians, especially the Brazilian press, have done well in exposing corruption.

Practical Steps

When Oscar Rodríguez, archbishop of Tegucigalpa, was president of CELAM (1995–99), he became convinced that the poor of the region were being adversely affected by corruption. He and other leaders of CELAM carried on face-to-face conversations about poverty with officials of the World Bank and other international organizations. They heard from these officials concerns about corruption, a domestic disease that was eating away public-sector resources and that could be diminished. (Problems were also caused by external factors, over which the countries often had little control.)

After Rodríguez left the presidency of CELAM, he continued in a key leadership position as chair of the Commission on Justice and Peace. But it was primarily in his role as the ranking cleric in Honduras that he carried on a public campaign to call attention to the national evil of governmental corruption and the need to combat it. As always, reform depends on opportunity. One presented itself when Hurricane Mitch left sections of the country in devastation and citizens wondered what happened to large funds donated for disaster assistance. A fair percentage of Hondurans felt that government officials pocketed some of the money. This suspicion fueled discussion of corruption as a major national issue.

The government responded to lobbying efforts by Rodríguez and others by forming a national commission on corruption, but they could not find anyone willing to take the position of chair. Virtually by default, Rodríguez took over the chairmanship of the commission. Rodríguez is much admired by most Hondurans, although esteem offers him no personal shield. In 2004, when I went to interview the archbishop at his office, he arrived in a jeep-style vehicle with two SWAT-team policemen with automatic weapons at the ready. Rodríguez had been receiving death threats. He could point to no measurable success of his commission but said he would have been content to increase awareness of the problem.14 By summer 2006, a mere two years later, a half-million Hondurans had taken part in programs sponsored by the commission.

A Transnational Perspective

National efforts to reduce corruption have been strongly backed by transnational organizations, ranging from the World Bank to international aid efforts of foreign governments, such as the U.S. Agency for International Development. The result in 2006 was an unusual ferment of networking. This can be seen at www.respondanet.com, a Web site that bills itself as the most com-
complete source of information on anticorruption efforts and that is especially helpful for Latin America.  

Governmental and nongovernmental agencies or groups have all lined up against corruption. Three relatively new organizations have provided insight into the fight that is going on and into progress that has been made. The best known of the three, Transparency International, has gained international renown through increasingly valuable studies and through its trendy index of honesty and corruption, picked up yearly by news sources around the world. Probidad is located in San Salvador and makes its intellectual resources available to other Latin Americans through its Web site and other means. The Center for Public Integrity in Washington, D.C., reports on various countries worldwide. Their depictions of individual countries adds the perspective of where the region may fit on a worldwide scale. Older organizations such as the World Bank were reluctant to address corruption because of their own limited charters and resources and the sensitivities of member states. By 2006, however, the World Bank had become a major player in anticorruption efforts. The World Bank and regional banks began facing up to the great obstacles to development that corruption posed. While the pressures for reform, as seen in the removals of presidents, have especially come from civil society, reform demands both governmental actions and civil society strategies. To the surprise of many observers, Paul Wolfowitz, on becoming president of the World Bank in 2005, made corruption a major theme of his tenure.

Transparency International created the Corruption Perceptions Index, which ranks most nations of the world by their propensity to accept bribes, according to the perceptions of businesspeople, risk analysts, and the general public. The scores range from 10 (squeaky clean) to 0 (highly corrupt). More than two-thirds of the countries surveyed scored less than 5.5, which is the number Transparency International considers the borderline figure distinguishing countries that have a serious corruption problem from those that do not. Most Latin American countries fall in the middle range, with only Paraguay near the bottom. These rankings are based on nonrandom, reputational sampling and are educated guesses. The presence of Transparency International, however, has enabled countries to think more systematically about their national corruption problems.

More promising is the Global Integrity Index, which measures integrity rather than corruption. It focuses on measuring the existence in law and the effectiveness in practice of institutions and practices that help to control or reduce corruption, to prevent further abuses, and to promote effective governance. The approach also has the advantage of pointing out the presence or absence of key anticorruption instruments that many Latin American countries have chosen (or not chosen) to employ as a result of demands from human rights groups and others in the private sector. These include whistle-blowing measures, national ombudsmen, anticorruption laws, and anticorruption agencies.

Conclusion

If outsiders feel that Latin America is overwhelmed by the “scourge of corruption,” it is important to note that larger Latin American countries fall in the middle range of the worldwide corruption scales, that considerable progress has been made, and that mechanisms are in place to make corruption less likely in the future. Much of this development has been the result of local, national, and transnational agencies. If globalization has brought increased corruption opportunities to Latin America, it also has carried with it better practices for combating corruption, tied to an energized civil sector.

Notes

5. Mitchell Seligson’s views were seconded by Latin American bishops. See “Signs of the Times,” America 191, no. 11 (October 18, 2004).
10. See www.derechos.org for a view from the human rights perspective.
15. The project Anti-Corrupción sin Fronteras and the English version, Anti-Corruption Without Borders, can be accessed at www.respondanet.com. As an indicator of anticorruption activity in Latin America, the Latin American Network Information Center of the University of Texas, a principal portal for Latin American studies, in 2005 added a major section dealing with transparency and corruption; see http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/region/transparency/.
17. In the rapidly changing universe of NGOs, funding, and Web sites, the Public Integrity Index has become in 2007 the Global Integrity Index of Global Integrity (www.globalintegrity.org).
18. A relatively new enterprise for indexing the measures taken against corruption is theOpacity Index (www.opacityindex.com/), which the Kurtzman Group maintains. It includes fewer countries than appear in Transparency International’s index.
WHEN MISSION COMES TO CAMPUS

C. STACEY WOODS AND THE EVANGELICAL REDISCOVERY OF THE UNIVERSITY
A. Donald MacLeod

Church historian Donald MacLeod introduces this little known yet formidable figure in mid-century American evangelicalism. A brusque, outspoken Australian, Stacey Woods confronted the anti-intellectualism of the conservative church, initiating what would become a dynamic, missional engagement with the university.

“Stacey Woods was the individual who did the most to make InterVarsity Christian Fellowship a leading campus ministry in North America in the mid-twentieth century. . . . A well-researched, engaging, sympathetic and honest account of Woods’s lifework.” —George Marsden, author of The Soul of the American University

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The Economies of Temple Chanting and Conversion in China

Eric Reinders

"We have always found the most earnest idolaters make the best Christians; indifference is the hardest thing to combat," said a Miss Harrison of the Church Missionary Society in 1910. Active but low-ranking Buddhists and Taoists were special targets of missionaries in China because they were perceived as easier to convert than those who were simply indifferent to any religion. So-called heathenism was widely thought to be a expression of an inherent human impulse toward God, however misguided.

British missionaries in China thus spent a lot of time in and around Buddhist and Taoist temples. The public spaces in front of temples were logical places to preach. The sight of icons was a common starting point for conversations, which inevitably turned to Jesus. Also, when itinerating, sometimes the only places to stay were Buddhist temples, which effectively functioned as inns. And missionaries knew well the various populations associated with temples—monks, nuns, novices, and lay activists, such as the old women in Buddhist temples who earned religious merit by chanting.

The Buddhist idea of merit created by chanting scriptures and mantras is well known, but less so is the fact that these ritual repetitions could be parlayed into hard cash. The key concept here is “transfer of merit,” which is expressed at the end of Buddhist sutras in a short verse in which one compassionately dedicates the merit created by reciting scripture or the name of a bodhisattva. Early on, merit was established as transferable. The prevailing mechanism seems to be that someone creates the merit and then gives it to someone else; a more orthodox explanation is that the act of sponsoring someone to chant is itself meritorious.

One could hire monks and nuns, but that could be expensive. More reasonably priced, the “reading prayers women” had timetables for chanting and used sheets of paper to record the number of prayers, marking little red dots for a certain number of repetitions. This kind of merit-accounting sheet is still in use today, though I suspect the uses of it have changed. Now it seems to be entirely about wish-fulfillment; in late imperial China, it had this function, but it also was much like money. It was a currency, a certificate of labor, exchangeable with the spirit world but also within the human economy.

Missionary Views of the Practice

The Church Missionary Society of the Church of England and related organizations such as the Zenana Missionary Society published a large amount of Sinology during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which included magazines, letter books, annual letters, annual reports, and circular books. This article samples the substantial reportage on China and Chinese religion in publications such as the Church Missionary Gleaner (later, Outlook), India’s Women and China’s Daughters, Homes of the East, Juvenile Instructor, and Awake! This large quantity of publications included numerous stories of these “reading prayers women.”

When they observed this practice, many Protestant missionaries naturally objected to it, seeing these rituals as praising an idol, not the true God. When contemplating this specific practice, they were reminded of the sale of indulgences in Catholicism, which they regarded as the worst example of mechanistic salvation.

Thomas M’Clatchie, a Church of England missionary, reported about his visit to a Buddhist temple in 1845: “In front of the altar was placed a table, on which lay their books used in

![Paper Sheet for Recording Prayers](image)

worship, and not one syllable of which is understood, even by the Priests themselves.” This remark may simply indicate priestly illiteracy, but more likely it points to the use of unintelligible language in scripture and liturgy. Such remarks refer to Sanskrit or pseudo-Sanskrit words in Buddhist worship, primarily in the form of mantra and dharani. Many Buddhist scriptures and liturgies indeed contain extended utterances with no discernable semantic meaning for the vast majority of their reciters. A few missionaries discussed mantras with Buddhists, but one would not expect most British Protestant missionaries to appreciate the complex theories behind the use of mantras, especially since they were steeped in a thorough critique of the use of “meaningless” liturgical language in Europe. Throughout Protestant Europe, the use of Latin was rejected in favor of the vernacular, as much during the Reformation itself as during the Victorian movement against Ritualism.
Mantras in particular were denied full conscious meaning. In addition to their unintelligibility, mantras and Buddhist liturgy in general were also objectionable to missionaries because of their repetition. John Francis Davis reported, “To the repetition of the bare sounds, without regard to the meaning, they attach the highest importance; hence they occasionally go over the same words hundreds and thousands of times.” Repetition of the same statement was absurd if conveying the semantic meaning of the words spoken was imagined to be the only worthwhile function of speech, and if meaning is conceived strictly as semantic communication. In the chanting of Buddhist mantras, however, the semantic meaning may be unimportant, so that in Buddhist terms, to point out their literal unintelligibility is to miss the point—namely, the production of the sacred sounds themselves, for the mantra is the deity, in the form of sound.

Missionaries associated endless repetition with Catholic practices of liturgical repetition such as the Hail Mary. In the 1860s many British Protestants objected not only to the fact of repetition but also to the chanting style in Anglo-Catholic Ritualist worship. Objecting to “intoning” or “intonation” (also known as monotoning), many British Protestants found it aesthetically unpleasant, comparing it to dogs howling, but, more important, they felt it to be harder to understand than a plain reading voice or a hymn. Missionaries in China familiar with the current conflicts in England over liturgy would have found the almost-monotone quality of Buddhist liturgy especially evocative of Catholicism and the Romanist tendencies in Anglican churches.

Another theme of anti-Catholic discourse, the hypocrisy and corruption of monastic institutions, was tied to sponsored chanting in China. A missionary in 1929 told of a young woman who was destitute after her mother died. “Then came two Buddhist nuns to the little village, with their long robes and shaved heads, seeking to line their pockets by repeating prayers for dead or living.” The young woman also became a nun. But the rituals “brought no peace to her troubled heart. Too soon she realized the futility of it all, the insincerity of the other nuns, most of whom had been taken as infants and reared to the profession. They did not pretend to keep the vegetarian vow strictly in the privacy of the nunnery, and seemed to care only for the money they could extort from the credulous, a dollar for twenty-four chants, or more if they could get it.”

As part of a larger industry, these chanting women also made various paper objects for ritual use. Some missionary discussions of Chinese religion focused on the economic waste and on the threat implied by the great economic power of Chinese religion as an industry. In the popular missionary magazine Awaake! Arthur Elwin in 1895 estimated the cost of all the offerings to the dead at £16 million a year. In a fairly monotonous article, he emphasized the great expenditure of labor. He enumerated all the trades in China which are directly interested in the continuation of idolatry, and therefore, of necessity, opposed to Christianity. . . . When those engaged in the trades and occupa-

The solution was for Mrs. Ho to chant her non-Christian prayers as promised, but very quickly.

Such passages show an awareness of the financial commitments that had to be broken by converts deserting that army.

The Cost of Converting

At this time in China a Buddhist nun got a dollar for twenty-four chants. Temple women were lowlier foot soldiers in that idolatrous army, but they could still earn a meager living. Temples were in this sense havens for old women with little financial support. When they converted to Christianity, their source of income was necessarily ended. Missionaries were insistent that the idolatrous practice must end but were sympathetic to their financial plight.

For example, in an account from 1900 in India’s Women and China’s Daughters, a certain Mrs. Ho politely inquired of the Gospel and began to attend church, was convinced of the Christian message, but had financial problems because she had been prepaid to chant Buddhist texts. “She was then quite convinced of the folly and wrong of idolatry,” but she felt obliged to those who had already paid her. Missionary Alice M. Phillips resisted the temptation to pay off the debt, commenting, “We feared to give her money, lest our motive should be misunderstood.” The rather mundane solution to the immediate obligation was for Mrs. Ho to chant her non-Christian prayers as promised, but very quickly.

Even after she stopped making merit sheets for clients, Mrs. Ho still had a stash of her own, which she also needed to get rid of. Mrs. Ho said a friend was keeping the papers and that they would be burnt over her coffin. Alice Phillips objected, saying that such action would not be religiously efficacious; getting rid of these papers now would “please Jesus.” The story continues:

One afternoon she called me downstairs, and to my delight I saw that, of her own accord, she had brought her basket and all it contained. It was a very solemn time for us both; she was giving up what had cost her a lifetime to make. How easy for me to take them from her, but what it must have meant for her! The old brown fingers trembled as so carefully she took out bundle after bundle of paper prayers marked with the red mark, which is the proof that so many prayers had been said; packets of chopsticks, bowls, spoons, all made of paper; packets of twisted paper, the cord to draw her soul from hell; a large paper-made ancestral tablet on which is written her life-history—the date when she was dedicated to the service of Buddha, &c., signed by her sons and herself, and other chanting women; two passports which are dedicated to the service of Buddha, &c., signed by her sons and herself; a book containing her rosary with a little image of Buddha and two silver bowels, spoons, all made of paper; packets of twisted paper, the cord to draw her soul from hell; a large paper-made ancestral tablet on which is written her life-history—the date when she was dedicated to the service of Buddha, &c., signed by her sons and herself; and other chanting women; two passports which are dedicated to the service of Buddha, &c., signed by her sons and herself; a purse made of calico, containing gold and silver money to be used in hades; numbers of shoes of gold and silver, each representing so many dollars (these, she said, are made with great labour), her rosary with a little image of Buddha and two silver characters for Buddha and happiness; four or five smaller rosaries; a paper representing a ship—this is surrounded by hundreds of little circles: each represents so many prayers, and therefore so much
money . . . ; a very pretty pair of white and blue satin shoes (real size) for her to wear after her death. Among the paper things was a large round of cardboard, and on it were fastened gold paper hair-ornaments, earrings, bracelets, &c. With all these was her idol calendar, telling when and where she must worship certain idols. It was very touching to see the old lady carefully take out these that had been most precious treasures to her. She told me what they were and slowly put them back, and then looked up brightly and said, “Now I have Jesus, that is enough; I do not want these any more.” Then they were packed up in her peculiar red basket (only used by such women), the wooden box to hold incense was also there, and later on she brought me her brown coat, grey skirt, and even her old black stick and little wooden box in which she used to take her rice to the temple. “I used all these things in the service of Buddha; I must have nothing more to do with them,” she said, and she gave them to me.7

Only after all of these things were relinquished, some time later, was Mrs. Ho baptized. Rather than just throw them away, converts gave various objects to missionaries such as icons, ritual paraphernalia, and the golden baskets of meritorious paperwork.8 It was part of a ritual of conversion—a repudiation of previous idolatry and a proof of sincerity for missionaries already suspicious of “rice Christians.”

**Riceless Christians**

Churches in the mission fields had systems of education, examination, and probation, along with a series of specific measurements of commitment, which consisted of giving up all worship of the idols, and (where applicable) polygamy, foot-binding, opium, temple employment, and vegetarian vows. Hence, it was never a simple matter for a Chinese to become Christian; just saying so was not enough. These precautions were perhaps inevitable, given the notion of the rice Christian—the apparent convert who desires only the material benefits from association with the mission: food, employment, and legal protection.9 Missionaries resisted the move to make conversion profitable.

Some missionaries lived in China for decades and undoubtedly got to know the Chinese intimately, but constant doubts about the sincerity of would-be converts generated a whole hermeneutics of suspicion applied to Chinese converts by Western missionaries. I suspect the cultural alienation experienced by missionaries as foreigners undermined their ability—and their confidence in their ability—to evaluate native peoples’ inner states. These doubts suggest uncertainty about their cultural competence to assess indigenous behavior, especially as the specifically soteriological suspicion was mingled with a wide range of negative colonialist views of the Chinese.

The well-known term “rice Christian” signaled a phenomenon—Chinese converting only for material benefit. We can never quantify such a phenomenon, but I suspect it was minimal. More important, the term implied a fear and a polemical accusation. Members of one’s own congregation were not rice Christians. It was an accusation made against others, or it was a denial that reveals an anxiety about one’s own congregation. But an inverse also existed: the fear and the phenomenon of Chinese failing to convert for fear of losing their income, which from a Western perspective was often a trifling amount. We might call these people “riceless Christians.”

Balanced against the fear of being misunderstood was genuine compassion. Of a male convert, Arthur Moule wrote, “Of course, we (and our friends) helped him a little. We saw that

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**Major Consolidation of Digital Missionary Photo Archives**

At the University of Southern California, the Center for Religion and Civic Culture and the USC Libraries’ Digital Archive have received a grant from the Getty Foundation to create a federation of two important repositories of historical missionary photographs. One of these, BMPix, is the collection held by the Basel Mission Archive in Switzerland, available at www.bpmix.org. The other is the “collection of collections,” called the Internet Mission Photography Archive (IMPA), online at www.usc.edu/impa. Bringing these two repositories together under the permanent oversight of the USC Libraries will greatly enhance their long-term viability and their value as research assets for the scholarly community.

Missionaries from Europe and North America were among the first to recognize the communications potential of the new medium of photography. Their pictures, some from as early as the 1850s, are among the earliest in existence that document social change in non-Western cultures. They represent an invaluable repository of visual information about a world that would otherwise be unknown—and that in many cases has now disappeared. While the pictures are obviously of interest to scholars charting the globalization of Western Christianity, they are by no means limited to the religious environment or the missionary agenda. Indeed, their scholarly value lies precisely in their ability to capture cultural encounters on a very broad scale and to provide a visual appreciation for the cultural, economic, political, and technological transformation of traditional societies.

Until recently, the usefulness of these collections has been limited by their dispersion across many sites. Few scholars are able to move from one archive to another in search of images to illustrate a theme, and comparative visual research across regions or time periods has been especially difficult. In the interest of making these materials more accessible, both BMPix and IMPA were supported in their early stages by awards from the Getty Grants Program. As most mission researchers are aware, the Basel Mission Archive was a pioneer in making its important collection of missionary photographs accessible to researchers when it cataloged, digitized, and published over 27,000 pictures on the Internet. Inspired by the Basel example, the Internet Mission Photography Archive has consolidated several physically separate collections into a single repository. Some 14,000 images have been selected from collections held by the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America, the China Inland Mission, the English Presbyterian Mission, the Leipzig Mission, the London Missionary Society, the Moravian Church, the Norwegian Missionary Society, the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, and the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society.

Bringing BMPix and IMPA into a federated relationship will accomplish two important objectives. In the first place, while the BMPix Web site will retain its original Internet address at www.bpmix.org, it will be redesigned, technically updated, and hosted permanently by the USC Libraries. The Basel collection will have a secure home in an academic institution.
our brother had need; and who would, from what is called the principle of not giving for fear of pauperizing, shut up a heart of compassion from him?  

The cost of conversion was, in one story at least, literally measured in bowls of rice. An inquirer named Toong finally converted:

In becoming connected with Christianity, Mr. Toong had to give up his whole means of living. His business had been that of a geomancer and fortune-teller, and his wife and son had been engaged in the work of making paper money, which is connected with the superstitions of this people in reference to the dead. Mr. Toong was also connected with an ancestral temple, of which he had the superintendence, on behalf of those who kept tablets there. From these, and, I suppose, similar sources, he derived support for himself and his family, but, without hesitation, he relinquishes all. When reminded of the hardships that might be before him, he said that he had been used to a certain number of meals a day of good rice, but that, if necessary, he could easily abridge the number, rather than continue in sin, and peril his never-dying soul. His wife, too, who expressed her determination to walk in the same path with her husband, replied to a similar remark, by saying that discomforts here were but for a time, but that the torments of hell were eternal. 

In a similar case, a Chinese girl in a missionary school in 1896 was not doing well. A missionary recounts that the “little pupil makes idol-paper all day long, and has no time for school. Poor little girl! she does not want to make the idol-paper, but she has to work—her parents make her do it. Will you pray for her, dear friends? She has promised to ask God to make a way for her to earn some money apart from idol-paper making.”

God apparently listened to some of those prayers. Some of the temple women became “Bible women,” distributing another kind of valuable paper in the interests of religious merit. Some missionary organizations established light industrial enterprises specifically “to help poor Christian widows and others who have given up work in connection with idols.” Converts made dolls, children’s clothes, stockings, school quilts, mosquito curtains, shoes, handkerchiefs, and velvet slippers with embroidery—

Balanced against the fear of being misunderstood was genuine compassion.

actually, a range of products not so dissimilar to their now-abandoned industry of idolatry, except with cloth rather than paper.

A good number of converts were employed as servants. For example, in the 1890s Miss E. Onyon met Mrs. Zau, “a poor widow with four children, earning her living by making idolatrous paper money, her eldest girl of twelve years old also being employed in the same way. Almost before we had thought of mentioning the subject, Mrs. Zau said, ‘I know if I become a Christian I cannot go on doing this work; I am looking out for other employment.’ We told her God would provide for her if she trusted Him and asked His help and guidance.” She later had a job offer, working as a servant for a European lady in Shanghai, who happened to live next door to the missionaries. Later she was baptized and eventually had a position in an English school.

committed to its preservation and continuing availability to the scholarly community. At the same time, the BMPix images will be added to the IMPA database, and their accompanying descriptive information will be “mapped” into the cataloging format adopted by IMPA. In this way, IMPA will be dramatically strengthened by the addition of the Basel images to its database, bringing the total number of pictures in one Web site to over 40,000. IMPA is meant to be a growing resource, and when the federation with BMPix is complete, participation in IMPA should be even more attractive to archives that want to make their own collections available to the educational community.

When the project is finished (in 2008), there will be three pathways that lead users into the Basel Mission picture collection. First, when the refurbished BMPix.org Web site goes live at USC, it will continue to provide direct access into the collection in a format that, in terms of functions, is faithful to the original.

Second, the pictures in the Basel collection will be available through IMPA, using the search procedures and vocabularies developed for the collections that are already in the IMPA repository. An IMPA user’s inquiry will yield appropriate Basel pictures when a general search is conducted across all of the collections or when a more limited search is directed specifically to the Basel collection by selecting “Basel Mission Archive” on the drop-down list of contributors.

Third, because the USC Digital Archive participates in the Open Archives Initiative (OAI), the identifying information and links for the pictures (but not the actual photographs themselves) for both IMPA and BMPix will be published and accessible for use by other participating digital archives. This pathway will lead users into the photo collections when the subjects of their searches touch on topics that are reflected in the historical photographs. This strategy for expanding searches (and audiences) breaks down the barriers between digital archives—text archives and visual collections, for example—that are administratively separate and that were originally conceived for different scholarly purposes.

As standards of international cataloging and digitization converge and as technical barriers and electronic storage costs decline, pictures add a distinct category of visual information to the more familiar text-based materials that are the usual primary sources for scholars. There is every reason to expect this information to be incorporated into historical scholarship as a matter of course. Equally important, as high-speed Internet access becomes more widespread, people in the areas in which the photographs were taken can for the first time participate in the discussion of what they mean, in effect internationalizing the conversation about social change.

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Still the suspicion persisted that Christian servants had converted insincerely. Moule lamented the misperception that “the Chinese, it was said, become Christians only for what they can get by such a profession, and you are much more likely to get faithful service from an honest Heathen than from a hypocritical Christian.”

The Value of Paper

Missionaries acquired books and papers from converts, which were mostly disposed of unceremoniously. But there was an inverse phenomenon, an unintentional economic effect of Bible and tract distribution. The destruction of Christian books took place constantly, and not usually during riots. “Of the thousands of books and tracts distributed, few have ever been heard from.”

What happened to these books? Some were put to practical or profane use: “making soles for cloth shoes, employing them at the toilet, papering walls, and so forth.” But the destruction of so much pious literature so intrigued M. T. Yates of the American Southern Baptists that he became a kind of detective: he first distributed tracts along a street; a month later he inquired, but there was no trace of them. Some said they had passed them on to friends to read, but Yates did not believe this. Then he got a tip from a Chinese friend to go to a certain temple. Hiding himself away very early one morning, he saw seven or eight coolies bring in sacks of books, including his own. “These loads of books were to be burned before the idol, and some of the ashes distributed in sacks of books, including his own. “These loads of books were to be burned before the idol, and some of the ashes distributed on the waters of the canals and rivers, to furnish the spirits of the departed with reading matter, and the balance, mixed with oil, would be used to make the paste of which the smooth surfaces of sign boards and lacquered ware are made.”

The spectacle of the Bible burnt as an offering to Buddha and distributed for watery souls to pass the time is wonderfully ironic.

Conclusion

Missionaries were very familiar with popular Chinese religion and viewed “earnest idolaters” as likely prospects—for example, the old women who earned merit and money chanting, who made these account sheets. This practice brought to the surface familiar categories of anti-Catholic rhetoric. Also, it was one example of many economic practices that made heathenism not just a set of wrong ideas but a huge industry, an economic army that indeed should have felt threatened by missions. Disengaging from the idolatrous economy was regarded as essential for conversion, but there is evidence of widespread awareness of and sympathy for Chinese who had to give up their income in order to convert. In the case of Mrs. Ho, she discarded not just cash income but her spiritual bank account and the accumulated wealth invested in her postmortem well-being as well.

I began looking into this topic out of curiosity about missions and Buddhist or Taoist temples as economic rivals. Missions did provide some economic assistance to converts—mainly work in small industry and handicrafts, as servants, in mission schools, and in hospitals. The category “rice Christian,” however, names primarily a kind of missionary fear or alienation rather than the reality of converts, not only because of the inverse reality, the “riceless Christian,” or convert who loses economically by converting, but also because far more than economic hardship was often involved.

Notes

1. Miss Harrison, Church Missionary Gleaner (CMG), June 1910, p. 92.
2. Kate E. Gardner mentions one site where “there were about eighteen ‘reading prayers women’ (Nang-geng) in the temple. They spend their time saying prayers to the idols.” (“Kien-ning Village Work,” India’s Women and China’s Daughters [IWCD], 1902, pp. 213–14). Alice M. Phillips describes “a class of women” called “those who read the holy books” (Buddhist Chanters in Kien-Ning,” IWCD, 1900, p. 16).
13. [Name illegible], “Industrial Work in Foochow City,” IWCD, 1905, p. 17.
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**COMMENTS:
Tainted Mammon and Righteous Cause**

**Paul Jenkins**

When I became an adult in the Britain of the 1950s, the moral world of money seemed simple. Capital belonged to the people—and indeed many of the key “means of production” had been “nationalized.” The people’s capital was administered, directly or indirectly, by the people’s representatives. And so our legitimate rulers provided the finance, for example, to run a meritocracy, in which talented young people from deep in the shires could win scholarships to the best universities. If they had the ambition to influence the way society would develop, they went in for careers in academia, the civil service, or a government corporation like the BBC, doing so in the belief that both salary and project money would be forthcoming as was appropriate for a public service, with no compromise between principle and expediency.

Since those idyllic-sounding postwar days the world has changed indeed. Industries in Britain were denationalized. All over the world the Market triumphed. What used to be one of the seven deadly sins—avarice—has been baptized as the Benign First Cause of potentially universal wealth. Capital is less and less the people’s, and more and more the possession of those who hold it. Taxation remains a wonderful way of laundering money morally so that it carries no taint of its origins. But the amount of finance from taxation available for NGOs or academic work is not adequate, and so the proponents of righteous causes find themselves trawling for money among the overflowing coffers of the world of capital.

People pacing the boundaries between avarice and idealism, like Tolkien’s Rangers, know that the world of capital is getting wilder and wilder. When I returned to Europe from Africa in the early 1970s, the top of the pile was dominated by corporations with a certain formal transparency and recognizable social purpose—producing and marketing something important like oil or chemicals. This summer my weekly reading, the Economist, is taking pains to make sure its customers understand what “Private Equity” is—the activity of wealthy individuals with enough capital to urge massive changes in the corporations and banks in which they have invested but who, unlike these, are not quoted companies on the stock exchanges and who operate without public accountability. And among the lower orders? I am seeing statistics that suggest that more people in the United States are gambling regularly online than are setting aside a couple of bank transfers away.

Back in the 1950s there seemed to be an insider’s way of raising untainted money for righteous causes—finding committed regular donors. My generation of Baptist students in Cambridge found our student society still tempting shillings out of our pockets to support mission by offering tea and buns. Some of us argued that if we meant what we said about wealth and poverty, we should contemplate a conscious salary-gift movement. We were at the beginnings of the European movement for self-taxation, inspired in my case by knowing about Vinoba Bhave and his “Land-Gift Movement.” But why, after almost fifty years always on at least the edges of the world of mission, do I have this unhappy feeling that money can carry not only the taint of its origins but also the taint of the intentions of its donors?

As I was mulling over this essay, the newspaper placard at the end of my road proclaimed, in pithy Basel-Deutsch, *Alte Drämli haben dem Daig zu wenig Kultur*—“[a museum for] old trams [is] not cultural enough for Basel’s old wealthy families” (Daig = “the yeast that leavens the lump,” a beautifully sardonic popular-dialect reference to claims of higher wisdom among people with inherited wealth). Whoever looks for finance for righteous causes in the world of personalized money must reckon with what we call in German Willkür—the likes and dislikes of the people who hold the purse strings and who regard their money as peculiarly theirs.

*Willkür* is a problem not just for promoters of a Basel tram museum. It concerns us in the world of mission too. For instance, is witness the central vital thing in mission? Many devoted Christians from the West with no more than a visitor’s experience in the Two-Thirds World will say yes and donate accordingly. They are wrong. Witness is a vital trigger (usually, of course, provided by local people and not foreigners). But the central thing is the encounter witness sets off between the carriers of the Gospel, with their values and insights and commitment, and the people around them, with their sense of the dilemmas and problems they regularly face. And knowledge of the local coordinates of this encounter—an endlessly varied and fascinating mosaic of structures, procedures, and values—is very weakly present among us in the West. That deficiency can well feed back into donors’ not being aware that actions they help to plan may be tainted with naïveté, ignorance, or worse.

I have, perhaps, a rather off-beat involvement with finance for righteous causes. Let’s say, just for argument’s sake, that you are a would-be mission archivist. You are a Christian sharing—however much you would reshape and reformulate them—the basic convictions of our missionary ancestors. You are also convinced that the world needs to revise its negative image of the work of Christian idealists in the past, and convinced, too, that there are many important but little known histories of the varied local reception or rejection of the missionary message. Talking
Edinburgh II—A New Springtime for Ecumenical Mission?

James A. Scherer

Anniversaries are occasions for remembrance, thanksgiving, and celebration. They are mostly of short-term significance, providing a brief emotional high, to be enjoyed and then forgotten. But one-hundredth-anniversary celebrations are generally more significant because they are less common and usually give rise to higher expectations. Centennial anniversaries may become the occasion for significant reflection, planning, and renewal.

Will Edinburgh II be such an occasion—a time for serious rethinking, criticizing, repenting, reconceptualizing, and even reinventing the nature of ecumenical mission? Between now and 2010, missiological journals will be filled with opinion pieces and proposals for making Edinburgh II the takeoff point for new global mission strategies. Already groups as diverse as the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE), the Boston Theological Institute, and the Pentecostal Partners in Mission have announced plans for activities to mark the centennial of the first World Missionary Conference. A common celebration jointly sponsored by many groups (www.towards2010.org.uk) is scheduled to be held in Edinburgh June 12–15, 2010.

Edinburgh I

The first Edinburgh World Missionary Conference, in 1910, was not a totally unique event, but it was unprecedented in terms of scope, preparation, and consequences. It was a world conference of Western denominational mission agencies that built on previous regional conferences in Japan, China, India, Europe, and the United States. There was only token representation from the global South. Edinburgh I was the most thoroughly prepared conference of mission agencies up to that time. It was broad public sense about its history was not a core competence for a missionary society when I was looking around for work on returning from Africa. But I was lucky. The Basel Mission was prepared at least to wager the cost of my salary for a couple of years that there could be something in having an archivist with a vocation, and that a Christian organization with a long history of intercultural bridge-building might well have a call to promote open-ended discussions of its life and work.

I soon found myself forced into the happy role of entrepreneur. At the intellectual level this was an obvious function—the Basel Mission could profit from having someone pointedly encouraging research who kept an eye on general writing in historical research that might help reconstruct its own identity. But then the challenge came to act as an entrepreneur in the financial field—not earning money but persuading foundations promoting culture and research to finance the big project we wanted to carry out with historical photographs. We started trawling for money that was not hallowed by any specific Christian intention. And indeed, as with the persistent suspicion that important pockets of capital in old European or American cities may have been fed by profits from the slave trade, we were talking to people who, for those of us with acute antennae for the immorality of dead benefactors, could well be administering money that bore the taint of the mammon of unhappy origins.

The finance we found, however, was not tainted by distorting intentions or personal interventions. In our contact with the Getty Grant Programme and a number of foundations in Switzerland who sponsor research in the University of Basel, I have come to value more and more the way that the congruence between fundamental rules of scientific research and our Christian worldview and ethics gives one great freedom to work with such secular organizations. Both sides are confident that the universe looks like the picture of a tough financier, and indeed he comes from the school that in general tends to force a reduction of the labor force of a company in order to profit from the rise in value that ensues when this process becomes known to other investors. But with his wife, Jamie Cooper, Hohn has set up a charity, the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation, which specializes in children’s health and schooling. It receives a part of Hohn’s hedge-fund profits—disbursements, since 2002, of $1.4 billion. In 2006 he was “Britain’s most generous philanthropist.” That sounds like a man for righteous causes. But to keep a cool head and a sense of all-around moral criteria at his sort of table is, I am sure, demanding. Step forward, please, Christian professionals who can avoid being mere window-dressing for otherwise dubious causes, who can stand up for the Gospel in new ways, and who are capable of winning selected overflowing coffers of new money for the intellectual and social purposes of the kingdom of God.

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October 2007
preceded by three years of fact-finding, detailed reporting, and planning. The entire global mission agenda was divided into eight separate policy areas known as commissions, and most commission reports were provided with databases compiled by mission correspondents. The architect and organizing secretary for the conference was J. H. Oldham (1874–1969), who prepared the findings of the commissions for publication in ten volumes, which came to be known as the Edinburgh Report.1

Oldham’s careful organization and rational planning for Edinburgh was complemented by the evangelical fervor and charismatic leadership of the conference chairman, John R. Mott (1865–1955). A Methodist student activist from Iowa, Mott first led the campus student Christian association at Cornell University, became involved in Dwight L. Moody’s summer student conferences at Mount Hermon School in Northfield, Massachusetts, signed the Student Volunteer Movement pledge, and went on to lead the Student Volunteer Movement, the intercollegiate YMCA, and the World’s Student Christian Federation. Mott was a natural to serve as general chairman of Edinburgh I. Without his personal faith, organizational skills, and personal contacts with persons in mission agencies, many of them recruited from Christian student organizations, it is difficult to imagine Edinburgh I succeeding as it did.

Then and Now—Edinburgh I and Edinburgh II

The watchword, or motto, of Edinburgh I was “the evangelization of the world in this generation.” The conference was supremely dedicated to what the Western missionary movement understood as the completion of the “unfinished task.” It was believed that by proper strategic planning, coordination of goals, and mobilization of resources, the completion of the unfinished task of world evangelization could be accomplished within the lifetime of those present at the conference. In no sense was the goal of the conference to be understood as world conversion; the aim, rather, was to offer the saving Gospel to every living being on the face of the earth.

Edinburgh I took place in the full tide of the student missionary awakening and of evangelical revival movements occurring at the end of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century. This period coincided with the flood tide of Western colonial expansion into Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Circumstances combined to make the first Edinburgh conference an event occurring “in the fullness of time,” missiologically speaking. No one at the time could have predicted that the outbreak of World War I four years later would seriously dampen enthusiasm for the unfinished missionary task, place severe limitations on missionary resources, and sharply alter the direction and priorities of the Western missionary movement. The very survival of mission and the preservation of fragile mission stations affected by wartime hostilities became the immediate new priority.

Delegates to Edinburgh I, had they been privileged to look ahead to preparations for Edinburgh II, would have gotten a conflicted picture of Christianity on the eve of the Edinburgh centennial.

First, they would have seen that the “unfinished task” which they had hoped to complete in their generation had been substantially completed by the end of the twentieth century, apart from small pockets of “unreached people groups,” which were being vigorously targeted for evangelization by evangelical mission groups.

Second, they would have learned that the spread of the Gospel into all the world had taken place in spite of two major world wars, anticolonial revolts, the demise of Western imperialism, the so-called cold war, and increasing conflict and competition between major world religious groups, especially Christians and Muslims.

Third, they would have rejoiced to learn that independent national churches and local congregations could now be found in every region and continent, and that the massive growth of Christianity in former “mission lands”—especially in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and parts of Asia—now exceeded the number of Christians in the lands of the former Christendom.

Fourth, they would have been disappointed to learn that the percentage of Christians worldwide is today no greater than it was in 1910, and they might have asked themselves what went wrong with the evangelization effort.

Fifth, they would certainly have been dismayed to learn that Christianity was in a state of severe decline in former mission-sending countries, especially western Europe, as reflected in the secularization of Western culture, sharp decreases in church attendance, and the diminished influence of the church in society.

Finally, under these changed circumstances they might have been led to ask, What is the purpose of a second Edinburgh conference? What is the real situation that a gathering in Edinburgh in 2010 of mission-minded Christians from all six continents needs to address?

Enter the New WCC General Secretary

In January 2004 Samuel Kobia, a Methodist minister from Kenya, took up his new post as general secretary of the WCC, succeeding Konrad Raiser. No stranger to the WCC Geneva office, Kobia had previously served as executive director of the WCC unit III, Justice, Peace, and Creation (now called Justice, Diakonia, and Responsibility for Creation), and as director for Africa. Before coming to the WCC, Kobia served as the secretary of the Kenya National Council of Churches (NCCK) and in other Africa-related positions. He also held positions within the WCC’s program unit on mission and evangelism.2

As general secretary, Kobia quickly addressed the broader issues of the church’s calling to mission, unity, and renewal, giving special attention to the WCC’s 347 member churches and its ecumenical relations with nonmember bodies, especially the Roman Catholic Church, Pentecostals, and evangelicalists. He logged thousands of miles making acquaintance visits to churches in Latin America, Bangladesh, Thailand, the Pacific, Japan, Korea, China, India, and the British Isles, while also troubleshooting in Africa. In February 2006 he played a major role at the WCC’s Ninth Assembly, in Porto Alegre, Brazil, helping to bring about a major restructuring. But it was in his opening address at the 2005 WCC Athens Conference on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) that Kobia began to disclose his own views on the church’s global mission.3
Referring to the “heavy historical baggage” carried by the mission movement from the West, Kobia suggested that “the time has come for confession, and repentance.” The shift in the demographic center of Christianity from north to south had major missiological implications, he believed, and called for a corresponding “conversion” in thinking and attitudes and in missionary vision. In a time when “mission spreads from unexpected directions,” “borne by brothers and sisters who have received gifts of the Spirit that were never monopolized by European or North American intermediaries,” Western ways of expressing the faith are no longer normative. The ecumenical movement, said Kobia, must open itself up to “new manifestations of the Spirit,” while at the same time not allowing itself to become detached from the “truth, tradition and theology” of the church that has faithfully served God for the past 2,000 years.1

**The Anatomy of Ecumenical Mission**

At a meeting in Edinburgh on April 27, 2007, to prepare for the celebration of the centennial of the first Edinburgh World Missionary Conference, Kobia provided a frank assessment of the achievements and failures of Edinburgh I. He offered a critical analysis of the report of Commission 8 (Cooperation and the Promotion of Unity) at Edinburgh 1910 and in so doing set forth his understanding of the anatomy of ecumenical mission. We review here the salient points in Kobia’s Edinburgh address.2

*The Edinburgh legacy—the practice of comity and cooperation.* Kobia praised Edinburgh for identifying practices of comity and cooperation developed by mission agencies before Edinburgh 1910 as being valuable precedents. These practices form the bedrock of partnership in mission and constitute guidelines for what Kobia calls ecumenical discipline.

*The formation of the Edinburgh Continuation Committee.* In 1921 this committee evolved into the International Missionary Council (IMC), which represented an important step toward the “institutionalization” of missionary cooperation and communication. Similarly, the creation of the *International Review of Missions* (1912; now the *International Review of Mission*) under the editorship of J. H. Oldham gave the incipient ecumenical missionary movement a vehicle for missionary research and the sharing of information. “Institutionalization” makes possible a continuity of development and ensures that lessons from the past are taken seriously.

*The 1947 IMC meeting in Whitby, Canada.* This meeting, which introduced the slogan “partnership in obedience” into common parlance, was a crucial turning point in recognizing the fundamental equality of all partners in mission. It brought about the understanding of partnership in mission and constitute guidelines for what Kobia calls ecumenical discipline.

*Models of ecumenical sharing.* The “moratorium” proposal that erupted in the 1970s became an occasion for dealing with the root causes of injustice and inequality between churches of the North and the South. Though rarely put into practice, the idea of a moratorium encouraged churches in non-Western cultures to develop their own theological and cultural identities. For Western mission agencies it provided an opportunity to rethink their aims and priorities. Two significant outcomes were (1) the emergence of new communities in mission in which all partners shared in decision making and joint use of resources (e.g., CEVA–Communauté d’Églises en Mission and the London-based Council on World Mission) and (2) programs such as ESP (Ecumenical Sharing of Personnel; see the declaration adopted at the 1987 WCC meeting in El Escorial, Spain), which offered a new model for sharing of power, decisions, and personnel between mission partners.

Need for greater inclusiveness. While acknowledging with satisfaction positive efforts within the Lausanne movement (LCWE) and the World Evangelical Alliance to stress closer coordination and mutual discipline in mission, Kobia lamented the fact that many evangelical, Pentecostal, and neo-Pentecostal churches and movements—above all, parachurch groups—had not yet embraced the Edinburgh vision of “ecumenical discipline.” The WCC, he said, was ready to work with wider mission networks to resolve issues that hinder the expression of our common ecumenical calling.

*The importance of ecclesiology for mission.* Kobia analyzed the struggle within Commission 8 to give visible expression to unity in Christ and to determine the place of the church in mission. While Edinburgh agreed that the goal should be to “plant a single united church in every nation,” it could not find a way of achieving the goal of visible unity. Strongly held differences of ecclesiological conviction prevented the mission agencies from finding an agreed formula for church unity. This failure led Kobia to conclude that “reflection on mission cannot and must not be de-linked from basic questions related to what the church is, how it is constituted, what its mandate and organizational form are” (p. 4). The presence of Eastern Orthodox Churches within the WCC, as well as new relationships with the Roman Catholic Church after Vatican II, demands that ecclesiological issues be taken seriously as part of the search for ecumenical mission.

*Church-mission integration and missionary freedom.* The integration issue remains a major point of debate between Christians of the evangelical missionary family and Christians of the conciliar, or ecumenical, missionary family. For Kobia, the ultimate responsibility for mission lies with the churches and not with particular groups of Christians or with parachurch agencies. Yet Kobia takes very seriously the charge that integration of mission into the life of the church can threaten missionary freedom to take risks or to cross frontiers. He believes that the accountability of mission to the church must be safeguarded. It is necessary to safeguard both the responsibility of the church for mission and the freedom to engage in mission. The tension is inevitable and necessary.

*Beyond church-centrism to missio Dei.* Mission proceeds from the church and is accountable to the church, but the church does not own it. Since the 1952 WCC meeting at Willingen, West Germany, ecumenical missiology has understood mission within the Trinitarian framework of missio Dei. God is the author of mission, and the kingdom is its goal. Mission, according to Kobia, is directed toward an eschatological horizon: “the eschatological establishment of God’s Kingdom of justice and love” (p. 5). Mission remains church-centric in the sense that the church is God’s privileged instrument for mission, but the church is not its point of departure. The 1982 WCC-approved statement “Ecumenical Affirmation: Mission and Evangelism” points to a holistic understanding of mission (“mission to all of life”). More recently, the 1995 Athens meeting of the CWME called the churches to witness to Jesus Christ and to form reconciling and healing communities.

Kobia recognized that evangelical mission movements had reacted strongly against this holistic understanding of mission based on *missio Dei,* believing it to be an unacceptable form of “social gospel.” Wishing to head off a confrontation that would be disastrous for the mission movement and might lead to still further alienation, he proposed that we “find a way to counter mutual exaggerations and disrespect, and progress in this gen-
cation with the healing of memories on the way of an authentic reconciliation process” (p. 6).

An “Ecumenically Responsible Evangelism”

Kobia concluded his so-far largely analytic commentary on the development of ecumenical mission theology and practice by issuing several ringing challenges to the Edinburgh 2010 preparatory committee. He called attention to the first meeting of a Global Christian Forum, scheduled to be held in Kenya in November 2007, describing it as an attempt to create at a world level “a space of dialogue for representatives of the major Christian movements of this generation.” The forum—organized by a wide array of ecclesiastical and missional stakeholders—will include churches and mission movements not represented at Edinburgh I and would reflect “how the face of Christianity has changed in one century” (p. 7). It would allow Pentecostal and charismatic movements and churches to be brought into dialogue with the traditions of the IMC and the CWME, while also enabling older churches and traditions to be reinvigorated and renewed by the contact. This call for dialogue about mission was his principal reason for endorsing a “new Edinburgh.”

Kobia also lifted up preparation for a Convocation on Just Peace in 2011, concluding the WCC’s “Decade to Overcome Violence.” This convocation, Kobia believed, should have direct theological and missiological relevance to the task of evangelism, “since religions, Christianity included, are more and more misused to fuel conflicts” and tempted to “win their cause by taking over power and might.” “We believe it’s the truth of the gospel which is at stake, because Christ’s death on the cross is the core of our message.” God chooses not to dominate the world from above but to “offer himself from below through the person of the suffering servant.” “It is of particular urgency that mission be understood and practiced in a way which does not lead to an increase of hatred and violence” (p. 7). Christian mission, as the Ecumenical Affirmation (1982) and the 1989 CWME meeting in San Antonio, Texas, assert, must be “in Christ’s way.”

Kobia hoped that Edinburgh II would enable Christians “to progress towards a better theory and practice of non-aggressive or non-violent form of evangelism or proclamation, keeping the bold witness to Christ and kingdom in creative tension with respect for men, women and children of all convictions, all made in God’s image” (p. 7). This was a major reason why the WCC, in partnership with Roman Catholic, evangelical, and Pentecostal churches, was engaged in the search for a common code of conduct on conversion. “Ecumenically responsible evangelism has to be a proclamation which, while critical of human pride and sin, makes it clear that God wants peace and not war, life and not death, unity and not division, forgiveness and not vengeance.” Summarizing the strategy for ecumenical mission that he envisaged for Edinburgh II, Kobia concluded, “This generation’s mission in a globalised world includes healing of Christian divisions, building communities of healing and reconciliation, challenging all justifications of violence, striving for peace as God’s gift, and sharing the gospel in Christ’s way” (p. 7).

Taking into account various events already planned for the Edinburgh Centennial in 2010, the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism of the WCC has proposed (yet to be confirmed) holding a world mission conference late in 2011, which would not compete with the centenary celebration but would allow time to process and digest what was learned at the centenary and to apply it to the ecumenical missionary agenda. Coincidentally, a CWME conference held in 2011 would also mark the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of that ecumenical organ at New Delhi in 1961.

Conclusion

By advocacy and shrewd diplomacy, the new general secretary of the World Council of Churches, Samuel Kobia, has energetically injected himself into the process of shaping the Edinburgh II agenda. He has made a bid to recapture the legacy of Edinburgh I for the ecumenical movement, which itself grew out of that event in 1910. By reaching out to evangelical and Pentecostal mission groups, he has affirmed their importance and sought their involvement. At the same time, insisting on the intimate relationship between church mission and church unity, he has called attention to unresolved “faith and order” issues and has reasserted the wisdom of the conciliar missionary approach and of its instruments, the International Missionary Council and the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism. Should the WCC, Roman Catholics, and others make progress toward drawing up an agreement on a “code of conduct” for conversion, the entire missionary enterprise would have cause to rejoice. It could indeed auger a new springtime for ecumenical mission.

Notes


3. The text of Kobia’s opening address at Athens, May 10, 2005, can be found at www.oikoumene.org/uploads/media/PLEN_10_doc_2_Samuel_Kobia_01.doc.


6. The WCC’s Office on Inter-religious Relations and Dialogue, in conjunction with the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, with other invited guests, held a first Intra-Christian Consultation on Conversion and Christian Self-Understanding at Lariano, Italy, May 12–16, 2006. A second consultation was scheduled for Toulouse, France, August 8–12, 2007. One aim of the consultations is to draw up an ecumenical code of conduct for conversions that will have credibility in a religiously plural world. See, for example, WCC News (Geneva), June 8, 2007, and www.oikoumene.org/en/programmes/interreligiousdialogue/christian-self-understanding-amid-many-religions/towards-a-code-of-conduct-on-conversion.html.

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My Pilgrimage in Mission

Theo Sundermeier

I was born in the small town of Bünde, in the Westphalia region of Germany, on August 12, 1935. The religious life of this town was affected by the revivalism of the nineteenth century. An encyclopedia from this period mentions Bünde as “well known for its sausages, cigars, and mission festivals.” My father, a committed member of the YMCA and a presbyter in the church, in fact owned a cigar factory. The main event every year in the town, and the high point for me of the church year, was the annual mission festival, which attracted thousands of visitors. Also, smaller meetings were held at other times during the year on the surrounding farms. My three brothers and I were in the church’s brass band; during the large festivals we would play at all the services.

When my father was called up from time to time to active duty as a soldier, my mother worked to keep the factory going. Since my father was a member of the YMCA, membership in the Nazi party was taboo in our house. Because our family had a strong position in the village and in the church, nobody dared to accuse us secretly of being insubordinate to the party and nobody hindered us from going to church regularly.

In 1957 I went to study theology at Heidelberg, where Professor Hans-Werner Gensichen had recently been appointed to a newly established chair of the history of religion and missiology. He invited me to work as a research assistant to help in setting up the library for his chair. Because I was so familiar with missions, I agreed immediately, and my schedule was soon filled with studying the history of religion and missiology. My actual theological instructors were Gerhard von Rad in Old Testament and Günther Bornkamm in New Testament. But it was the study of missions that kept me from losing sight of the church and its missionary work worldwide.

It was natural for me to do a doctorate in missiology. When I was twenty-five years old, I became the first doctoral student under Professor Gensichen. In a certain sense we broke new ground in the university, as the chair had been newly established and the discipline had to prove itself and gain acceptance within the university. Its success can be attributed to the well-defined interdisciplinary orientation of the subject as it was credibly presented with academic rigor by Professor Gensichen. The fact that in 1983 I became Gensichen’s successor shows the clear direction of my career—for me a sign of God’s merciful guidance.

The pious atmosphere of my childhood home, my commitment to children’s services in the YMCA and to the brass band, and the study of missiology led me to spontaneously accept the call of missions when the Rhenish Mission asked me in 1962 to go to Genadendal, the oldest Protestant mission station in South Africa, which had been founded by a Moravian missionary from the heart of the African religious experience.

There the Evangelical Lutheran Churches—founded by the Finnish and the Rhenish Mission—with the aid of the Theological Education Fund (TEF), which H.-W. Gensichen had temporarily served as Africa secretary, built a new seminary. In 1962 they were looking for a lecturer to complement the staff of Finnish, German, and African instructors. My dissertation had attracted their attention, and they asked me to join them.

To Africa

When asked to go to Namibia, I was still a convinced single. Now I had to reorient my lifestyle. By the Lord’s grace I met Renate Wellmer, a pastor’s daughter from Westphalia. I did not propose marriage, but just asked whether she would come with me to Africa. On the spot she agreed, and we have been happily married to the present. We left in January 1964 for South Africa.

We experienced firsthand the effects apartheid had on people we learned to esteem and love.

Fortunately, a course was being held then in Johannesburg for lecturers at theological seminaries and colleges, initiated and supported by the TEF. Thus, right at the beginning of what became an eleven-year stay in Africa, we became acquainted with leading representatives of the various churches and seminaries, most particularly with Beyers Naudé, with whom we collaborated so well for many years. It also was especially fortunate for me that Professor Monica Wilson, the leading anthropologist of South Africa, was one of the teachers, for she provided the best possible introduction to African religions. She was an impressive researcher, an excellent teacher, and also a committed Christian. She gave me important hints and tips for my later research, and her books became trusted friends in my research. By focusing on the symbolic language of rites, she gained access to African religions and to the social behavior of African societies, an approach that for me provided the key to unlocking the heart of the African religious experience.

An important stop-off point on our way to Namibia was Genadendal, the oldest Protestant mission station in South Africa, which had been founded by a Moravian missionary from the community of Count Zinzendorf. Before going to Namibia we lived for some months in Genadendal—the only whites among the so-called coloreds, who were suffering intense discrimination—and learned the local language. We experienced firsthand the effects apartheid had on people we learned to esteem and love. Apartheid—however comfortable this policy might have been for European settlers, and however strongly it was supported by even the most likable and committed missionaries of the Dutch Reformed Church—never became a temptation for us. I strongly opposed it, which aroused suspicions within the South African government and estranged me from the German-speaking residents of the country and from fellow members of the...
German Lutheran Church of Namibia. Our stance, however, allowed for an unbroken sense of mutual trust with the African students and pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Namibia.

We lived for eight years (1964–71) on the campus of the United Lutheran Theological Seminary, Paulinum in Otjiambingwe, in the midst of a poor native reserve where non-blacks were allowed to live only by special permission. There we made our home—lock, stock, and barrel. I taught the Old and New Testaments, and later also homiletics and pastoral care. My wife taught the students’ wives, who lived on the campus with their children. She also helped prepare four students, one a woman, for music studies in Germany and Finland. Soon I was appointed principal and also became president of the 100 men and women there who had been sent out by the Rhenish Mission; also I was elected vice president of the indigenous Evangelical Lutheran Church of Namibia.

Here in Namibia and later on in South Africa I came to disagree with Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s statement that the church, by nature, is “the church for others.” This concept, I found, did not speak to the value of living together. No church did more for the African people than the Reformed Churches of the Boers—seldom did white missionaries match what the missionaries of this church did for the African people—and yet, by life and word, the majority of this church supported apartheid. No, it was and it is a matter of living together with people, or sharing life with them. Standing with them and sharing good times and bad, physical space and environment—that was the point. Later on in my missiological articles, I adopted a term from liberation theology for this thought, namely, that mission work happens and truly achieves its goal only insofar as there is a commitment to convivence, which is the basic structure of missionary existence. Convivence means that we learn from one another, we help one another, and we celebrate with one another. We lived and experienced all three aspects in Paulinum in living together with students and faculty and their families, as well as with foreigners who did not belong to our church and with followers of traditional religions.

The church, which had arisen from the Lutheran Mission, had experienced three schisms under three different ethnic groups, the Nama, the Herero, and the so-called Baster of Reheboth (an independent group of colored). The synod asked me to try to establish connection with these groups. This directive turned out to become a focus of my research. Very much in line with the trend of mission studies of that time, which was especially advanced by Bengt Sundklar and Harold W. Turner, I contacted the separated churches and the new religious movements (today called African Initiated Churches). In doing so, I became acquainted with the Herero people—or, more precisely, the people of Otjiherero-speaking Mbanderu—in a way I had dreamed about but that, in a situation of apartheid, I had hardly dared to hope for. The chiefs of the tribe, who belonged to the newly established separatist Church of Africa, responded by appointing me a “writer” of their history. They and their elders were aware that in a time of upheaval, the oral traditions of their history and of their culture, which was marked by traditional religion, would be lost. In long evening and night sessions in the poorest houses in the eastern veld of Namibia, near the border with Botswana, far away from any sign of Western civilization, they told me their history, bit by bit, and asked me to write it down and publish it.

Soon after I had finished the first draft of the text, the paramount chief of the Mbanderu, who lived some hundred kilometers away in another reserve, asked me to submit it to him and his counselors, who also belonged to the Church of Africa. We discussed it together sentence by sentence, it was supplemented by new insights, here and there the text was corrected, and ultimately a final version was authorized for publication. Even the title of the future book was discussed in detail. They wanted it to become a historical document of their traditions as told from their point of view—as it were, their book—documenting their identity over against the other peoples of Namibia. Here I could personally witness the transition from an oral culture to a written tradition, an act that was also central for the history of Israel, considering that probably under Solomon the histories that had previously been handed down orally were put into writing. Later when I was back in Heidelberg and described this process to my retired colleague Claus Westermann, a well-known Old Testament scholar, he listened with great interest, repeatedly comparing specific details of this experience with what must have happened in early Israel.

The Key Steps of Missionary Living

Here in the veld of Namibia and in the experience of living together in the seminary and of preaching in the reserves and in other African countries, I learned the three steps of missionary hermeneutics and missionary existence: listening, understanding, and communicating.

Mission means to listen, to listen, to listen—these three first and foremost. It is the basis of all missionary contribution. Whoever cannot listen, whoever is not willing to learn, should not become a missionary. In this respect, the learning of the local language is a first test. Much too early and much too often, missionaries start talking, which is why their words evaporate so quickly. Listening is the beginning and must repeatedly be relearned. Only by living together, in convivence, can understanding begin.

Understanding is the bridge between listening and communicating. I must understand people in their religious experience, in their cultural surroundings, and in their social context. I will always be a stranger, an outsider to those to whom I want to preach the Gospel. As deeply as I entered into the thinking, the symbolic language, and the social relationships of my Herero-speaking friends, and as much as they let me participate in their feasts (from which Europeans were normally excluded), I nevertheless was well aware that I could never entirely become one of them. I learned here that strangeness is a category that must be fully integrated into missiological hermeneutics.

Years ago the great Swedish missionary and missiologist Bengt Sundklar said that being a missionary means crossing borders. This experience proved true for us in the apartheid state of South Africa and Namibia, where not only linguistic and religious-cultural borders but also racial barriers had to be crossed. But if understanding succeeds, even if only partially, then a genuine community can emerge, one sometimes thrilling, but
always blessed. The question of how to define this process of understanding and how to assess the steps of better understanding the stranger became for me an essential task of mission theology. Defining mission from its innermost core broadens our comprehension of mission and opens new dimensions of communication. Only from this perspective can the process of inculturation proceed successfully.

In such a community, where people have learned to listen and have advanced in the process of understanding, communication of the Gospel happens almost by itself. There one learns that it is always the Holy Spirit who opens the hearts of people and leads them to God. Trying to force a conversion is never helpful but in fact can be damaging.

**Political Involvement**

On the seminary campus we tried to ignore political issues as much as possible. Paulinum, we believed, should be a place of living together peacefully, a place to learn and to experience the truth that blacks and whites can live together and different cultures can enrich each other. I learned from my African students, however, that this view is rather illusory, for they themselves regularly faced the bitter reality of apartheid as soon as they left the reserve. Though they were free in our facility, as soon as they left, they were confronted with, and had to adapt to, the passport laws and the arrogance of whites. We knew of course about the secret police, the opening of our mail, and the tapping of our telephone calls. In this our adopted homeland, every action had political implications.

In our classes, though, political themes received focused attention only in our ethics course. Things changed abruptly in June 1971, when the International Court of Justice declared South Africa’s occupation of Namibia illegal, thus depriving South Africa of any legitimacy in its presence there.

When the court’s decision became known, the seminary students started dancing and singing and held an impromptu service of joy and thanksgiving in the old village church of Otjimbingwe, the oldest Lutheran church in Namibia. Next, they wrote a letter to the church council, asking the church board to stand up more aggressively for human rights and for overcoming apartheid. This letter drafted by the students, who got help on the wording from the expatriate ethics instructor and from the native instructor of New Testament, caused quite a radical change in how other churches viewed apartheid. In particular, the two hitherto highly nonpolitical and conservative Lutheran churches that had emanated from the work of the Finnish Mission and the German Rhenish Mission began expressing hostility toward apartheid and changed the political stand they had taken until that time. Around the world, the sudden activities of these churches put them in the political spotlight.

In northern Namibia the students’ letter inspired the teaching staff of the Ovambo Lutheran High School to write a letter to their church council. Both letters were on hand at the joint session of the councils of the two churches, which was held shortly thereafter. The church leaders decided that they would translate the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (which had not yet been made available in Afrikaans) into three of the local languages, as well as into Afrikaans, and then read them together with a pastoral letter in the churches after the Sunday worship service. At the same time it was decided to send an open letter to the prime minister of South Africa. I was appointed chair of the ad hoc committee that, on the basis of the two letters and the discussions in the meeting, was asked to write this open letter (for which there was then no term in Afrikaans!). The letter demanded the ending of apartheid and compliance with the U.N. declaration on human dignity and human rights, as well as a free Namibia. With this letter the churches, to which the majority of the people of Namibia belonged, made a public statement to the world regarding how reprehensible the political system was. These two small Lutheran churches officially included human rights into their ethical policy, becoming the first Lutheran churches in the world to do so. The church boards fully realized that this action was an affront to the Boer government, which at the time seemed invincible. At the suggestion of Leonard Nangolo Auala, the outstanding bishop of the Ovambo-Kavango Church, the joint meeting of the church board was closed by the participants standing and singing Luther’s great hymn “Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott.”

The Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican bishop of Namibia publicly supported the letter, but it was vehemently rejected by the German Lutheran Church. Later, at a joint pastors’ conference with the leader of the German church, I personally felt the pain of this breach. The members of the Rhenish Mission, whom I had called together for a conference, declared themselves in support of the open letter and, in a pastoral letter to the church board, admitted that they were guilty of having too often accepted compromises with the South African government and of not having often enough clearly taken sides with their fellow church members who were discriminated against.

At the end of 1971 I received a call from the Lutheran College in Umpumulo, in Natal, South Africa. My wife and I thus went to South Africa proper, together with our three children, all of whom had been born in Namibia. In Namibia we had lived very closely with the African students and parishioners. Now, however, we met students who, in a very different way, had developed a new self-assurance relative to overseas missionaries, whom they often treated very critically. In any case, theoretically and personally it was a highly exciting period in which to witness the development of African black theology. At that time the Umpumulo college, as well as other centers, was something of a think tank for this movement. Leading representatives of the black consciousness movement lived in this college or regularly attended it. Due to the overall presence of the secret service, however, communications between them and the colleagues they trusted required increased watchfulness and spiritual training. Although the lecturers were scarcely at risk, students of the college suffered imprisonment and torture. Here I experienced a very new and significant dimension of missionary existence, as we learned that mission also means practicing solidarity with people who suffer spiritual or social oppression.

**Return and Retirement**

In 1975 we returned to Germany, as the college then had enough African instructors and my teaching was no longer required. At
come inside – come as you are...

Come...
**to search out the deep things**
of God and to sit at the feet of Jesus.

Come...
**willing to be transformed**
into the image of Christ.

Come...
**to be challenged and encouraged**
by men and women who will be friends and colleagues for life.

Come...
**to be changed by the Word.**

Come...
**to change the world.**

Introducing new degrees for the 2007-2008 Academic year:
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY • Biblical Studies • Evangelization Studies
Although only a minor prophet in the record of Anglican mission history, Francis Thomas McDougall (1817–86) deserves more than honorable mention in the continuing assessment of nineteenth-century European missionary attitudes. Destined by birth and upbringing to an active and adventurous life, with a combative nature that rendered dialogue irksome, an intolerant streak that made him a difficult colleague, and a melancholic hypochondria that resulted in his being galvanized more by physical danger than by theological challenge, McDougall could never have become the stereotypical Victorian missionary. Yet in his life he mirrored many of the contradictions inherent in the nineteenth-century missionary movement, although—unlike his brother-in-law, John W. Colenso—he could never decisively or satisfactorily resolve the challenges his missionary experiences posed to his theology.

Early Influences

McDougall was born into a military family at Sydenham, London, in 1817. Both his father and his grandfather were army officers, and an uncle and a great-uncle served in the Royal Navy. The various travels of his father’s regiment, particularly around the Mediterranean between 1825 and 1834, meant that McDougall enjoyed an independent and practical boyhood, but at the same time they deprived him of a more regular and systematic academic education that might have encouraged a thirst for study and scholarship in later life.

Having reputedly vowed to marry only a clergyman, Harriette Bunyon in 1843 brought him into a family that included the influential Bickersteth dynasty, pillars of traditional orthodoxy, as well as the more heterodox John Colenso. McDougall’s mother was an evangelical in the Claham sect sense, marked by piety and strict morality, who brought her son up in the same tradition. At Oxford he came under the influence of John Henry Newman and Edward Pusey, whose books were included in the library he took with him to Sarawak.

McDougall’s marriage to Harriette Bunyon in 1843 brought him into a family that included the influential Bickersteth dynasty, pillars of traditional orthodoxy, as well as the more heterodox John Colenso. The latter, who officiated at the marriage, married Harriette’s elder sister Frances in 1846. Both young women had been much influenced by the ideas of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and by a friendship with F. D. Maurice (as Colenso had also been while at Cambridge), in marked contrast to McDougall’s espousal of some of the enthusiasms of the Oxford Movement.

Having reputedly vowed to marry only a clergyman, Harriette propelled her new husband into ordination. Although this vocation may not have been his first choice, the way was opened for his selection as the first Anglican missionary for the new state of Sarawak on the island of Borneo in 1847. Had it not been for financial problems, the Colensos might have accompanied the McDougalls to Southeast Asia. If they had done so, the course of subsequent Anglican history would surely have been different.
Foundation of a Mission

McDougall and his party arrived at Kuching on the Sarawak River in June 1848 and found themselves in a small independent country that had already experienced seven years of paternalistic rule under James Brooke, the Indian-born English rajah. It was clear from the beginning that the missionaries saw themselves as allies of the rajah, their task being to introduce “a good leaven of Christianity and the arts of civilization” so that what they called “the dark heathenism of the Dyak,” the indigenous people of Borneo, might be “enlightened.” The great religions of Islam and Buddhism, the faiths of the minority Malay and Chinese population, were to be opposed and eventually replaced by “the light of Christ.” These sentiments, expressed in a sermon delivered in Singapore on the journey eastward and fairly typical of popular thinking back in England, were destined to be modified by closer experience with the peoples among whom the missionaries settled and worked.

As an expression of his early hopes, McDougall built a church and mission house in Kuching, both of which are still standing, and established a school for Malays, a day school mainly for educating the children of prominent people in useful arts, and another more church-based school or home school that attracted small numbers of Dayak and Chinese pupils. The home school was residential and avowedly Christian with children as students who were given to him by relatives and immediately baptized and educated in the Christian faith and church principles. He also utilized his medical skills both to express Christian compassion and to attract his patients to the Gospel. The work began in an atmosphere of great enthusiasm, but within a few years McDougall had become disillusioned by lack of success among the Malays, disappointed at the poor response to his doctoring, and depressed by the paucity of recruits from England. The Malay school collapsed, but he persevered with the Christian home school and in time came to visualize it as the nucleus for training an indigenous ministry. This school, which has educated the leaders of Sarawak society over the past 150 years, was to become probably his most enduring legacy.

The Educative Power of Experience

The story thus far includes nothing exceptional, as it merely repeats the pattern of a great deal of missionary expansion from Great Britain in the mid-nineteenth century. Colenso began in similar fashion when in 1855 he went to Natal, in South Africa. But in one respect McDougall demonstrated a movement in ideas that was unusual in his generation and that brought him closer to Colenso’s emerging vision than McDougall would have cared to admit.

During his first three years in Sarawak and on the island of Labuan, a few miles off the coast of Brunei, McDougall spent most of his time in and around Kuching, but he also paid a few visits to Dayak longhouses in more remote areas. His encounters with the indigenous people in their home surroundings appear to have made a deep impression on his conservative, but by no means closed, mind. Early prejudices held in common with his contemporaries, such as the conviction that the Dayaks and similar peoples had no religion of their own worthy of the name, were soon shaken. It was easy to dismiss those aspects of culture he considered superstitious and to be skeptical of the Dayaks’ belief in the guidance of spirits mediated through birds and omens. To his surprise, however, McDougall discovered that the people he met possessed a strong awareness of a supreme creative power who revealed his will and formed the object of their worship. In their family and community relationships he was forced to recognize “moral perceptions” and “kindly feelings,” and their general outlook on life appeared to him to give evidence of some feelings held in common with Christians. These included the voice of conscience, a desire for the removal of guilt, the longing for better things, forebodings of a life beyond the grave, and dim notions of a future state of reward and punishment. Whence could such feelings arise if not from our common Father?

Although couched in traditional language about “the dark clouds of superstition” that overshadowed the Dayaks, McDougall’s first report in 1849 to the Borneo Church Mission Institution reveals how significantly his early impressions were affecting his attitudes. He relates that he had spoken to the longhouse dwellers on religious matters and had tried to show them “how Dewata, whom they worship, was the God of all power and might whom we worshiped too, that he was their and our Father.” It was quite evident to him that “their unknown God has not left Himself without a witness; they all acknowledge a Supreme power who made all things.” This report reveals the first step along the road that led within three years (via sympathetic and courteous attendance at primal religious ceremonies) to a remarkable sermon in which McDougall conceives the prior activity and beneficent presence of God among the peoples whose conversion he had come to effect.

Proofs of a Religious Nature

McDougall preached the sermon in his church at Kuching on September 7, 1851, on the occasion of the commissioning of the first missionary sent to live and work among the Dayaks. The inspiration, as with so many British missionaries during the nineteenth century, was the evangelistic work of Paul as portrayed in the Acts of the Apostles, understood in a rather literalistic fashion.

Paul’s appeals to the inhabitants of Lycaonia, to the Roman Felix and Hebrew Agrippa, and above all to the philosophers of Athens who gathered on Mars Hill showed to McDougall how much the apostle discerned in all people “proofs of a religious nature which had never been effaced.” By making himself all things to all persons, “touching the chords that would best vibrate in men’s hearts,” Paul discovered and released inner yearnings present in every person to be renewed in God’s likeness, to which he appealed in his preaching. His great object was to lay hold of the seeds of goodness that he saw struggling for life in the hearts of his listeners and to quicken them into healthy growth. Even in the midst of the idolatrous worship that surrounded him, Paul could discern attempts to render homage to the true author of the being of the devotees.

For McDougall the conclusion was clear. Since the Dayak cultures appeared to contain elements of goodness and truth, signs that God’s image was stamped on the people, the task of the Christian missionary was to accept and build on that foundation, not to belittle or destroy it. With Paul as a model, the missionary assigned to a station in 1851 must neither ignore the truths that lie at the bottom of the flawed systems that he will encounter nor set at naught whatever is good and true in the religions that those whom he meets have grown up in and cherish. Acting in this way also accords well with the example of Jesus, who drew people to him with gentle words and kind deeds.

Christianity must therefore be proclaimed as a faith that...
Mission Moves Men in Different Directions

Colenso was consecrated as bishop of Natal on St. Andrew’s Day, 1853, and McDougall as bishop of Labuan on St. Luke’s Day, 1855. McDougall was consecrated in the cathedral at Calcutta, which made him the first bishop of the Church of England to receive his orders overseas. It may not be too fanciful to detect a prophetic hint in the days chosen for their consecrations, for it could be argued that Colenso would turn out to be the better missionary, McDougall excelling at, and in the main remembered for, his medical work.

Upon appointment to the episcopate, the two men found that their influence moved in opposite directions, for their contrasting views on mission could now affect the wider church instead of being confined to their own personal judgments. There is no need in this article to outline Colenso’s evolution into a critical and divisive theologian, as the controversy he provoked in the Anglican Church during the 1860s and beyond has been well documented. McDougall, wounded perhaps by the rejection of his earlier ideas, retreated into the safety of a more conventional episcopate, enlivened by opportunities to contend with Chinese rebels and Filipino pirates and tussle with an increasingly unsympathetic rajah.

McDougall contented himself with overseeing the creation of a few church centers in the expanding Sarawak work and negotiating for the transfer of his diocesan headquarters to the more tranquil Singapore, converting the home school into a more definite college for ministry, translating the Bible and Prayer Book into Malay and the indigenous languages, and continuing his much-appreciated ministry of healing. He later received recognition as having been the first medical missionary from the Church of England. These were no doubt modest achievements and, compared with Colenso’s more extraordinary contributions to church and South African history, hardly epoch-making in their importance, but they did prove of lasting value in the planting and growth of a vibrant Anglican Church in Southeast Asia.

Noteworthy

Announcing

The commission reports, addresses, and records produced by the 1910 World Missionary Conference, held in Edinburgh, Scotland, are now available online through the Special Collections Library of the University of Michigan. Tomoko Masuzawa, professor of history at the university, arranged for Google Book Search to digitize the entire nine-volume collection, available at quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/ text-idx?c=genpub;idno=1936337.

The meeting of the Eastern Fellowship of the American Society of Missiologists will be held November 2–3, 2007, at Maryknoll Mission Institute, Maryknoll, New York. “Majority World Initiatives in Christian Mission” will be the topic. For details, contact Dwight Baker, president, at baker@omsc.org.

Transformation, an international journal of holistic mission studies published by Paternoster Periodicals on behalf of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, now offers online access to previous issues without cost, including nearly 1,000 articles by 583 authors. Visit www.ocms.ac.uk/transformation.


The Biola University School of Intercultural Studies (www.biola.edu/sics), La Mirada, California, plans a master’s degree in anthropology beginning in fall 2008. For details, contact F. Douglas Pennoyer, dean, School of Intercultural Studies. Biola named Barry H. Corey, vice president and academic dean at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Massachusetts, as president, effective July 1, 2007. He succeeded Clyde Cook, who retired in June.

Personalia

Christian Research, London, publisher of the UK Christian Handbook and Religious Trends, appointed Benita Hewitt executive director to replace the retiring Peter Brierley on July 1, 2007. Hewitt, international research manager for Barclaycard, has managed her own research consultancy since 1986 and
As the storm clouds gathered around Colenso’s head in 1864 and as conditions in Sarawak were settling down before McDougall’s return to England in 1867, McDougall reflected on the movement of the two brothers-in-law in such different directions. He wrote to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), “How strange it seems that John’s missionary work should, as he says, have brought out his own doubts and disbelief. I feel that such has the contrary effect on me.”

But was it so strange? In Sarawak McDougall appears not to have been provoked to questions by a character similar to the Zulu William Ngidi, who could ask Colenso whether the story of Noah’s ark was true or not. McDougall’s main provocation came from skeptical Europeans who mocked his orthodoxy and thereby caused him to avoid debate over controversial and, for him, sacred issues. Modesty over his own theological abilities would counsel caution in reacting to the new scientific theories of A. R. Wallace, who was in Sarawak in the 1850s, gathering material for the publication of evolutionary theories strikingly similar to Darwin’s at the end of the decade. It is significant that, although both McDougall and Colenso drew their missionary inspiration from the apostle Paul, the former was encouraged by the journeys in Acts, while the latter was influenced by the theology of Romans. Fundamental differences in character, intellect, and outlook inevitably led to contrasting interpretations of the missionary challenge.

Although not immediately obvious, a change took place after McDougall’s return to parish work in England in 1867. Freed from the obligation to maintain the loyal front he felt was expected of him as a diocesan bishop, he revealed toward the end of his life a more inquiring and adventurous spirit. This spirit might have been triggered by his refusal to support Colenso’s critics at the first Lambeth Conference in 1867, or it could be seen as a logical progression from his earlier views. It was, however, a long time in coming. Not until 1884, two years before his death, did he allow himself—in a sermon to SPG supporters—to reveal in public a more daring line of thinking.

Moving from Acts to John’s Gospel, McDougall emphasized that “God so loved the world,” not just the church; that Christ is “the Savior of all men,” not just of Christians; and that he gave himself “a ransom for all,” not just for some. Although Christians are called into a special covenant of grace, yet “in some way or other we may well believe that all peoples are sharing even now, though in a different manner, in the benefits of the coming of Christ.” God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that fears God and worships righteousness, McDougall’s phrase, is accepted by him. “There is one looking upon us all, Christian and Heathen alike, who is the life and light of men and who lightened every man that cometh into the world.” The perceptive missionary would therefore notice that there are movements and thoughts within “the poor heathen’s heart” that can arise from no other source than “the gracious working of the Spirit of Christ.”

McDougall therefore believed that the message of the missionary should be dominated not by words of terror about hell and damnation but by a gentle whisper “of Him who has been with them all along,” whose voice they have heard already, though they knew it not. Besides hearing the voice of God’s power in storm and thunder, “the heathen have heard another and softer voice in the inner movements of their being, in every thought which stirred them to brave and manly and righteous deeds, in fulfilling the duties of family affection and acts of compassion and tenderness for the sick and suffering, the stranger and the orphan.”

To Meet the Heathen Halfway

It is clear that in the thirty years or more since his 1851 sermon and the hostile reception it had provoked in England, McDougall had reflected on his experiences and was prepared to draw some conclusions that were more sympathetic to Colenso’s. Although he did not admit it at the time, he felt that the rejection of his 1851 views by the home committee had suggested an ignorance has undertaken projects for major national and international companies. Brierley will continue to be involved with Christian Research, contributing statistical knowledge gained from more than twenty-five years of researching the church. For details, visit www.christian-research.org.uk.

Michel Marcil, S.J., a missionary with experience in Chinese Catholicism, was named director of the U.S. Catholic China Bureau, South Orange, N.J., effective June 1, 2007. Led by Janet Carroll, M.M., now the senior associate, and more recently by Charles Douglas Lovejoy, the bureau (www.usccb.net) “seeks to engage the American Catholics in a new missionary partnership with Chinese Catholics.” In the 1960s Marcil led the Tien Educational Center, Taipei, Taiwan. Beginning in 1998, he worked as director of the Inter-Friendship House Association, in Los Angeles, and as program coordinator at the Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History at the University of San Francisco. USCCB’s 2008 national conference will be held October 3–5 in Belleville, Illinois.


Died. Walbert Bühlmann, O.F.M. Cap., 90, member since 1935 of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin, a branch of the Franciscans, and former professor of missiology at Pontifical Urban University, Rome, May 16, 2007. Bühlmann was the author of seven books translated into English, including Es Kommt die Dritte Kirche (1974; ET The Coming of the Third Church: An Analysis of the Present and Future of the Church [1976]), which was recognized as a landmark in revealing to churches in the global North that the church’s center had shifted to the global South. Ordained in 1942, he worked as a missioner in Thailand, after which he embarked on study trips in Asia, Latin America, and other parts of Africa. Bühlmann served as mission secretary for the Capuchin order in Rome, as well as on two commissions of the Vatican’s Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.
in the church about the true meaning of mission, a refusal to acknowledge “the latent germs of truth struggling for expression” in indigenous cultures, a mistaken desire to “uproot entirely” the primal faiths, and an unthinking derision for the superstitions that had for generations represented the guidance of the beings who inhabited the spiritual world.\textsuperscript{15}

By the 1880s, perhaps inspired in part by Colenso’s insights, McDougall optimistically detected a hopeful shift in missionary thinking. Missionaries were learning “to meet the heathen to whom they go halfway as it were upon the ground of our common humanity—for we are all redeemed . . . in Christ the Second Adam.”\textsuperscript{16} Here are unmistakable echoes of Colenso. But there is no evidence that the bishop of Natal ever read this 1884 sermon as he had studied McDougall’s address of 1851 before going to South Africa.

\section*{Notes}
2. For details of McDougall’s life, see Bunyon, \textit{Memoirs}, the only full biography. For fuller examination of the issues discussed in this article, see David A. Edwards, “A Study in Paradox: Some Contradictions in Anglican Attitudes to Mission in the Mid-nineteenth Century as Embodied in the Life of Francis T. McDougall and His Work in the Borneo Mission” (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Edinburgh, 1998).
4. The indigenous people of Borneo were referred to as Dyak—the usual nineteenth-century spelling, now spelled “Dayak.” These peoples are now listed under their more specific tribal groups, for example, the Iban and Bidayuh.
5. Sermon 24, Trinity Sunday, 1848, from twenty-six of McDougall’s sermons, uncataloged, Rhodes House Library, Oxford. (All subsequent manuscript materials are found in Rhodes House Library.)
6. Sermon 2, September 7, 1851, Trinity 12, St. Thomas, Kuching, McDougall’s sermons.
14. Sermon 14, McDougall’s sermons. Written for the Church Missionary Society (CMS), May 25, 1884, but not preached; adapted for Winchester Cathedral, Trinity 2, 1884, and for SPG at Milford on Sea, Hants, Trinity 12, 1884.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.

\section*{Selected Bibliography}
\textbf{Works by Francis Thomas McDougall}
The main manuscript sources for McDougall’s life and mission may be found in Rhodes House Library (an offshoot of the Bodleian Library) at Oxford under the labels CLR72, CLR73, and CLSS4 (USPG letters). Other family letters are in the Turner Papers, MSS.Ind.Ocn.s.292; the official Rajah Brooke papers are under heading MSS.Pac.s.90. Twenty-six of McDougall’s original hand-written sermons are also at Rhodes House (not cataloged).

\textbf{Works About Francis Thomas McDougall}

\section*{Erratum}
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As an undergraduate, I once had the opportunity to own The New Cambridge Modern History, the successor to Lord Acton’s original project. Its appeal to me lay in the fact that eminent historians wrote on subjects of which they had unrivaled knowledge, and did so with the economy and succinctness that were a boon for an undergraduate’s initiation into the historical craft. My history professor, however, whom I approached about the idea, poured cold water on it. The series, he said, might be Cambridge, but it was neither modern nor history. With sophomoric recalcitrance, I went ahead anyway and purchased the books, going on a diet for a year to help pay for them. I found the volumes disappointing, however, though I did not rush to tell my professor that. To have one’s bluff called is one thing; to admit it face-to-face is another matter altogether. Put simply, like railway carriages the individual chapters duly showed up but simply did not add up, indicating how the constraint of detachable essays can detract from the momentum of unity and coherence required for historical direction. The flow of historical explanation—such, for example, as you would encounter in a book by G. E. Rudé, D. W. Brogan, or Bernard Lewis, who all wrote for the Cambridge series in question—simply vanished in the volumes because the commissioned chapters had to proceed at the pace of the gathered convoy. There is need for collaborative history, to be sure, but only when at least three elements conspire to bring the enterprise to a conclusion. The process involved a radical cultural restructuring of Christianity in the light of India’s history and experience. Beyond the horizon of “World Christianities” in the title, those seeds of indigenous restructuring laid the basis for the eventual twentieth-century awakening, and it would have been appropriate to profile it as a matter more than chronology.

In following the well-trodden path of Western Christian predominance, the volume all but smothers seeds in the nineteenth century of the acute indigenization and its anti-Western predilections that missions sowed, as is evident, for example, in the chapters on India, China, Korea, Indochina, and Japan. Nationalism alone cannot account, say, for the Indian encounter with Christianity, as Robert Frykenberg makes clear, since the process involved a radical cultural restructuring of Christianity in the light of India’s history and experience. Beyond the horizon of “World Christianities” in the title, those seeds of indigenous restructuring laid the basis for the eventual twentieth-century awakening, and it would have been appropriate to profile it as a matter more than chronology.

Europe in 1914 was in crisis, different though no less momentous than the crisis of 1815, the year of Waterloo. The 1917 Communist Revolution in Russia, and its sequel in China, revealed the depth and dimensions of the challenge that showed Europe becoming a receding Christian borderland, as Chinese political leaders noted with satisfaction. World War II would deepen that crisis. Already the New Cambridge Modern History of my undergraduate gamble called the period 1898–1945 “The Era of Violence,” long overshadowing the decades 1830–70, which it called “The Zenith of European Power.” Yet churchmen and statesmen were completely blind to that reality, as Brian Stanley observes with sharp irony in his epilogue. At home and abroad the hallowed institution of church-state unity and the concordat was weakening where it had not been dissolved, and with it the structural underpinning of establishment Christendom, called a damnosa hereditas.

Around 1914 a spontaneous charismatic resurgence convulsed the landscape in much of Africa, and in spite of their post-Christian secular scruples, missions stepped into the field to shepherd the teeming masses. Civilization in terms of a progressive colonial dispensation had been superseded by the resurgence. Yet, like the pigs of evolutionary science carrying over habits developed from grubbing on the stakes of their natural confinement, scholarship finds it hard to kick the habit acquired under a privileged Christendom, and so continues to gnaw on the barriers of Christianity’s Western captivity by construing, as this volume does, that mission was part of Europe’s overseas cultural project for any number of reasons: organized missions were funded and maintained by Europeans; they represented range and reach above and beyond the capability of incipient indigenous initiatives; their bureaucracy was self-replenishing; their order and hierarchy were more robust and versatile than the inchoate nature of village palaver gatherings; and their network of economic contacts and global outreach, as well as their systematic records, were far superior to the subsistence economies and sporadic tribal councils of preindustrial, preliterate societies. In the field, missions were without rival.

Yet those very considerable advantages imposed limits on local effectiveness. Religion in primal societies was not a matter simply of bureaucratic
organization, external institutions, once-a-week church attendance, and official labels, but of the spirit, of the unseen, of protection from evil spirits, and of belief in the life hereafter. Power and authority alone could not compete with the spirit or pursue the spirit through its many challenging workday manifestations. Establishment Christianity offered a take-it-or-leave-it message, unwilling or unable to give people what they were looking for or to welcome what they had to offer. Colonial hubris was the cross Christianity carried.

In contrast, a translated Christianity offered converts resources they could connect with the old dispensation. A chief wrote to a missionary stating that the chief and his people had already embraced Christianity but felt in need of further instruction. He requested help because he saw Christianity as a defense against the devil, whose return he feared was imminent. “To avoid the devil visiting us any more, we pray that your Church supplies our need by sending a teacher here before the close of the month,” he wrote. The history of Christianity looks very different when viewed from that fundamental, primal perspective.

—Lamin Sanneh

Lamin Sanneh, a contributing editor, is Professor of World Christianity and History at Yale University, and Chair of Yale’s Council on African Studies. His most recent book is Disciples of All Nations: Pilgrims of World Christianity, due shortly from Oxford Univ. Press.

Missions and Money: Affluence as a Missionary Problem . . . Revisited.


This “revised and expanded edition” of Jonathan Bonk’s 1991 publication Missions and Money develops a still-relevant theme: “the challenges of living Christianly in contexts of economic deprivation and destitution” (p. xxiv). This edition has two forewords, by the late Walbert Bühlmann and by Zablon Nthamburi, and three concluding essays on the Bible and wealth—one by Christopher Wright and two by Justo González. Together the additions affirm the relevance of Bonk’s theme. Thus the book now offers something more than just how missions manage material resources among deprived neighbors. It leaves readers wondering why the old title was retained unamended.

Bonk lucidly shows how “prevailing Western notions about progress, civilization, and power influenced missionary theory and practice” (p. 27). Christian missionary work is a sacrificial calling, and many in this noble vocation serve God faithfully. As Bonk argues, however, Western consumerist values and economic hegemonies often obscure the nature of the Christ to whom missionary messages must bear witness (pp. 34–36), leading to profound discrepancies between “what wealthy missionaries preach and what they personally practice” (pp. 74–87). Chapter 6, dealing with wealth from theological, ethical, and biblical perspectives, can easily be utilized as teaching material on Christian mission, wealth, and stewardship. Bonk does not argue that wealth and possessions are sinful but that “Christianity was never designed to make people comfortably at ease with wealth and power” (p. 156). Its message is about God becoming flesh, dwelling among us, and mediating salvation through self-denial, so “any mission strategy worthy to be called ‘Christian’” must be consistent with biblical teaching on the incarnation, the cross, and “power through weakness” (pp. 182–88). Materialism, I understand Bonk to be arguing, makes mission difficult, though not impossible.

Bonk is certainly no “outsider,” as far as the challenges emanating from the relationship between Christianity and the use of material resources in mission are concerned. He is the son of missionaries and was later a missionary in Ethiopia himself. This experience, particularly its paradoxes, almost blinds him to the very positive uses to which missionary resources have been put in many poverty-stricken and economically deprived Third World contexts. The book is also silent on the dangerous “gospel of material prosperity” that North American neo-Pentecostal televangelists now peddle in Africa.

On the whole, however, Missions and Money is extremely valuable in presenting passionately articulated reflections on what the God of mission is about and on the need to guard against all greed and covetousness in order that the transient and vain things of life—mammon, as Jesus calls it—may not obstruct the message of mission.

—J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu

J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu is Associate Professor of Contemporary African Christianity and Pentecostal Theology, Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Ghana, and 2007 Visiting Scholar in African Christianity, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota.

NEW from the American Society of Missiology Monograph Series

God’s Mission in Asia

A Comparative and Contextual Study of This-Worldly Holiness and the Theology of Missio Dei in M. M. Thomas and C. S. Song

by Ken Christoph Miyamoto


Ken Christoph Miyamoto describes the development of “this-worldly” holiness in Asian ecumenism and seeks to understand how M. M. Thomas of India and C. S. Song of Taiwan view the relationship between God and the world. Miyamoto highlights the shared idea of God’s presence despite differing theological formulations. He concludes that immanence became central to Asian ecumenism because it offered to Christians who come from a region of tremendous diversity a unifying vision—a God who both transcends diversity and takes it seriously.

Ken Christoph Miyamoto is assistant professor of Christian studies at Kobe Shoin Women’s University in Kobe, Japan.

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October 2007
Evangelism After Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness.


This book offers a serious theological treatment of evangelism, questioning liberal and conservative assumptions from a deeply biblical perspective. Bryan Stone, the E. Stanley Jones Professor of Evangelism at the Boston University School of Theology, has issued a profound challenge to the contemporary church. Drawing heavily on the thought of John Howard Yoder, he asks what evangelism would look like for a church that has “disavowed Constantinianism.” His thesis is that “the most evangelistic thing the church can do today is to be the church—to be formed imaginatively by the Holy Spirit through core practices such as worship, forgiveness, hospitality, and economic sharing into a distinctive people in the world, a new social option, the body of Christ” (p. 15).

Stone is highly critical of the way evangelicals have conformed to liberal capitalist society in viewing evangelism as a results-oriented form of production, and he criticizes liberals for allowing Christianity to be marginalized as something “private.” Stone argues instead that, as the “embodied witness to the subsersive values of God’s reign,” the church follows Jesus in the way of the cross. Stone quotes Yoder’s dictum that “the relationship between the obedience of God’s people and the triumph of God’s cause is not a relationship of cause and effect but one of cross and resurrection” (p. 315), and he applies this insight to a host of issues, including church growth, preaching, and social action.

Stone offers an attractive vision of the church as a public minority within late modern, liberal, individualist culture that offers life in the triune God as an alternative to the secular lifestyle embraced by millions of people in the post-Christian West. This is a serious book and required reading for those who are struggling to understand what is wrong with the Western church today and what renewal might look like.

—Craig A. Carter

Craig A. Carter, Professor of Religious Studies, Tyn- dale University College and Seminary, Toronto, is the author of Rethinking Christ and Culture: A Post-Christendom Perspective (Baker, Brazos, 2007).

They Were in Nanjing: The Nanjing Massacre Witnessed by American and British Nationals.


The accounts of Japanese atrocities committed in Nanjing between December 1937 and March 1938 presented in this volume have been drawn from reports of the foreign press and the business, military, diplomatic, and missionary personnel who remained in the beleaguered city after its fall. The litany of horrors recorded from different vantage points still causes outrage, even as the constant repetition numbs the mind. Nevertheless, given the controversy that continues to swirl around the Nanjing massacre, the appearance of this volume is extremely valuable.

Almost half the volume is devoted to material drawn from the diaries or letters of American missionaries resident in the city. Each missionary is given separate treatment: a brief biographical sketch, followed by summaries of their experiences and testimony, often quoted at length, with a summation of their postwar years. While mission properties flew the American flag and carried notices from the Japanese Embassy warning soldiers against entering, this did not prevent repeated incursions for looting, rape, and rounding up of Chinese for later execution. None of the missionaries was prepared for the savagery of the troops, and most, like YMCA secretary George Fitch, expressed “amazement at the lack of discipline in the Japanese army” (p. 89).

The only female voice included is that of Wilhelmina (Minnie) Vautrin of Jinling Women’s College. Although she managed to turn the campus into a refuge for women and children and saved scores, she could not prevent the raids by the soldiers, and she personally witnessed many rapes in the dorm rooms. All the male missionaries went on to have productive lives after the war, but Vautrin never recovered from the trauma. She returned to the United States for treatment in 1940 following a breakdown, and she committed suicide in May 1941. In her note she expressed feelings of personal failure and the injury that failure had given to the cause of missions. No male missionary expressed such a sentiment. This striking gendered difference in response to trauma is one of many examples of the sorts of issues raised by these accounts. The material provided in this volume will be of singular importance in advancing our understanding of this and other similar evils that challenge our humanity.

—Margo S. Gewurtz

Margo S. Gewurtz is Professor of Humanities at York University, Toronto. A Canadian, she has published numerous essays on Canadian missionaries in China and their Chinese co-workers.


This last volume in the new gold standard for general histories of Christianity is probably as successful as a multiauthored work can be in accounting for a stunningly diverse world movement during its period of greatest differentiation. The lion’s share of the credit must go to editor Hugh McLeod, who not only coordinated the work of thirty-six authors from twelve countries but himself authored five synthetic chapters that lend an unusual measure of coherence to a work of this type. His bookend summaries on “being a Christian” at the beginning and end of the century wisely recall the weight of “Christendom” around 1900 and suggest that in 2000 “the biggest question mark hung over the present position and future prospects of Christianity in China” (p. 646).

The volume’s first part treats five “institutions and movements” (the papacy, ecumenism, colonialism and missions, Pentecostalism, and independency) that, along with warfare and economic globalization, make up the thematic skeleton for the whole. Predictably, the freshest material appears on the Pentecostals (from Allan Anderson) and independent churches in Africa and Asia (Anderson with Edmond Tang).

Part 2, “Narratives of Change,” is the longest and best part of the book,
though its eighteen chronological- and geographical-specific surveys are occa-
sionally marred by authors’ ideological fixations. Overwhelmingly, however, 
are superb in digesting research, periodizing significant developments, 
and providing instructive detail. Seven chapters treat Western Europe and the 
United States, three each Africa and Asia, two Latin America, one Eastern Europe, 
one Australia and the Pacific, and one racial issues in South Africa and the 
United States. Although the European and American chapters are sometimes very 
good, it is again not surprising that the non-Western chapters will likely have the 
greatest impact in revising course outlines and prompting new reading. Of several 
superb contributions, David Maxwell’s on postcolonial Africa is the crème de la crème. 
His masterful insights into the histories of Catholics, Protestants, Independents, and 
neo-Pentecostals are matched by expert contextualizing in the complex political, 
economic, and international dynamics of the postcolonial era.

Part 3, “Social and Cultural Impact,” contains much useful material on gender, 
the arts and architecture, relations with other religious groups, and other cultural 
subjects. But because most of these chapters are dominated by Western concerns, it is 
the weakest part of the book. The section on literature, for example, does not mention 
South Africa’s Alan Paton; there is almost no attention to the explosion of indigenous 
Christian music in Africa and Asia; and Latin America drops out of the picture 
almost entirely. McLeod’s own treatment of “role models” reaches further toward 
the whole world and in so doing shows how necessary, but also how difficult, it 
have to write a genuinely universal account of recent Christian history.

Mark A. Noll is Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History in the Department of History at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.


There is no end in sight to academic discussions of the validity (if valid at all) 
and meaning of “Hinduism.” Christian academics confused by the seeming 
cacophony emanating from Indological studies now have at hand a brilliant 
introduction to the debate based on the history of British Protestant missionary 
discussions of Hinduism.

Noted mission historian Geoffrey Oddie (Honorary Research Associate, 
Department of History, University of Sydney, Australia) does not propose a 
solution for this conundrum; rather, he analyzes one particular aspect of the 
root of the problem. Precursors to the British Protestant missionary analysts of 
Hinduism are introduced and discussed in some depth; these are European travelers, 
Roman Catholic missionaries (de Nobili, Dupin, etc.), South Indian Protestant 
missionaries (Ziegenbalg in particular), British Protestant friends of missions 
(Charles Grant, Claudius Buchanan, and Bishop Heber), and the Orientalists.

By the time William Carey and William Ward began wrestling with Hindu realities, 
a consensus of opinion had developed: “the Orientalists thought of Hinduism as an 
all-India unified phenomenon, based on Sanskrit and still controlled, policed and 
enned by brahmans” (p. 100). Oddie

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D.N. PREMNATH, EDITOR

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A World of Books that Matter 213
sought information on the training in Britain of nineteenth-century missionaries; most noteworthy was a focus on language, which led to dependence after arrival in India on (usually) Brahman informants (language teachers), who encouraged the self-aggrandizing view of Brahmanic influence on Hinduism.

One of Oddie’s central insights is how missionary students of Hinduism were in a unique position, forerunners of later anthropologists, as many of them faced, described, and analyzed the practical religion of the people of India. But the textual orientation of scholars impacted them as well, and Oddie sees Carey as one who moved away from the “experiential” to the “textual” approach, clearly a move in the wrong direction. William Ward’s massive and influential volumes were even worse: “Ward picked up and promoted the idea of Hinduism. Indian ‘paganism,’ ‘the Hindu religion’ or ‘Hindu superstition’ was now, quite simply, ‘Hindoosim.’” Furthermore, for Ward especially, ‘Hindoosim’ was a word for ‘the Hindu other,’ for everything that was evil and different from Christianity. Indeed, in helping to popularize the term he helped develop a very valuable and effective weapon in the arsenal of Christian propaganda. As a result of its increasing usage, English-speaking commentators were tempted more strongly into stereotyping, oversimplification and misunderstanding” (p. 179). This “dominant paradigm” of Hinduism was guarded by Alexander Duff and many others.

Evidences were at hand that Ward had really described Bengali realities and even then was very selective in the midst of massive diversity. Yet a bias toward the dominant paradigm long triumphed over empirical evidences against this unified Brahmanic system.

But reality impinged on the “imagined Hinduism” of the early nineteenth century. Despite the longevity of the dominant paradigm (particularly in popular motivational missionary literature, which is also analyzed), many missionaries moved away from the idea of a monolithic, Brahman-dominated Hinduism. Oddie’s survey and analysis of this shift is full of insight, and his conclusions need to impact missionary thinking about the meaning of Hinduism today. This is an essential book for every library of mission studies.

—H. L. Richard

H. L. Richard is an independent scholar focused on issues in South Asian religion and culture. He is one of the founders of the Rethinking Forum.

**The Maya and Catholicism: An Encounter of Worldviews.**


This book examines the relationship between Catholicism and the religious beliefs and practices of many Mayan communities in Guatemala and southern Mexico. The author explores how and why Mayan folk religion incorporates many elements of Roman Catholic ritual and practice—baptism, the intercession of the saints, and the celebration of mass by a priest not of their culture—into their own religious system, in which belief in the saving role of Jesus Christ is hardly fundamental.

John Early’s basic hypothesis is that this phenomenon can be understood at least in part by a comparison of the basic worldview of the Mayas and that of the Spanish missionaries, mostly of the Dominican and Franciscan orders, who were sent to Christianize them from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries (from the late 1700s secular diocesan priests offered sporadic ministry to these communities). These missionary efforts could better be described as Christianization rather than evangelization, for their basic objective was the incorporation of these peoples into a monocultural Christendom and their submission to Spanish civil and ecclesiastical authorities. The author documents in detail how deficiencies in language learning and in regular pastoral contact with the indigenous communities allowed the Mayas themselves to reinterpret certain elements of Catholic belief and ritual and to incorporate them into their own preexisting worldview. This book is a contribution to understanding the phenomenon called syncretism.

John D. Early is professor emeritus of anthropology at Florida Atlantic University. He obviously knows the Mayan regions of southern Mexico and Guatemala quite well, having combined social science research with pastoral service as a Catholic priest in that area since the late 1960s. At times he draws upon his former ministerial and theological background to explain to readers certain features of both official and folk Catholicism.

—John F. Gorski, M.M.

John F. Gorski, M.M., a contributing editor, has served as a missionary in Bolivia since 1963. Since 2005 he has served half-time as Missiological Consultant to the National Office of the Pontifical Mission Societies (U.S.A.) in New York.


Researchers of American religion have been keenly aware of various influences and complications sparked by Christian revivals and revivalism in North America. A much-needed reference work from Greenwood Press demonstrates how these revivals, and the components that helped shape them, have been significant threads woven into the religious and cultural fabric of U.S. and Canadian history.

Michael McClymond, the Clarence Louis and Helen Irene Steber associate professor in the department of theological studies at Saint Louis University, has compiled a two-volume collection of articles and primary documents on the history of revivals and revivalism in the United States and Canada. McClymond’s interesting and useful reference tool highlights the work of an impressive group of authors, including a review board of well-respected scholars of religion in the United States.

The editor of the *Encyclopedia of Religious Revivals in America* states that this new publication “is the first academic reference work devoted explicitly and wholly to the topic of religious revival in the context of the United States and Canada” (p. xv). With few exceptions, the editor and his team of contributors
clearly succeed in navigating the changing currents of revivals and revivalism in the American past.

Volume 1 contains over 200 short essays organized into five broad categories: persons, events, religious affiliation, phenomena, and themes. Volume 2 includes a broad range of original source documents and a helpful introductory piece to assist with situating the accounts in their contexts. These documents range from a sixteenth-century account of a Roman Catholic Christian in the American Southwest to a report by a nineteenth-century Moravian Christian worker in Canada to the more recent revivals during the late 1990s in Pensacola, Florida.

Two extensive bibliographies, one on revivals and revivalism in the United States and Canada, the second on global Christian revivals, demonstrate the abundant material available to researchers and general readers. Compiled by McClymond and Michael A. Farley, these reference lists include nearly 5,500 books, articles, and theses from New England to New Mexico and from India to the Philippines. The final section of volume 2 includes a guide to various collections of archival material available throughout the United States and Canada. Organized by Wayne Sparkman, director of the Historical Center of the Presbyterian Church in America, the list maps the locations of materials related to topics including black Christianity, Pentecostalism, and the Salvation Army.

While McClymond and his writers very successfully treat the history of revivals and revivalism, one could hope to find more information on Canadian Christianity. The first volume is filled with interesting persons and movements from the United States, with only light attention to Canada, and fewer than ten of the more than one hundred primary documents in volume 2 provide commentary on revivals and revivalism in Canada.

This concern aside, the volumes provide readers with a fuller picture of the individuals, movements, and themes in American revivalism. The primary documents with contextual introductions speak for the participant and observer from history. Students in undergraduate and graduate work will benefit from using the material McClymond has assembled. The bibliography will also help foster new research projects and introduce readers to forgotten, though historically important, participants in the religious landscape of the United States and Canada.

—Christopher J. Anderson

Christopher J. Anderson is Methodist Librarian at Drew University, Madison, New Jersey. He has published articles on American religious history and is author of Voices from the Protestant Fair: Race, Gender, and Nation at the Methodist Missionary Exposition (Scarecrow Press, forthcoming).

Christian Heretics in Late Imperial China: Christian Inculturation and State Control, 1720–1850.


For the most part, historians of Chinese Christianity have neglected the social history of early Chinese Christianity outside of the elite, and little is known about the experience of ordinary Chinese Christians during the prohibition of Christianity between 1724 and 1844. Lars Laamann, from the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, examines Chinese Catholics in that period, drawing from Qing government documents in the imperial archives.

Christian Heretics in Late Imperial China: Christian Inculturation and State Control, 1720–1850.
Laamann persuasively argues that most Chinese Christians incorporated their religion into commonly accepted religious, social, and cultural traditions and that, for the most part, they maintained their faith in the absence of European missionaries. (Laamann notes similarities with Japan’s “hidden Christians” of the Edo period.) Christianity in effect became a Chinese popular religion, perpetuated in part by the Christians’ adherence to a filial obligation to follow their parents’ faith. The Qing state regarded Christianity, like many indigenous forms of popular religion, as subversive. It regarded Christians as heretics: “as the mysterious unknown, as a menace to internal peace and, finally, as collaborators with external intruders” (p. 4). For most of this period, however, Qing authorities did not regard the European provenance of the religion as being particularly significant.

Laamann’s discussion of “peasant millenarianism” and “Christian theology” provides a nuanced description of the ways Christianity and Chinese popular religions complemented each other and of the tensions that existed between them. His work is a significant contribution to the history of Christianity in China.

—Robert Entenmann

Robert Entenmann is Professor of History and Asian Studies at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. His research examines Chinese Catholics in eighteenth-century Sichuan.

Woman’s Identity and the Qur’an: A New Reading.


In this book, Nimat Hafez Barazangi, a research fellow at Cornell University, draws resources from the Qur’an advocating for social change, gender equality, and justice. She contends that Muslim women, rather than depending on male patriarchal interpretations, should identify with the Qur’an and thus achieve self-identity for the first time in Muslim history. In order to model this approach, Barazangi conducts an innovative exploration of Qur’anic texts on gender. As a linguist and an educator, with expertise in participatory action of women in Muslim societies, she presents a theory and method of self-learning of Islam, empowering Muslim women to read and interpret the Qur’an. She also presents a curricular framework for enhancing education within a Muslim context.

This book is primarily written for a Muslim audience. Barazangi, born in Syria, is a Muslim herself, and she uses the Qur’an as the main source and framework for her discussion. She also addresses non-Muslims and on a few occasions Christian missionaries. Not all interpreters of the Qur’an will agree with Barazangi’s views. She does not approach texts in conventional Muslim or traditional feminist ways. Some passages of the book may be challenging for readers unfamiliar with terminology from the field of Islamic studies. Those already reflecting on Islam will benefit from this book, however, because as the author argues, Muslim
women are often studied without being consulted. Numerous passages, such as the story of Adam and Eve in the Qur’an, or the discussion on morality or modesty, will remind Christians of their own internal debates on women in church history.

This book is helpful for readers who want to broaden their understanding of Islam, with a focus on women, the Qur’an, and education. Barazangi does not provide the whole spectrum of perspectives on women’s issues in contemporary Islam, but she joins the growing list of female Muslim authors wrestling with the issue of gender, faith, and education, and she provides a unique perspective on the identity of the Muslim woman as an autonomous being.

—Evelyne Reisacher

Evelyne Reisacher is Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies and Intercultural Relations at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California.

Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg, the Father of Modern Protestant Mission: An Indian Assessment.


A German Exploration of Indian Society: Ziegenbalg’s “Malabarian Heathenism”; An Annotated English Translation, with an Introduction and a Glossary.


One of the most important missiological by-products of the fall of the Berlin Wall is the sustained campaign to research the eighteenth-century Francke Foundation in Halle and its mission on the Tamil coast of India. This research might have been restricted to work in German and in Tamil. But Daniel Jeyaraj deserves every plaudit for his long efforts to communicate his passion for Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg in English, of which these two volumes are a partial result.

Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg, the Father of Modern Protestant Mission is Jeyaraj’s own biography of Ziegenbalg, A German Exploration of Indian Society is his translation of a key Ziegenbalg text on the cultural and religious environment that Ziegenbalg found on the Tamil coast. This review concentrates on the latter because this reader — while coming to fully accept Jeyaraj’s argument that the key foundation date in the development of modern Protestant missions was 1706 (Ziegenbalg’s arrival in South India) rather than 1792 (the year William Carey’s Baptist Missionary Society was founded) — was most astonished at the many-sided effort Ziegenbalg expended in mastering the Tamil language, and even more so at the differentiated view of early eighteenth-century Hinduism that he offers us. In particular, along with his presentation of more familiar Hindu traditions, he stresses the existence of a rationalist critique of the many gods and of the superstitious nature of much Tamil piety. The Jnanins were monotheistic puritans in belief and practice. Far from arguing that this phenomenon was marginal to what we now call Hinduism, Ziegenbalg is at pains to establish Jnanin attitudes toward many of the topics dealt with in his long work on Tamil society and culture, citing repeatedly from the main Jnanin text at his disposal and explicitly and implicitly offering us a picture of a Hinduism with one wing highly critical of orthodox
Brahmanic traditions and surprisingly close to Christian and Pietist theology and practice.

One result of the breadth of Ziegenbalg’s perception of religion and culture in his Tamil environment is that A German Exploration has an element almost of the schizophrenic, or at least of the unresolved. Yes, Ziegenbalg proclaims the Lutheran orthodoxy well enough and can even write about the “detestable spiritual ignorance” around him. But he also frequently expresses a very high opinion of the results Tamil philosophy has reached through natural intelligence, if for a moment the revealed truth of Christianity can be set on one side. He is enthusiastic about Tamil rhetoric and compares it very favorably to the dusty formality practiced by people speaking ex cathedra at home.

One should not underestimate the way Jeyaraj’s own living involvement flows not just through the book he has authored, but also in the one he has translated. The quality of his engagement becomes obvious in one central and tricky problem of translation. “Malabarian Heathenism” is the literal translation of Ziegenbalg’s original title, Malabarischs Heidenthum. A modern missionary society would not let this “h”-word pass its lips, of course—too great is the damage this expression has already caused, and too wide the gulf it creates precisely where we need to learn to build bridges. Jeyaraj evidently shares this inhibition and in the text allows himself to translate Ziegenbalg’s attitude in order to promote communication rather than destroy it. So for the various forms of the root Heide he uses the neutral term “society.” (We had the same problem in making English translations of picture captions for the Basel Mission archive photo database [www.bmpix.org] and came to the same kind of conclusion. We translated Heide as “non-Christian.”) So Jeyaraj’s heart beats not only for the missionary as such but also for Ziegenbalg’s efforts through the employment of copyists and teachers and through his Tamil correspondence with local and regional intellectuals to develop an open dialogic approach to people practicing other religions. Indeed, through reading these books I came to the conviction that Ziegenbalg should also count as the father of the distinctive Indian genre of “I-said-to-him-and-he-said-to-me” missionary texts, which I first came across in nineteenth-century Basel Mission reporting.

My main (mild) disappointment with the books under review is that Jeyaraj does not follow Ziegenbalg closely enough into the world of Tamil Hinduism or make as much use of his own scholarship on the history of Hinduism in Tamil Nadu as he might. He has conducted important work establishing what eighteenth-century Tamil manuscripts are held in the archives in Halle and Copenhagen. But he could have gone much further in explaining how Ziegenbalg’s picture of Hinduism stands up in the context of modern scholarship on the Tamil world, and in making explanatory comments on specific Ziegenbalg observations. Outsiders and non-specialists will therefore have difficulty answering the two main open questions this Ziegenbalg text
poses: How far can missionary sources contribute something distinctive to the regional history of Hinduism? And how far were nineteenth-century missionaries, with their constructed colonial dichotomy, themselves making an awful mistake by failing to pay prime attention to groups like the Jnânis and, by stealing their thunder in the name of Christian authority, perhaps weakening them decisively?

—Paul Jenkins

Paul Jenkins was, for many years, archivist of the Basel Mission/Mission 21 and is now, in retirement, pursuing a project to promote knowledge of that archive in Karnataka and Kerala.

Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World. 3d ed.


R. S. Sugirtharajah revises and expands the first and second editions of Voices from the Margin. Notable additions are Sugirtharajah’s perceptive “state-of-research” on “Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation” (pt. 1, chap. 5) and part 4, “Postcolonial Readings.” “If liberation theology was the product of modernity, postcolonialism is the product of post-modernity” (p. 5). Postcolonial biblical criticism disturbs mission, for it “strives to go beyond the propagandistic tone and aims to locate biblical scholarship in a non-missionary and less apologetic tone” (p. 79). Dube’s essay illustrates this theme.

This edition has six parts, with thirty-five essays; nineteen are new. Part 1, “Reading Strategies,” sets the stage with Tamez’s “The Bible and the Five Hundred Years of Conquest.” Weems (African American), Bonino (Argentine), and Ukpong (Nigeria) add strong contributions. Part 2, “Subaltern Readings,” retains two excellent earlier articles: “Minjung in Mark’s Gospel” (Byung-Mu) and “Anti-Greed and Anti-Pride” (Soares-Prabhuj). Others develop the topic significantly: Raja (India), “... the Madurai Veeran Legend and Mark’s Story of Jesus,” focusing on the caste oppression of the Dalits; Kayama (Japan); Reimer (Brazil); Barton (India/U.K.), “The Cornelius Story in the Japanese Cultural Context”; Murrell (Grenada, West Indies/U.S.), on Rastafarian interpretation; and Nadar (South Africa), “‘Barak God and Die!’ Women, HIV, and a Theology of Suffering.” Part 3, “Many Readings: Exodus,” includes a Pixley/Boff article “Option for the Poor” and “An Asian Feminist Perspective” (skit on Exod. 1:8–2:10 produced by eight women in a Human Liberation Workshop in Bombay, 1988). In addition, articles by Ateek (Israel) and Warrior (United States) highlight the ambiguous contribution of Exodus theology. (What happens to the Canaanites and Native Americans when Exodus theology legitimates conquest?) Twonew essays—by Fernandez (Philippines), “Exodus-Toward-Egypt: FilipinoAmericans’ Struggle to Realize the Promised Land in America,” and Kirk-Duggan (African American), reflecting on African American narratives in the American freedom struggle—show further limitations of Exodus theology.

In part 4 (on postcolonial interpretation) Lee compares postsecular Judaism with Hong Kong, valuing hybridity, with various peoples forged into a new community, requiring inclusivity that embraces plurality. Dube’s article, troubling for mission theology, subverts the mission-
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PART 11, “Popular Readings,” exemplifies readings in six cultures: Mesters (Brazil), Kalilombe (Malawi), Nicaragua and Indonesian skits “The Alabaster Bottle” and “The Miraculous Catch of Fish,” and new essays on black womanhood theology (Plaatjie, South Africa) and the emergence of the Akurinu African Instituted Church’s new “Ten Commandments,” repudiating Western missionary instruction (Ndung’u, Kenya).

The collection excels in jolting white Western expositors of Scripture to think anew, even about cherished First World gains in liberation and feminist theologies. Every article, ten by women (the group skits involve many more women), merits careful reflection. Sugirtharajah’s five “Marginal Matters” (pp. 3–4) stimulates. The quotation from Christopher Rowland introducing part 6 (p. 429) needs further documentation; it is from Martyrs Mirror by Thielemann J. van Bragt, 5th ed. (Scranton, Pa.: Herald Press, 1950), p. 775.

—Willard M. Swartley


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