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Occasional Bulletin

Perspectives on Christian Mission

The missionary mandate of the Church can be viewed from various and often quite divergent perspectives—ways of looking at certain aspects in relation to the whole. Perspectives are invariably conditioned by cultural and historical circumstances. They are, by definition, partial and incomplete; yet it is just such insights that have frequently helped to chart the way toward more relevant and holistic mission.

Among the missionary statesmen in the first third of this century, none had more profound and far-reaching influence than Robert Elliott Speer. Speer's perspective on the unfinished missionary task made him not only a giant among the missiologists of his own day, but a prophet for future generations. In this issue of the *Occasional Bulletin*, H. McKennie Goodpasture reflects on the legacy of Speer—interpreter, historian, ecumenical pioneer, steadfast evangelical who saw above and beyond the fundamentalist-modernist controversy raging in the very circles to which he belonged.

Menno Wiebe represents a denomination in the vanguard of mission to Native Americans. He pleads for wisdom to see ourselves through the eyes of those we seek to serve, and for caution against the folly of plucking converts out of their social context and thereby contributing to the divisiveness already present among them. "A real problem for the Church," says Wiebe, "is whether it should address itself to categorized and specialized expressions of religion, or whether it should seek to understand the total range of human experience, allowing religion to penetrate all its dimensions." In brief, he advocates "an Indian version of Christianity for Indian peoples," something neither his nor other mission agencies have yet succeeded in cultivating.

In the article by Donald E. MacInnis we are confronted with the critical perspective that Chinese communists have on the nineteenth-century Christian mission in their country. China was for many years the pride of the missionary enterprise, endowed with more missionary personnel and larger expenditure of funds than any other segment of the "foreign field." MacInnis examines Chinese texts in the "History of Modern China Series," prepared by members of the history departments of two Shanghai universities (published between 1972 and 1974), and probably the major reference work on that subject for most Chinese students today.

Norman A. Horner describes the current situation of Christianity in the Gulf States of the Arabian peninsula, a stronghold of conservative Islam. The Christians throughout that area now are almost entirely expatriates. Their social and religious context is therefore quite different from that of the indigenous Christian communities living there in early centuries, but Horner argues that their impact on the daily life of the region is by no means inconsequential: "The undramatic, low-key Christian witness of an expanding foreign population has a significance that missiologists should not overlook."

Announcing

The Overseas Ministries Study Center, publishers of the *Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research*, announces a major consultation, May 2-5, 1978, on "Liberation, Development, and Evangelism in Mission: Must We Choose?" Details are given elsewhere in this issue, and readers are asked to remember the occasion in their prayers of intercession, that it may be used to illuminate and empower the unfinished task of Christian mission with understanding and effectiveness.

On Page

# of Missionary Research

Robert E. Speer's Legacy

H. McKennie Goodpasture

The missionary movement has been deeply indebted to many of its lay leaders over the years. One of them was Robert Elliott Speer (1867-1947), evangelist, mission theorist, administrator, spokesman, and historian in the first half of this century.[1] Luther Weigle, former dean of Yale Divinity School, wrote "Let no one think . . . that Robert E. Speer was simply a great missionary leader of the generation that is past; he was a prophet for the present day and for those that are to come."[2] John A. Mackay, president of Princeton Seminary for many years, former missionary in South America and a close associate of Speer, referred to him as "one of the greatest figures in American Christianity. Judged by any standard intellectual or spiritual, Dr. Speer was incomparably the greatest man I have ever known."[3] Many of our elders remember hearing Speer speak. They often refer to his "majestic presence" on the platform and to the unusual spiritual power in his addresses.

An outline of Speer's life is easy to make. He was a Pennsylvanian and was educated at Phillips Academy in Massachusetts and at Princeton University. After graduation, he spent a year itinerating for the Student Volunteer Movement and then studied a year at Princeton Seminary. Without finishing seminary and without ordination he accepted in 1891 a position on the staff of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions in New York and stayed there until retirement in 1937. In 1893 he married Emma Doll Bailey, who had a Quaker background and was also a Pennsylvanian. She was a graduate of Bryn Mawr and came to be a prominent leader in the church. For many years she was president of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association. She accompanied her husband on many of his travels, and her intellectual and spiritual companionship deepened his thought. Among other things, her interests encouraged him to be an early advocate of women's rights. Speer's books, lectureships, travels, memberships on boards of trustees, chairman and moderatorships, and presidencies were all taken on while he was secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions. He died in 1947 after an active retirement. During his life, he wrote sixty-seven books and numerous articles; many of the books were collections of his addresses. They read well today, and their publication gives evidence of his care in preparing them. As I studied these, I found that his volume entitled *The Unfinished Task in Foreign Missions*, a series of lectures delivered at Union Seminary in Virginia in 1926, gives a convenient introduction to his thought as a whole.[4] Moreover, it provides us insight into his legacy to missiologists and mission studies. It can be examined under four headings.

Interpreter of the Purpose of "Foreign Missions"

Speer was, perhaps first of all, an interpreter of the purpose of foreign missions. In a period of exuberant expansionism of Western powers in which the missionary movement was a participant, this mission board secretary emphasized the proclamation of the gospel above all else. As we read what Speer wrote in the 1890s and early 1900s, we see that he was to some extent a child of his age and culture. He shared the optimism over Western democracy and progress; he attributed much of it to its Christian heritage.[5] He was at the same time critical of much in American life. He knew there was paganism and immorality here and he pointed it out. However, relative to what seemed to be grim, retarded conditions in places like Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines, or Shanghai, Speer considered the intervention of American power to be liberating and civilizing. He was influenced by the times in which he lived but not captive to them, because he was committed to one whose claims took priority over all others. That one was "the man Christ Jesus."[6] The purpose of foreign missions, he said, speaking in 1900, had to do with "implanting the life of Christ in the hearts of men. . . . " In a time of uncritical optimism about the benefits of Western civilization he made his position clear. The aim of missions was not "the total reorganization of the whole social fabric. I had rather plant one seed of the life of Christ under the crust of heathen life than cover that whole crust over with the veneer of our social habits, or the vesture of Western civilization."[7]

> *"Speer was, perhaps first of all, an interpreter of the purpose of foreign missions."*

How did proclamation relate to social justice? This leads to a second observation. Speer interwove evangelism with his concern for social uplift and all along insisted that faith was primary. In 1902 he wrote, "It is impossible that any human tyranny should live where Jesus Christ is King."[8] From our perspective, many wars and injustices later, that sounds naïve, but in a time when Western culture was accepted as king, his calling attention to the ultimate King was crucial. In 1919 he wrote:

> The Board I serve has 1,721 schools and colleges and 191 hospitals and dispensaries. It has asylums for orphans, lepers and the insane, schools for the blind and the deaf and dumb, printing presses, homes for tuberculosis patients; and men and women are needed for these and truly serve Christ in these; and rightly conducted these are not only agencies of evangelization, they are evangelization.[9]

Yet Speer went on to make the point that in spite of all these services he was convinced that the gospel was central, and the direct, unencumbered approach of the apostle Paul inviting listeners to faith was still primary.

In his lectures in Richmond in 1926, he raised the question about the way in which the Kingdom of God was to be made visible. It shall come, he said,

> By many forces wielded by the purpose of God, —good government and honorable trade and true education, care for human health, the production and conservation and just distribution of wealth, man's fuller knowledge of himself and of his brothers and of the world. The mission enterprise does not speak slightingly of these or of any of the unnumbered ways in which God is advancing His purpose of righteousness and unity upon the earth. But it believes that it is doing His work in the most central and fundamental way of all. "How do you

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plan to help Persia?" we asked a young Christian man in Tabriz. In his own English he replied, "By preaching Christ in the crucified style." That is the one supreme business of missions, "Preaching Christ in the crucified style,—Crucified and Risen;" . . . [10]

One of Speer's legacies was this firm union of the practical demonstration of God's love with the proclamation of the gospel, giving priority to the latter.

Historian of Mission

While Speer was an interpreter of the purpose of mission, he was also one of its historians. His books and articles in this area drew on various sources. For example, he had the interesting lifetime habit of reading, on the average, two books a week. He read large amounts in the areas of history, biography, world religions, and political science, with special interest in Asia and Latin America. He was a frequent traveler in those areas and always combined the trips with consultations and board meetings. His reading knowledge was supplemented and corrected by those encounters and by the study documents that inevitably preceded them. Turning to his writings, we find a series of essays on nineteenth-century subjects such as the Taiping and Boxer rebellions in China, the midcentury mutiny in India, the transformation of Japan in the Meiji era, and the emancipation of the Latin American republics in the 1820s. In later books he returns to these geographical areas for twentieth-century subjects. Interspersed were biographies and a history of Presbyterian missions.

Reading over these, one finds that Speer was a historian with a double purpose. He wished to describe a particular area and period in such a way as to reveal the resources and needs of the people about whom he was writing. And second, he wished to show the healing effect of Christian witness and the continued challenge before it. One of his lectures in Richmond in 1926 illustrates his approach. He called it "The Present Situation in South America."[11] He was not a beginner in this field; he had written extensively on it in 1909 and 1912.[12] In 1913 he was an organizer of the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America, which continues today as an area unit in the National Council of Churches (NCCC/USA). He chaired that committee for many years and saw it through two landmark congresses, one in Panama in 1916 and the other in Montevideo in 1925. He was an editor of the two-volume report which emerged from the second of these.[13]

"Speer interwove evangelism with his concern for social uplift and all along insisted that faith was primary."

His Richmond lecture on South America was based on this accumulation of study. The intellectual climate across the southern republics was changing, he said. In earlier decades Latin prophets had spoken of theirs as a "sick continent" with an impoverished inner life, but in 1925 there was new hope for a cultural and moral renaissance. The evidence for this was in the new concern for public education and public health, for the rights of women, and for the right of labor to organize.[14] He documented each of these and then turned to inter-American relations, which he saw deteriorating. He quoted Julius Klein, who at the time was director of the United States Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce:

> Our total trade with Latin America, exports and imports, has increased two and a half times in the last ten years, rising from a pre-war average of about $730,000,000 to $1,800,000,000 in 1924. . . . American capital has a dominant position in such basic industries as mining on the West Coast and in Mexico, meat packing in the River Plate region, petroleum in Mexico, Colombia and Peru, and sugar and tobacco in Cuba. Significant advances are also probable along certain lines in Brazil.[15]

These facts, Speer told his audience, had led to a widespread fear among Latin Americans, a fear, he said, of what Manuel Ugarte called "the imperialistic tendencies of the United States," and which an Argentine scholar called "the egotistic motive . . . that guides the United States . . . [that is] the conquest of our markets."[16] This growing alienation of the continents disturbed Robert E. Speer. A basic part of the answer, he said, was spiritual. He informed the Richmond seminary community of this history with a view toward their helping to restrain North American acquisitiveness. As for the Latin Americans, who suffered injustices both from without and from within and who historically had lacked an effective social conscience, the problem lay in the inadequate Christology inherited from Spain and Portugal. The image of Christ that was deeply embedded in the culture was anemic and docetic. For Speer the answer to the problem lay not in proselytism by Protestants but in irenic, persistent evangelical wit-

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ness. A "prophetic spirit" and an "adequate embodiment" of it are, he said, the best contribution Protestants could make to the Latin American peoples, to their traditional church, and to inter-American relations.[17]

Though in this lecture Speer dealt with a more contemporary situation, it is typical of his historical essays. He synthesized and popularized from good secondary sources. He wrote history with the purpose of revealing needs and pointing out the resources which were available in the Christian faith and community and challenged people to lay hold of them. His work as a historian provides a substantial legacy from which we still benefit today.

Ecumenical Pioneer

Robert E. Speer was an interpreter and historian of mission. He was also an ecumenical pioneer. Several illustrations of this dimension of his work have already been mentioned. We can add his presidency of the Federal Council of Churches in 1920 and his responsibilities in the International Missionary Council, a parent body of the World Council of Churches. The point is that Speer was committed to unity in Christian witness and service. In several ways he implemented his commitment in the "mission fields." First, he worked for the emergence of genuine national churches. The aim, he said, was "to plant and set in the way to autonomy and self-maintenance the Christian Church in nations where it did not exist."[18] Second, he worked for church union. He put it this way in 1910:

> The churches, which it is the aim of foreign missions to found . . . ought . . . to be united churches. They are not a set of imported denominations or western churches orientalized. For we are not trying to spread over the world any particular view of Christian truth or any particular form of Christian organization. I belong to the Presbyterian Church, but I have not the slightest zeal in seeking to have the Presbyterian Church extended over the non-Christian world. I believe in one church of Christ in each land, and that it is far more important that the Presbyterians of Japan should be related to the Methodists of Japan than that either of these bodies should possess any connection whatever with any ecclesiastical organization in the United States.[19]

The third concern of Speer was to avoid prolonged paternal care of younger churches. "The aim of the foreign missionary is like the doctor's—to make himself unnecessary. . . . " Missionaries are "to plant Christianity in each nation . . . foster its growth . . . and then withdraw. . . . They are not the church. They are simply the founders and helpers of it." Speer then went on to make the point that this planting had "not yet been adequately done."[20] Thus the title of his lecture series in 1926: "The Unfinished Task of Foreign Missions." Speer's sharp distinction between mission and church has had to be modified in recent decades, but his fear of paternalism is still valid.

> *"Speer was a consistent champion of the finality of Christ amid the religions of the world."*

It is interesting to note that in the conclusion of his lectures in 1926 he alluded to what our generation has witnessed, the demise of the colonial era, at least its political phase. For the missionary implications of this, Speer quoted K. T. Paul, a church leader in India:

> If the day of the British "Ruler" is done, so is the day of the foreign "Teacher." It is in no spirit of arrogance, but in honest difficulty that India desires its friends from abroad to come in the attitude of fellow-students and fellow-workers.[21]

This issue has, of course, come into full bloom over the past two decades or so. Speer saw it clearly on the horizon. From Speer's legacy we can be sure that he would have welcomed the six-continent approach to mission and the ecumenical exchange of personnel that goes on in our day.

Witness amid the Religions

Another aspect of this Pennsylvania layman's work is of particular interest today. Speer was a consistent champion of the finality of Christ amid the religions of the world. It was a theme he touched repeatedly in his books. Two experiences give us insights into his theological position. The first was the fundamentalist-modernist controversy in the 1920s in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. This is not the place for details, except to say that the contest was fought on three battlegrounds: the Board of Foreign Missions, the General Assembly, and Princeton Seminary.[22]

> *"Speer did more in forming the theological policy of the Presbyterian Church than perhaps any other individual."*

Speer was executive secretary of the one, moderator of the other (1927-28), and on the Board of Directors of the third. The basic issue was whether those institutions would be characterized by "a broad and warm evangelicalism on the one hand" or a "highly rational orthodoxy and extreme literalism on the other." All three opted decisively for the former and broader position. According to a leading historian on the period, it was Robert E. Speer who did "more in forming the theological policy of the Presbyterian Church than perhaps any other individual."[23] His theology gave him convictions and a generosity of spirit which would brook no inquisition within the church.

The second experience grew out of the report which W. E. Hocking and others published in 1932 called *Re-thinking Missions: A Laymen's Inquiry after One Hundred Years.*[24] Speer appreciated many of the recommendations of the report, which aimed at the improvement of educational, medical, and other mission services. In the matter of the interreligious encounter, however, he felt that the report left an uncertain place for the person of Jesus; it implied that Christian truth was not absolute but relative. Speer soundly rejected that part of the report and wrote extensively to make his position clear.[25]

His position in regard to the other religions contained two major thrusts, and the first was more important than the second. The first had to do with the finality and incomparability of Christ and the second with the consequent superiority of Christianity over the other religions. In the first place, he sought to set forth Jesus Christ as absolutely unique and as the full revelation of God.

> It is not enough to say that the central thing in Christianity is Christ. Christ is not only the centre. He is also the beginning and the end. He is all in all. . . . If there were any words that one could use or any mode of approach to this one supreme issue which would more highly exalt Jesus Christ or make more clear and vivid the faith that He is God and the Son of God, not to be classified in any human category, and the One Saviour from sin and the One Answer to all the need of the world, the writer would use those words and pursue that approach.[26]

This was his main theme; he drew his support for it from Scripture

and from an array of witnesses out of church history.

In the second place, he insisted upon the superiority of Christianity. To the Richmond seminarians in 1926 he outlined his consistent position.[27] Christianity is universal; its conception of God is superior. It is "the only religion . . . which clearly diagnoses the disease of humanity . . . and . . . attempts . . . radically to deal with it." Further, Christianity is "historical, progressive and spiritually free." It possesses an ethical uniqueness and "contains all the good and truth . . . found in any other religion, and is free from the evils" which they contain. On the basis of these arguments, he concluded that Christianity was "absolute" and ". . . must displace all that is partial or false. It must conquer the world." Its attitude to other religions is " 'not one of compromise, but one of conflict and conquest. It proposes to displace the other religions.' "[28] In his readable and influential work, *The Finality of Christ* (1933), Speer continually equated the Christian religion, or sometimes the "ideal Christianity," with Jesus Christ. Therefore, the ideas of "conquest" and "displacement" referred to Christ's own conquering and were no problem for him; indeed, he saw them as necessary.[29]

What do we say with regard to this part of Speer's legacy? Many will agree with him. Others will wish to preserve his high Christology, yet modify his view of the religious traditions of others and demur to his stating that Christianity was superior. The latter involves semantics, since by Christianity Speer meant the ideal content of the faith whereas today it is usually used to refer to both the faith and practice of Christians, and neither has been ideal. The issue is important. Speer's missiology tended to be church-centered; many today would wish to hold differently. Perhaps it is the prevenience of the Triune God and his participation in the meeting with people of other faiths that some will miss. However, Speer's straightforward insistence that God abhors and works to overcome that which is evil, destructive, and false, and his clear affirmation that the true and full life God intended for people comes only in Jesus Christ are both legacies that many today will wish in turn to pass on to their heirs.

Robert E. Speer was a towering figure in American and world Christianity in the first half of this century. We have named at least four elements of his large bequest, which missiologists today will recall with gratitude: (1) his clarity about the purpose of mission, (2) his careful exposition of the history and contemporary condition of various people and churches, (3) his resolve to promote ecumenical consultation and action, and (4) amid religious pluralism his unequivocal confession of Jesus Christ as the King of kings and the Lord of lords and therefore the ultimate standard for moral and religious judgments.

Notes

1. Much of the material in this article appeared first in *Affirmation* 1, No. 5 (September 1973), 25-34. This is an occasional publication of Union Theological Seminary in Virginia.
2. Quoted in W. Reginald Wheeler, *A Man Sent from God: A Biography of Robert E. Speer* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1956), p. 270.
3. John A. Mackay, "Robert Elliot Speer," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 60, No. 3 (June 1967), 11, and 41, No. 3 (Winter 1948), 26.
4. New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1926.
5. See R. E. Speer, *Missionary Principles and Practice* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1902), chaps. 12, 36. See also his *Missions and Modern History*, 2 vols. (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1904), I, chaps. 2, 4; II, chap. 10.
6. See R. E. Speer, *Studies of the Man Christ Jesus* (New York: The International Committee of Young Men's Christian Association, 1896), 249 pp.
7. Speer, *Missionary Principles*, pp. 34, 35, 37.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
9. R. E. Speer, *The Gospel and the New World* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1919), p. 164.
10. Speer, *The Unfinished Task of Foreign Missions* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1926), pp. 347-48.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 218-69.
12. R. E. Speer, *Missions in South America* (New York: Board of Foreign Missions, Presbyterian Church in the USA, 1909), 178 pp.; *South American Problems* (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1912), 270 pp.
13. R. E. Speer, Samuel G. Inmann, F. K. Sanders, eds., *Christian Work in South America: Official Report of the Congress on Christian Work in South America, at Montevideo, Uruguay, April, 1925.* 2 vols. (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1925).
14. Speer, *The Unfinished . . .*, pp. 220, 237-38.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 233.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 262-64.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 255, 261-67.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 272. It had long been his aim, cf. R. E. Speer, *Christianity and the Nations* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1910), p. 330.
19. Speer, *Christianity . . .*, p. 331.
20. Speer, *The Unfinished . . .*, pp. 273, 307.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 310.
22. See Lefferts A. Loetscher, *The Broadening Church: A Study of Theological Issues in the Presbyterian Church since 1869* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1954), pp. 90-156.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 105, 147.
24. W. E. Hocking, Chairman, The Commission of Appraisal, *Re-thinking Missions: A Laymen's Inquiry after One Hundred Years* (New York: Harper Bros., 1932), 349 pp.
25. R. E. Speer, *The Finality of Jesus Christ* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1933), 386 pp. See also his "An Appraisal of the Appraisal," *The Missionary Review of the World* 55 (January 1933); 7-27.
26. Speer, *The Finality . . . , p. 5.*
27. For what follows, see Speer, *The Unfinished . . .*, pp. 43-54. Also see his *The Finality . . .*, chap. 5.
28. W. N. Clark, quoted with approval in Speer, *The Unfinished . . .*, p. 54.
29. See *The Finality . . .*, pp. 130, 137, 275-76, 277-78, 287-88, 372-76.

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Indians Talk-Back – Churches Back-Track

Menno Wiebe

Can the white man's religion make one final effort to be real . . . ?"
—Vine Deloria, Jr.[1]

Much of theological research on mission activity has presumed a transcontinental context. The theologies of mission expounded by Johannes Blauw and Hendrik Kraemer, for example, have a European-Indonesian dimension as their frame of reference. Wilhelm Andersen's theology of mission similarly regards the overseas orientation as the context within which the Christian message is to be transmitted. Little has been written by European peoples in the context of their coexistence with minority peoples. Specifically the relationships of the Christian churches in North America to the Indian peoples with whom we now share one continent needs redefinition. Popular treatments that have been written assume the unevangelized of our country to be of the same ethnic stock as that of the evangelist and therefore committed to a similar lifestyle.

Good theological homework, keeping North American Indian peoples in mind, may prove to be extremely fruitful both for an upgraded self-understanding of the church and for the discovery of a new, healthy, biblically oriented theology of mission. Mission activity among Indian peoples requires cultural adjustment similar to that experienced in foreign mission ventures, but it demands one further consideration. We live next to them. They are our neighbors and fellow citizens. Indian peoples and non-Indians live in sufficient geographic proximity that missionaries are by no means the only white representatives known to the Indian people. It is a case of two peoples converging. It is more. They are moving in on one another. It is my thought that:

two peoples
of divergent origins
now
are touching one another

they have met
by the circumstance of ethnohistories
and
by our ecclesiastical design

now
that there is geographic coexistence
we dream about
proximity of mind and soul

Father of all peoples
give your assent
we ask
for the building of this dream.

I am persuaded that a most profitable route of thought for theologians to take is via an ethnohistorical-theological understanding of mankind. The entire sojourn of the Jewish peoples recounted in the Old Testament might well serve as a basis for understanding other postbiblical, ethno-religious peoples. The proposed fruitfulness of the foregoing suggestion lies, as I see it, in the observation that Jewish people seem to live by ideology, that is, the notion of peoplehood seems always to be uppermost in the Jewish mind. The rest of Jewish behavior is ordered in terms of their peoplehood consciousness. And it is the absence of such consciousness that they scorn most vigorously in their own peoples and others. It might be contended that the absence of peoplehood consciousness anywhere results in human deterioration. To a large extent the Jews' rejection of Jesus as God's Son is to be understood as a negation of an "alternative" god who would threaten Jewish peoplehood solidarity. Old Testament studies represent a most convincing demonstration of peoplehood, in its contemporaneous as well as in its transgenerational dimensions. Such solidarity is refreshing when seen against the proliferation of post-New Testament expressions of the Christian faith, for example. Proliferation, it seems, is related to the neglect of the Old Testament as a biblical authority.

"Not unlike the Hebrews of the Old Testament, North American Indians have fostered a strong concept of peoplehood."

How the Jews continue to survive as a people in the present modernized, individualistically oriented society is surely one of the most unusual phenomena of world history. Persistence of Jewish peoplehood can be observed in previous environmental changes. Much could be learned by checking theological continuity in the face of Jewish transitions from pastoral nomadic to agricultural lifestyles; then, more recently, from an agricultural to an industrialized mode of existence. Only the most naïve can disregard the observation that there is something more at work than survival-adaptation processes, something other than Western pragmatic-functionalist thinking must account for the continuation of the Jews as a people. The Jews represent a convincing example of a demonstration that humans do not live by bread alone but by ideologies—and that not as individuals, but as a people—the relationship that makes individuals more fully human. Not always following biological definitions of Jewishness, not confined by parameters of territoriality, not capitalizing on modern social techniques of highly specialized structural hierarchies to retain cohesiveness, the Jews continue to know themselves as a people. That feat, quite apart from considerations of theological rightness or wrongness, deserves our attention.

Not unlike the Hebrews of the Old Testament, North American Indians have fostered a strong concept of peoplehood. The Cheyennes call themselves *Tsistsistas*, meaning "the men" or "the people." Athabascans refer to themselves as *Dene*, meaning "the people." The Montagnais know themselves as *Inu*, mean-

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ing "the people." The self-appellation of the Eskimos is *Inuit* meaning "the people." Northern Ojibwa call themselves *Anishinaapek*, meaning "the people." These honorable, aboriginal self-appellations stand in sharp contrast to the names that others have given to the North American natives. They have been called "red men," a cover term for all tribal groups. They have also been referred to as "cutthroats" and "savages," a derogatory image which modern TV westerns have not helped to correct. Even the term "Indian" is an appellation which has nothing to do with the North American native people themselves.

Peoplehood, as a self-concept among North America's native people receives little public acknowledgment. The breaking of Indian treaties by the Canadian and United States governments alike is usually interpreted as a violation of moral and legal commitment. More basically it seems that the violation consists of nonrecognition of the Indians as a people. Here the underlying assumption is the same as in the prevailing attitude toward all ethnic groups, namely, individualized assimilation into the American mainstream.

"A recognition that human beings belong to social networks brings about a collision with the kind of evangelization that seeks only individual conversion."

The encouragement of Indian land sales in the United States and the New Indian Policy in Canada, proposed in 1969, were official actions resulting in inevitable Indian divisiveness. The creation of government policies which would make the sale of Indian lands possible is in keeping with the philosophy of integration, especially as parts of the reserve lands become accessible to non-Indians. Typical Western emphasis on individualism to the exclusion of one's group is a detriment in all relationships with Indian peoples. The Indians of the American continent seemingly do not want the dream of American homogeneity realized. It follows then that Indians cannot accept Christianity either, which they find altogether too intertwined with the American notion of the melting pot. Indian people do not want the red color of their brick to become bleached as it forms part of the culture mosaic of our society. Cree folk singer Buffy Saint-Marie laments the condition of her Indian peers whose "genes have been paled." Thus a Saskatchewan reserve spokesperson, Carol Lavalle, comments, "Cultural genocide is the nameless fear of all the Indian people."[2] Her comment, it seems, is almost impossible to understand for "average" Canadians or Americans, who are supposed to be committed to a national mainstream identity.

The hankering among Indian peoples for a culturally sensitive context to express themselves as a people continues. This is apparent from the formulations by emerging Indian spokespersons who articulate their present dilemma. These include Vine Deloria, Jr., whose books *Custer Died for Your Sins* and *We Talk, You Listen* shocked both popular and sophisticated reading audiences. His is a dramatic articulation of resentment on behalf of his own Sioux and other Indian peoples. David Courchene, president of Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, has been equally dramatic with his powerful oratory calling the Canadian government to task for its relentless authoritarianism. Harold Cardinal, a young Cree Indian leader of Alberta, had the audacity to name his paperback *The Unjust Society*. His publication followed in the wake of Canada's election of Pierre Elliot Trudeau, who used the slogan "the just society" as his campaign leitmotiv. An Indian spokesperson of the Six Nations Indians, Kahn Teneta Horne, makes repeated appearances on the national and international scene pleading for understanding of the "Indianness" of her people. Prominent Indian artists Jackson Beardy and Daphne Odjig Beavon, both of Manitoba, are making explicit the profoundness of traditional Indian mythology. Buffy Saint-Marie's song "My Country Tis of Thy People You're Dying" is an intimate plea to the white world for a revised understanding of her people. Similarly, actor Chief Dan George pleads poetically for acknowledgment of his people:

> What is it like to be without pride in your race, pride in your family, pride and confidence in yourself? What is it like? You don't know for you have never tasted its bitterness. I shall tell you what it is like. It is like not caring for tomorrow for what does tomorrow matter?[3]

Increasingly, Indian leaders are recognizing the "divide-and-conquer" effect upon Indian solidarity, and are now articulating an urge to be reformulated into a people. The quest is for a recognizable body which represents something else than a marginal, diminishing sector of an otherwise progressive North American society. The rise of prominent Indian voices through the Red Power movement in the United States and the Indian Brotherhoods during the latter part of the '60s are dramatic reminders that Indians are suffering from a backlog of resentment against whites. This very recent articulation of Indian assertiveness has a precedent in the Ghost Dance of the 1860s, which represented a last attempt at a widespread aboriginal expression, only to be snuffed out by the United States armed forces.

John Collier in his *Indians of the Americas* has suggested that progress-oriented Americans have been so busy settling and developing the country that they have had no time for remorse over any of their actions toward the Indian peoples. Because the Indian peoples have been nonassertive, by and large, their resentment has not become known to the whites. A particularly difficult function of the church in its relationship to Indian peoples of all tribes may well consist in assuming a stance of needed repentance, perhaps even remorse.

Mennonites, because of their own history of minority oppression, may have an added sensitivity to the harbored resentment of the Indian peoples. Consequently, they may also be in a position to understand, and perhaps even absorb, the long-standing resentment. The delegate body of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada at its 1970 annual meeting participated in a liturgy of repentance that was designed to speak not only for the Mennonites, but for the Christian Church and the wider society as well (see "A Litany of Confession" at the end of this article). A stance of repentance may in fact be a prerequisite for any genuine continuing relationship of the Mennonite Church to Indian peoples.

The church also needs to respond with a revised criterion for the selection of mission personnel. Deloria has observed that the early missionaries proved themselves worthy of becoming totally enmeshed in the native life, but that their successors, to their own detriment, enjoyed the locally ascribed status given to them without understanding the reasons for it, and thus misusing it.

What is an intelligent response to these Native American voices? Ignore them we cannot. Assuming that white missionaries will continue to fill a function for some time, the church will do well to define qualifications of mission personnel in terms of projected needs of the respective Indian communities. This is a sensitive matter. On the one hand, maximum competence of learned skills is required; on the other, it is questionable whether specialization in terms of academic disciplines is the type of competence required. It must be remembered that training institutions for whites are geared to services in the white community. There is little assurance that those skills apply in native contexts.

The call for native leadership for Indian churches is, of course, a counterpart to the indigenization emphasis in overseas missions, and there are encouraging reports about native pastors. One theoretical point of caution is crucial, however. The pastor's slot within the church structure is a social design of the sponsoring denomination, not of the local group. Specialized, professional religious categorization is part of the input of missions. Similarly, notions of congregational membership, the liturgy, church architecture, and church policy probably need to undergo indigenization. To forget that the structures are important in cross-cultural communication is always to invite endless misunderstanding.

A further response by the church to the voice of the Indian people requires a more intelligent consideration of parallel religious and secular agencies active in the community. The diversified denominational influence of almost any given Indian community is breathtaking. Sometimes it appears that the Indian people are playing games with the various denominations, and at times it seems that they are thoroughly confused by them. Where there is no interaction between the various denominational groups, the missionaries face a loss of integrity. The severest aspect of the problem is the fact that the denominational missionaries are not willing to expose themselves to each other and to integrate the variety of separate religious influences, which, however, the members of that community are forced to do. Wherever Christian missions are guilty of contributing to divisiveness in a community, the respective mission sending agencies should take drastic action for correcting that situation in order to allow for a rebirth of Indian peoplehood.

A recognition that human beings belong to social networks brings about a collision with the kind of evangelization that seeks only individual conversion. There is room for a biblical conversion of social systems and networks of peoples as well as individuals. The unresolved clash between strictly individual and corporate religious orientations is probably basic to a relative failure of the Christian Church in its missionary efforts among native Americans. Peoplehood is not only an Old Testament phenomenon. It is also there to distinguish subhuman from fully human in the New Testament, or, as I Peter has it: "Once you were no people, now you are a people." The emphasis to be noted is our human corporateness.

For the church there is some additional theological homework to be done. That assignment consists in a theoretical conceptualization that will successfully combine the two biblical notions of "the people of God" and the commission to communicate the faith. That concept will challenge the route of integration via individualization. By shelving the concept of intended national homogeneity, thereby allowing alternatives for social expression, that is, pluralism, we stand a better chance of gaining an understanding of the Indian mind. Proponents of the mainline position have difficulty accounting for the cultural expressions of ethnic groups, and that is because a common system permeates all of the national, and much of the international, scene. The persistence of Indian tribalism throughout the four hundred-year period of Americanization speaks of an ethnic tenacity that defies the heat of the melting pot.

I suggest that Indian peoples are probably best understood in terms of their persistence, dissolutions, and reformulations as tribal groupings. Deloria hints of tribal regrouping comparable to the Jewish reformulation following a four hundred-year period of economic oppression in Asia.

"America's 400 year-old period," says Deloria with prophetic irony, "is almost up."[4]

For the Indian people the question of the reserve system is not merely a concern about the viability of its economy. Rather, the question for the Indian hinges on legal recognition. Any of the plans for abolition of the reserve system have thus far carried with them implications of termination. The proposed new Indian policy of the Canadian government will seriously threaten the only legal status that Indians retain. The sale of individually owned property lots to individuals would, of course, seriously threaten the economic base for tribal solidarity. The government's proposal comes under the guise of giving Indians full citizenship privileges. Harold Cardinal insists that the Canadian government intentionally creates schemes that will disrupt Indian social networks. The granting of treaty status to registered Indians only leaves approximately 250,000 native people (Metis) without any Indian status whatever.

Regrouping of Indian peoples is strongly suggested, even advocated, by Indian spokespersons Deloria, Cardinal, Courchene, and others. The regrouping process may not necessarily follow lines of traditional tribal adherence. The fifty tribes in Canada are presently dispersed throughout all ten provinces. Tribal identity is still retained by most groups, but there is growing pressure for a recategorization. The government of Canada classifies Indian peoples into regions coterminous with provincial boundaries. So also does the National Indian Brotherhood. Indian leaders use the broad term "native," or "Indian," rather than referring to tribal names, for example, Cree, Sioux, Iroquois, etc. The urban centers in particular represent a dramatic collision of the various tribes, and it is in such centers that a reformulation is likely to originate. The intertribal composition of urban Indian groups is apparent in the memberships at Indian-Metis Friendship Centers and Indian youth clubs centering around team sports and other social activities.

Assuming that the Indian people are presently finding themselves in a state of ethnic dissolution, what stance should the church take? It is the view of this writer that Christians should rediscover themselves as a people of God and be open to the possibility that Native Americans also may come to know themselves as a people of God. Certainly such a statement is too generalized and abstract to be helpful in itself, but if a European version of Christianity has been useful for European peoples, what is now needed is an Indian version of Christianity for Indian peoples. Authentic native expressions of Christianity will reflect the harmony of Indian peoples with their total environment. A segmentation of life into secular and sacred categories, for instance, is not meaningful to Native Americans. While separate criteria of moral behavior for the church and the state are consistent with an otherwise ever differentiating worldview of Westerners, Indians find such arbitrary divisions preposterous. The holistic worldview of Indian peoples has been broken into unrelated components in the acculturation process.

"The persistence of Indian tribalism throughout the 400-year period of Americanization speaks of an ethnic tenacity that defies the heat of the melting pot."

Before European contact, Indian religion was ecologically adaptive and thus thoroughly validated by the people who embraced it. To hear the missionary pronouncements on the accomplishment of the medicine men as the work of the devil obviously had to be interpreted as one more expression of white domination and oppression. Perhaps a real problem for the church is whether it should address itself to a categorized and specialized expression of religion and promote only that aspect, or whether it should seek to understand the total range of human

experience, allowing religion to penetrate all its dimensions. The latter obviously seems more authentic, yet seldom finds its way into the actual church program.

Western Christians need to understand more fully that the brand of Christianity they themselves practice is historically linked to their own whole way of life. The prominence of agrarian images used by Mennonite preachers, for instance, seems normal to a people of an agricultural background. The Thanksgiving festival comes at the period of the agricultural harvest. Easter and the resurrection are celebrated when plant life is renewed. When those same rituals are transplanted to a woodlands hunting society, however, they have no connection with that society's way of life.

The discussion of the supernatural in Indian religions is not so much to be understood as a pondering of the metaphysical unknown. Rather, the supernatural may well be interpreted as an externalization of issues that are too taxing for individuals within the group to handle. Such externalizing is not limited to Indian peoples. Is there perhaps a parallel between their appeal to the supernatural and the appeal to policy in a modernized society whose executive similarly requires an externalized source of authority? Both are abstract and are means of self-protection, yet in both cases the authorities are able to execute their wishes. In both cases the system works.

Indian religion should also be understood in terms of its ecological relationships. The Naskapi Indians of the Northeast Coast, for instance, developed a unique mechanism of divination used for population control. Shoulder blades of caribou were ritually scorched by holding the bones above a fire. The manner in which the bones cracked and the spots appeared were said to indicate to the hunters where the caribou were to be found. The earliest observers, including anthropologists, simply wrote the divination practices off as another pagan rite. More intensive observation has proved a much more profound, twofold function of that practice. For one thing, it took the group's leader off the hook. He then did not have to impose his judgment above that of the group. They would simply follow the "road map" indicated on the charred shoulder blade, often against the better judgment of such knowledgeable hunters. A second function was related to the acute matter of population control. By following the shoulder-blade chart, the men would proceed without dispute to the area indicated, often knowing that caribou would not enter those regions. In that way an overkill of the caribou was prevented but, at the same time, a deliberately created shortage of food effectively restricted the population growth of the Naskapi.

Christians would do well to learn the skills of making their efforts applicable to the present-day threat of ecological stress. The Indian peoples' tremendous respect for their habitat may in fact offer a solution to the current world ecological crisis. Tom Jackson, a young Cree folk singer and poet, recently wrote:

> The winds were green and eager then,
> the eagles nesting high,
> majestic in their hunger's strife,
> and prayers went with the skinning knife
> that took the deer our brother's life
> to keep us warm and dry.

Social functions of religion in addition to the Naskapi divination already cited can be seen in the Algonquian Feast of the Dead, a ritualized period of celebration during which goods were shared to the extent that economic equalization occurred. Northwest Coast potlatches can also be interpreted as equalization rituals. Among the northern Cree hunters such festivity accompanied the slaying of a moose, a time when all people in the band shared in the benefits. One is reminded of the Hebrews' "acceptable year of the Lord," when economic reallocation neutralized the diabolical extremes that tend to destroy a society. Perhaps the love-feast of the early Christians, and certainly the pooling of resources recorded in the book of Acts, represent what Vine Deloria, Jr. would call "real" acts of religion. It may be that modern Communion services are abstract and vestigial remains of what originally provided the actual mechanisms for distribution, not merely symbols of equalizing extremes within a society. Word formulations, like rituals, tend to become removed from that which they designate. The well-intended formulations of European clergy in Indian communities are all too frequently received as imposed, abstract dogma unrelated to the exigencies of Indian life. Deloria has a point in his complaint that Christian missionaries are "imprinting two thousand years of sterile dogmas on the unstructured Indian psyche."[5] Edward Dozier observes that Indians have by and large accepted the externals of white man's religion without understanding the internal meanings of that faith.[6]

For the church, the business of helping is more difficult than ever in a cross-cultural context. Christians have tried to be realistic in their religion by extensive relief services. The church should be able to relate easily to the prevalent Indian notion of sharing, but perhaps it is the nature of the transaction of the goods that requires examination. Deloria contends that Christianity substituted giving for sharing, and that giving has become abstract.[7] By and large, giving has meant contributing to a cause rather than sharing with a people, or it has meant giving to an unfortunate people who were geographically and socially removed from the donors. Giving has become both impersonal and nonreciprocal. The native Indian notion of sharing was a sharing with people that meant being both giver and recipient. When David Courchene suggested that he and I have dinner in a downtown Winnipeg restaurant, he made it very plain that the T-bone steak was "on him." Courchene asserted, with that representative act, that Indians should not be regarded as recipients only.

Despite all good intentions on the part of the Christian Church not to be domineering, we find it hard to be more than mere donors in the name of "missions." Isaac Beaulieu, executive director of Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, addressed the delegate body of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada at Saskatoon in 1969 to plead for a revision of attitudes toward the Indian people. *The Star Phoenix* (July 8, 1969) quoted his statement: "After 400 years do you still need missions? To us the word mission designates an inferiority even if it is not intentional. Why can't we just become regular congregations?" Beaulieu strongly encouraged them to change the name of their mission board from Mennonite Pioneer Mission to something more appropriate. The appellation obviously represented a gross insensitivity to Indian peoples. The term "pioneer" is associated with the white settlers who actually invaded Indian territory. Typical of the frontier mentality, Mennonites thought that they were entering wide-open spaces available to agricultural settlers. Little did those in Manitoba, for instance, acknowledge that their settlement in the 1870s contributed to the displacement of Indian peoples who by government action were thereafter confined to designated reserves.

One aspect of our Christian response to the agonies of acculturation should be a greater self-understanding and an attempt to see ourselves through the eyes of those we seek to serve.

A second response should be a greater sensitivity in the ongoing ministry traditionally known as evangelism. All of us know about personally unbearable crises of individuals who must be helped through a personal confrontation. In accordance with the recognition of individuals as a part of the society, caution must be exercised not to pluck converts out of their social context and thereby contribute to the divisiveness already present in many Indian communities.

Third, the church would do well to seek a broader understanding of social problems faced by the Indians. The alcohol issue is probably the most serious. I know of no Christian mis-

sionaries, government administrators, teachers, or nurses acquainted with the Indian settlements who do not lament the widespread alcoholism. What is the explanation for the apparently excessive consumption of alcoholic beverages? Some creative, culturally sensitive answers are needed.

A fourth response on the part of the Christian Church should be to promote reconciliation. We need to exercise a priestly function by mediating among the diverse segments of our polarized society. In keeping with the Jubilee theme of the Hebrews, as interpreted by Jesus, the churches should serve as agents of reconciliation amid the extremes in the social structure. The failure of the church to do so earlier is probably what relegated that priestly function to the United Fund agencies.

Finally, the church should assume its responsibility as a social pioneer. If it can be demonstrated historically that the church was the pioneer in educational, healing, and welfare institutions, and if those functions have subsequently been assumed by government bodies, the church should now explore new, uncharted areas for fresh initiatives. It is common knowledge that specialization seems almost totally lacking among Indian hunting tribes. Egalitarianism, linked to this nonspecialization, still prevails on reserves despite the fact that these bands have become sedentary and that their populations have increased substantially. The current situation of acculturation obviously calls for the emergence of some specialists, but the development of local specialists is accompanied by severe stress within a given Indian community. Consequently, the Christian missionary, instead of limiting his/her function to that of a theological specialist, rightly introduces the need for new roles in that community. One becomes a banker in the sense that he is a guardian of property, a role hitherto unknown to many native communities. One is a lender of money and casher of cheques, stores tools, and demonstrates storage of foods. The missionary also finds himself/herself fulfilling the functions of a lawyer by completing application forms and help-

ing Indian peoples with endless red tape in legal matters. Often the missionary engages in medical practices on the reserve, thus introducing medicine or, in this case, replacing the function of the aboriginal medicine man. In these ways as well as through religious services the missionary witnesses to Jesus Christ, the peoplebuilder whose salvation generates the birth and continuity of all God's people.

A Litany of Confession

Conference of Mennonites in Canada, 1970 Annual Meeting

We have tried to be helpers without first becoming acquainted with you, the native people of Canada. We have been guilty of contributing to the disruption of solidarity in your communities. Our bold, roughshod behaviour has forced your tender but important feelings to be suppressed. We have not allowed your voice to be heard. Where there was resentment we have ignored it or suppressed it. We have judged the acts of drunkenness without caring to discover what significance drinking has besides its immorality. We have ridiculed and lamented your mismanagement of property and thereby revealed our own idolatry in worshipping property.

Forgive us for this, Lord!

We have wanted you as converts, but we weren't sure that we wanted you as brothers. We were interested in you when you lived on the reserve, but when you came into the city we ignored you as everyone else is ignoring you. In the city we have neither invited you nor really wanted you in our fellowship. You found the parlors [bars] to be more welcome than the churches.

Forgive us, Lord!

We have talked about you as Indians and recognized you as such, but we didn't recognize you as a people who are called of God to be his people. Where we recognized you as Indians by the colour of your skin, but didn't recognize that you were fellow human beings, friends, brothers who were called, Jacob, Harold, Madeline, and George,

Forgive us, Lord!

We have sent missionaries to your communities and it pleased us to be able to report of our mission work up north, but there is reason to believe that a portion of our motivation may have resulted from our craving to do missionary work rather than from a capacity to love, understand and share the love of Christ.

Forgive us, Lord!

We have not understood you when in your own way you have tried to talk to us. We heard your words but heard little of the message. Your actions seemed simple and unimportant to us when they were actually highly charged with importance. We have not loved nor respected you sufficiently to learn your language.

Forgive us, Lord!

Often we have enjoyed the novelty of being in your community, appreciating the quietness of the surroundings, the unspoiled landscape, the trees, flowers, streams, and game, without respecting it as your territory. Too often we have stepped onto your holy ground not as visitors but as bosses. At best we regarded you as living examples of our own distant past.

Forgive us, Lord!

We have, by our silence, sided with the powerful forces of government and industry when they invaded your rights, discounted your modest protest, and exploited your resources.

Forgive us, Lord!

We are guilty of tracing America's history back no farther than 1492. Canada, for us is only 100 years old. The accounts of your own history, your stories, your dreams and your visions have meant nothing to us. We have wanted your furs, your wild rice, your skill in the woods, but we didn't want you.

Please forgive us, Lord!

Where we have permitted the judgement of heavenly scorn to override brother love,

Forgive us, Lord!

We have erred where we have poured our energies and anxieties into doing things instead of listening and learning, where principles, policies, programs, and right theology took priority over you the people.

Forgive us, Lord!

Where you have been the object of competitive mission ventures, each denomination claiming monopoly on God's truth,

We are ashamed, Lord!

Where we have not trusted the Holy Spirit to originate and generate faith in your midst, where we have not fully expected you to take your place as a full-fledged people of God,

Do forgive us, Lord! And help us to discover you as our new brothers.

Notes

1. Vine Deloria Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins* (New York: Macmillan, 1969), p. 124.
2. Charles E. Hendry, *Beyond Traplines* (Scarborough, Canada: Ryerson Press, 1969), p. 33.
3. Dan George, Unpublished speech given at the Canadian Association of Indian Education Conference, Banff, Alberta, 1970.
4. Deloria, *Custer*, p. 32.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
6. Edward Dozier, *The Pueblo Indians of North America* (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), p. 50.
7. Deloria, *Custer*, p. 121.

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A Chinese Communist View of Christian Missions in the Nineteenth Century

Donald E. MacInnis

The sources for this paper are three volumes from a series of ten books prepared by members of the history departments of two Shanghai universities and published in the years 1972-74: *Chung Kuo Chin Tai Shih Ts'ung Shu* (History of Modern China Series). Five of these books were available in Chinese at the time of my visit to China in 1974, and it was from these versions that I did my study. Since then these five volumes have been published in English, and it is presumed that the other five will be published in English as well.*

These studies invariably portray the early missionaries in a role of complicity with the military and commercial forces of the Western nations who forced their way into China in the nineteenth century. The time of publication and the source of authorship and publication in Shanghai suggest a link with the "gang of four," whose base was Shanghai and who, we are told, were scheming to seize power following the Cultural Revolution. All textbooks in Chinese schools were scrapped or subjected to review and revision during the Cultural Revolution. We don't know if this new series replaced an older one, or if it was intentionally designed by decision-makers, perhaps by the "gang of four," as an ideological position statement in the two-line struggle between the leftists and the moderates. The inference is clear: these ten historical studies designed for widespread use in the schools would give no aid or comfort to those seeking détente with the Western powers following Richard Nixon's first China visit—which coincided with the publication of this series; for the central motif linking these studies is the enormity of the foreign imperialists' crimes against the Chinese nation and people.

Introduction

The charge of cultural imperialism through Christian missions in China was one of the sources of Chinese antiforeignism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The reasons for Chinese resentment of Christian missionaries and their work were in some ways unique to China of that period; but there is enough correlation between conditions in China at that time and the situation in many nations of the Third World today where Christian missions are at work to merit examining the historical record as it is viewed by Chinese historians today.

The volumes reviewed here were written collectively by members of two Shanghai universities in the years 1972-74. One can question the scholarly objectivity of an "official" publication series published in China. Yet the resentment of foreign intrusions of all kinds is a theme that can be traced in Chinese historical and polemical writing long before the founding of the Chinese Communist party in 1921; that resentment began with the first of the infamous unequal treaties signed following the Opium War (1839-42). The foreign presence, including the missionaries, was imposed at gunpoint and protected by the treaties; this central fact of modern Chinese history is known by every Chinese of whatever political persuasion.

The Protestant missionary period in China began with the opening of five treaty ports to foreign traders, diplomats, and missionaries following the Opium War. The numerous anti-Christian incidents of the nineteenth century, climaxed by the Boxer Uprising (1899-1900) have been documented by historians and scholars.

While a major source of opposition to the missionaries in the early period was the conservative Confucian scholar-gentry, the situation changed in the twentieth century. China's young patriot-intellectuals, many of them educated abroad, searched for intellectual and political solutions from the West to bring about national salvation. For a time Christianity was seen by many of them as the spiritual dynamic that might restore China's unity and national discipline. Science and democracy were raised up for a time as the keys to modernization and national salvation. But following World War I these modern patriots, disillusioned by the disarray of the Western powers and their failure to help China in a time of desperate need, rallied around the resurgent Kuomintang (Nationalist) party under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek following the warlord period of semianarchy. One of the most virulent periods of anti-Christian and antiforeign feeling coincided with the triumphant Northern Expedition of Chiang's forces (1925-26). The students in particular, many of them from mission schools, were at the center of both the anti-Christian and the Nationalist movement. The failure of the Western powers and Japan to yield treaty rights and other privileges, the use of gunboat diplomacy to protect their special interests, and the continued special privileges of the foreigners under treaty protection all contributed to the swelling antiforeignism.

"The foreign presence, including the missionaries, was imposed at gunpoint and protected by the treaties."

The work of the missionaries was vilified under the double charge that it propagated superstition and reinforced foreign imperialism. The anti-Christian movement among youth was led by the National Student Association. Christian schools in particular were condemned for allegedly introducing non-Chinese education. By teaching English and other Western-oriented courses, by requiring the study and practice of a "foreign religion," and by exemption from government standards and supervision, the mission schools were seen as centers of cultural imperialism, robbing Chinese youth of their cultural heritage.

Chinese nationalism and antiforeignism were two components of the movement that mobilized the Chinese people during this period. It was believed that until China was free from exploi-

*English versions of five of these volumes (*The Taiping Revolution, The Opium War, The Reform Movement, The Yi Ho Tuan Movement of 1900,* and *The Revolution of 1911*) are now available from China Books and Periodicals, 125 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10003.

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tation and interference by foreign powers and their agents, no progress toward national salvation was possible. When the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, Mao Tse-tung proclaimed that the two mountains of foreign imperialism and domestic feudalism had been lifted from the backs of the Chinese people.

Since the mid-1960s the total absence of official pronouncements on religious policy and the scarce mention of religion in the Chinese press suggest that the nation's leaders have simply ignored religion, the surviving remnants of the various religious groups being too insignificant, it would seem, in both numbers and influence to merit even a word in the Cultural Revolution documents and other policy statements. The new state constitution adopted in 1975, however, reiterates the people's "freedom of religious belief."

> *". . . the involvement of missionaries in the violent confrontation with Western powers that opened China to commerce and religion against her will is not forgotten."*

But the involvement of missionaries in the violent confrontations with Western powers that opened China to commerce and religion against her will is not forgotten in a set of ten books published by the Shanghai People's Publishing House in 1972-74. *Chung Kuo Chin Tai Shih Ts'ung Shu* (History of Modern China Series) was compiled by members of the history departments of Futan University and Shanghai Teachers' University. These short studies, ranging in length from 130 to 188 pages, present historical summaries of ten crisis periods in China's modern history from the Opium War (1839-42) to the Revolution of 1911. While brief in scope and drawing selectively on the historical data, reviewing the history of China's unwilling opening to the West from both Marxist and Chinese perspectives, they are presented as historical studies, not propaganda tracts, and must be taken seriously, for they will be widely read inside China.

Three of these volumes have particular interest for students of modern mission history because of their portrayal of the role of missionaries in the early decades of Sino-Western relations: *The Opium War, The Taiping Revolution,* and *The Yi Ho Tuan Movement of 1900* (Boxer Uprising). The importance of these studies for us is their function in interpreting for this generation of Chinese the work of the early missionaries and their relation to the forces of imperialism. The History of Modern China Series is widely disseminated and may well be the major reference work on this topic for most Chinese students today. Missionaries come off badly, pictured invariably in willing collusion with the foreign invaders, their motives being to use any means to infiltrate China and to impose cultural imperialism under a religious guise. No attempt is made to understand the theological and evangelical impulse for the missionary vocation; nor are the works of compassionate service and social melioration mentioned. This is the image of missionaries and their work available to today's generation of Chinese youth. To what extent can truth be found here, both for this early period of China's history and for the work of Christian missions elsewhere in the world yesterday and today?

The Anti-Imperialist Exhibit at Chin-ling Hsieh-ho (Union) Theological Seminary in 1962 was divided into eight sections. Echoes of these materials are found in the History of Modern China Series. For example, one of the eight sections described the role of missionaries in the imposition of the unequal treaties. "After the colonialists had opened the gates of China with the bombardment of cannons, they forced the Ching Dynasty to sign unequal treaties. In the process . . . the missionaries performed a very important function." According to the late U.S. Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, the missionaries constituted "an absolute necessity in diplomatic relations."[1]

Missionaries and the Opium War

The Opium War, volume I in the History of Modern China Series, presents a standard Marxist rationale for European and American pressures on China: capitalism generated inexorable forces to find markets for the expanding production of the industrial revolution in order to avoid economic collapse in the home countries. "The British bourgeoisie felt it imperative to seek new and bigger markets for their goods in order to shake off the [domestic] crisis and gain more profit."[2]

The excess flow of British silver into China in the late eighteenth century to pay for Chinese teas and silks is cited as the reason for the invention of the opium trade and for the war that ended with the imposition of the unequal treaties. The inflow of opium corrupted "all kinds of hangers-on of the ruling class, such as court eunuchs, yamen runners, sedan-chair bearers, soldiers, Buddhist monks and nuns, Taoist priests and city prostitutes."[3]

The complicity of missionaries in the early stage of imperialist aggression is highlighted by the role of Charles Gutzlaff, one of the first missionaries to East Asia, "who systematically collected political, economic and military intelligence regarding Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo and Shanghai."[4] He served as an aide to the commander of the British "spy ship," the *Lord Amherst,* which made a six-month cruise up the China coast in 1832. The book cites Gutzlaff's role again nine years later as he continued to serve with the British forces. "Having occupied Ningpo, the invaders appointed as its magistrate Charles Gutzlaff, who under the guise of being a missionary was an important agent and had taken part in the *Lord Amherst* expedition."[5] The presence of a clergyman evidently had little effect on the occupying troops, for it is said they looted the city, carrying off $120,000 worth of cash and silver ingots, "stealing enough grain to keep them supplied for two years."

The espionage role of the missionaries is cited again in connection with negotiations for a peace settlement. Pottinger (the British plenipotentiary) "had intelligence from missionaries that the Ching government was strengthening its defence to the north around Taku off Tientsin, leaving the lower Yangtze very weakly defended"[6]—information that led to the British decision to reject peace proposals and launch an invasion force up the Yangtze River with the objective of capturing Nanking.[7]

In final negotiations leading up to the signing of the Treaty of Nanking (1842), it is said that Pottinger sent Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary to serve in China, to the Ching officials "to demand the lifting of the opium ban with a note giving his reasons: that China had previously prohibited the opium trade, but it had continued at sea between Chinese and British merchants, so that the ban could only be nominal; and that it would be better to legalize the trade and increase China's revenue."[8]

The earliest Protestant missionaries were thus linked directly to both the unilateral military thrust of the British armed forces

and the implacable demands of the opium traders. J. L. Nevius, "an American missionary long active in China, ranted that right or wrong the Opium War opened, in accordance with God's will, a new era in the U.S. relationship with the vast Ching empire."[9]

Despite the climate of détente following Richard Nixon's trip to China in 1972, this new series of historical studies does not exempt the United States from guilt. "The United States collaborated with Britain to the hilt in initiating aggression against China."[10] The authors take pains to point out the Americans "in the name of equal opportunity" exacted the same privileges in the Treaty of Wanghsia (1844) that Britain had got from the Treaty of Nanking (1842). Included was the provision to open the treaty ports to missionaries.

> Under Article 17 of the Treaty of Wanghsia, the Americans were to be allowed to build their own churches at the five ports. This prepared the ground for the French demand [later the same year] that the Ching government rescind its ban on the Catholic religion.[11]

The Sino-French Treaty of Whampoa (1844) opened the way to subsequent international confrontations over antimissionary incidents because it enlarged the scope of missionary activity and placed it under the protective treaty-based umbrella.

> What distinguishes the Treaty of Whampoa is that besides granting the French the right to build churches and cemeteries in the five ports, it provided that the local Ching officials should severely punish any [Chinese] trespassers on these places. This provision giving the Ching government the responsibility of protecting French churches and missionaries subsequently proved extremely detrimental to the Chinese people. Under its protection, the invaders openly carried out aggressive activities using the cloak of religion.[12]

The religious ban on Roman Catholic work in China, proclaimed by the Kang Hsi emperor under provocation from the Vatican in 1724, had abruptly ended over one hundred years of virtually unrestricted missionary activity and church growth. Under the ban the practice of the Catholic faith by Chinese and its propagation by foreign missionaries was prohibited. Théodose de Lagrène, the French negotiator for the Treaty of Whampoa, pushed for an imperial edict lifting the ban. "The invaders' " appetite was unlimited. . . . Lagrène used the question of the ban on Roman Catholicism as a pretext to extort more from the Ching government."[13]

Under pressure, the Tao Kuang emperor finally approved the lifting of the ban. As a result:

> The privileges France acquired for its missionaries played an evil role in the history of modern imperialist aggression against China. Thenceforth, foreign missionaries, accompanying opium, commodities and guns, streamed into China without hindrance. On the one hand, they bought over traitors, collected intelligence, and propagated superstition to lull the people; on the other, they collaborated with the China officials and oppressed and bullied the people. . . . They were in the van of the foreign penetration of China, bringing disaster to the Chinese people.[14]

The final chapter of *The Opium War*, "Birth of a Semi-Colonial and Semi-Feudal Society," describes the disintegration of China's self-sufficient natural economy and handicraft industries under the impact of imported Western textiles and manufactured goods. Statistics on the opium trade (which continued into the twentieth century) described the massive outflow of silver in payment for increasing amounts of imported opium, reaching "700,000-800,000 chests valued at 300-400 million silver dollars" in the decade or so after the Opium War. The once self-sufficient Chinese economy was being bankrupted and its people debauched by the foreign invaders.

Meanwhile, the five treaty ports, open to missionaries as well as traders, "became the bases for capitalist aggression against China. . . . "[15] Worst of all was the traffic in indentured labor where "foreign gangsters" allegedly used deception or intimidation to seize or kidnap Chinese laboring people and ship them to North or South America and the West Indies to do heavy labor. The American transcontinental railroads would not have been built without Chinese labor. The vessels which shipped the kidnapped Chinese were "floating hells," where confined quarters and poor ventilation led to a death rate at sea "as high as 45 per cent. Many more died from their suffering after arrival at their destinations. The survivors did forced labour and were subjected to ruthless enslavement and exploitation."[16]

And so the missionaries, in this modern overview of China's opening to the West, are irrevocably linked to the opium merchants, the capitalist entrepreneurs, and the armed "gangster" diplomacy of the imperialist nations.

Volume I in this series concludes with a listing of popular revolts against the foreigners and the decaying Ching government, and a transition to volume II, *The Taiping Revolution*. Among the over one hundred popular uprisings between 1841 and 1849 mentioned in the *Tung Hau Lu* (Annals of the Ching Dynasty) was the Pai Shang Ti Hui (Worship God Society), which was started by one of China's first Protestant converts, and became known worldwide as the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (Taiping T'ien Kuo) as it swelled into the greatest popular uprising in history up to that time and almost overthrew the Ching Dynasty before its suppression in 1864.

> *"No attempt is made to understand the theological and evangelical impulse for the missionary vocation; nor are the works of compassionate service and social melioration mentioned."*

Missionaries and the Taiping Revolution

The authors of *The Taiping Revolution* credit Hung Hsiu-chuan's religious conversion for his revolutionary vision and success in organizing the Pai Shang Ti Hui.

> Hung's identification with religion enabled him to use Christian tenets to claim that he was sent by Heaven on a mission. This was his preparation for the revolutionary cause of "killing evil to protect the righteous" and of "wiping out injustice among men. . . . "[17]

Paradoxically, the aim of the religious tract *Good Words for Exhorting the Age*, compiled by a convert of Robert Morrison's and studied by Hung,

> was to paralyze the people's will to rebel against the system under which the world was ruled by the exploiting classes. By preaching that people should revere some so-called "creator" or "the only true God," and teaching that "real happiness exists not on earth but only in Heaven," and that people should love their enemies, such books attempted to induce people to seek their happiness in the next world, not in this one.[18]

But (according to the authors) Hung Hsiu-chuan interpreted Christianity differently.

> Since all people were born equal as the sons and daughters of God, why shouldn't the peasants rise up and fight for the equality of which they had so long been deprived? So the Society, when stripped of its religious mantle, was actually a revolutionary organization advocating an anti-religious philosophy of struggle. [19]

Hung's vision of an egalitarian society, with equality among men and women and the abolishing of class and wealth differentials, is praised. His articles "Doctrines on Salvation," "On Awakening the World," and "On Arousing the World" "combine the Western religious idea of 'equality' with the Great Harmony concept of ancient China. . . . With his aim of establishing 'an ideal kingdom on earth,' Hung clarified his opposition to the feudal system of ranks, class oppression and autocracy: 'All under Heaven have the same Heavenly Father and so are of one family.' "[20] In these same writings he "condemned the injury and torture inflicted on people by the super-natural system ranging from the Monster King of Hell, down to the various spirits and demons of the under-world."[21]

> *". . . some deep-rooted feeling on the part of the Communists that the Chinese church has been intimately related to imperialism and capitalism."*

While the religious source of Hung's vision and dynamic is acknowledged, the missionaries receive no credit. Issachar Roberts, the American missionary who taught Hung Christian doctrine, "did not trust Hung Hsiu-chaun and would not receive him into the Church. After two months he fell out with Roberts and left the place. Later, evaluating the religion of Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, the missionary said that they were 'bent on making their burlesque religious pretensions serve their political purposes.' "[22]

The Pai Shang Ti Hui became the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, and the Taiping Army swelled with recruits as it pushed northward. Within three years (1850-53) it had grown from 10,000 to one million, "going from victory to victory because their revolution reflected the wishes of the people."[23] Among three important Taiping manifestos, the authors of *The Taiping Revolution* highlight these four points:

1. The Taiping Army carries out the orders of Heaven.
2. Buddhist idols, the Monster King of Hell, and all the Ching rulers are alike; they are devils, the enemies of the people. The people must take up arms and slay the devils on behalf of Heaven.
3. The Ching government has committed hideous crimes. [These are enumerated.]
4. We give notice to all the armed forces of the landlords, the time has come for them to awake. [We] will work together to exterminate the China Dynasty.[24]

The authors comment on these excerpts from the Taiping manifestos: "*In spite of their religious coloring* [emphasis added], there is a strong spirit of political realism in these three manifestos. Poignantly written, with a clear-cut view on what to love and what to hate, they expose and repudiate the evils of the feudal system . . . . "[25]

After tracing the history of the aborted revolution, the battles, the forces of opposition, and the final dénouement, *The Taiping Revolution* ends with an analysis and critique of the movement and its leadership, concluding that it was "the first great high tide of the revolution of modern China." The revolution failed in part because of the reversion of its leadership to "bad old habits like conservatism, pleasure-seeking and factionalism": the Taiping leaders lapsed into "decadent feudal habits, which brought disaster to the revolutionary cause. . . . "[26] But the contribution of the Taipings to the ultimate victory of people's revolution "will last forever," for they attacked both the feudal ruling class and the foreign capitalist aggressors.

However, they "battered the superstructure of the feudal society" in their attack on Confucianism and what they termed other religious superstitions, bringing forth in their stead the vision of an "ideal society where people were equal." They attempted to abolish commerce, saying: "Everything is granted by the Heavenly Father. It is not necessary to purchase things with money."[27] They issued a program for social reform called the Heavenly Land System, which abolished the landlord system, redistributed the land to the tillers, and "ruled that all land under Heaven should be cultivated by all the people under Heaven. . . . " The ideal was

> that land, food, clothing and money should all be shared equally, and that all under Heaven should be well fed and well clad, . . . Each peasant household was to exist within a self-supplying small-scale economy based on a few *mu* of land, some mulberry trees, five hens, two pigs and so on. . . . This dream reflected the peasants' longing for an ideal society without exploitation or poverty, where there would be no inequality, no hunger, and no lack of warm clothes.[28]

One can only speculate on the origins of this utopian dream in Hung Hsiu-chuan's reading of the Old Testament prophets, their vision of a "peaceable kingdom," and the New Testament vision of a Kingdom of God on earth.

A century before the New Marriage Law (1951), the Taiping leaders insisted on equality between men and women. The Heavenly Land System required that land be distributed to families on the basis of numbers regardless of sex, and abolished the feudal institution of marriage by purchase: "under Heaven marriage should have nothing to do with property."[29] W. Muirhead, a British missionary of that time, is quoted with approval by the authors, describing the remarkable emancipation of women he observed during a visit to the Taiping capital.

The book closes with this encomium: "The Taiping Revolution failed. But its brilliant deeds and its marvelous contribution to history will live forever in people's memories."[30] Today the Taiping revolutionaries occupy a place of honor among the heroes and heroines of China's people's history, carved in stone on the Monument to Martyrs in the center of Tien An Men Square, Peking. But no cross or other symbol of their Christian origins appears in the sculptured panorama of the Taiping peasant revolutionaries.

The authors of *The Taiping Revolution* do not ignore the role of religion in this great people's movement. But their projected image of religion is unswerving: a classical Marxist view that religion is a man-made fantasy providing an ontological framework for popular understanding in lieu of the truth of scientific materialism; and that Christian missionaries were co-conspirators with the other foreigners in the nineteenth-century Western imperialist assault on China.

> It is true that the Taiping Revolution made use of the religious doctrines of the Pai Shang Ti Hui to hammer at the chains of feudalism, but they did so because no adequate critical weapon was as yet available to them. In doing so, however, they changed the enslaving Christian doctrines into a philosophy of rebellion with which they struck hard at the stubbornly fortified reactionary feudal superstructure.[31]

In December 1949 a group of Protestant church leaders sent a message from Chinese Christians to mission boards abroad. Although no official messages from the church in China have been transmitted in many years, there is ample evidence that the church survives today in numerous family, neighborhood, and village groups. The 1949 message reads, in part:

> A new chapter in the history of China has begun; a new era has dawned. . . . We Christians in China feel the urgent necessity of reexamining our work and our relationship with the older churches abroad in the light of this historical change in China. We need not reexamine our faith, for our fundamental faith in Christ is not to be

shaken, and under the New Democracy freedom of religious faith is stipulated in the adopted national policy. It is also needless for us to relate here what the Christian movement in China has accomplished, nor need we stress at the present juncture what share our Christian friends abroad have contributed to that achievement. These are matters of history and common knowledge. . . .

There does exist some deep-rooted feeling on the part of the communists that the Chinese church has been intimately related to imperialism and capitalism. It is a fact that the Christian Church in China in the past has been entangled with the unequal treaties imposed upon China under duress; it did enjoy certain special privileges accruing from them. It is also a fact that the churches in China have had close connections with the churches [abroad] in personnel and financial support. It is also a fact that the church life and organization here in China has been modeled after the pattern in Britain and America. Traditions of denominationalism have been imported and taken root here. Much of the church administration is still in the hands of missionaries, and in many instances church policies are still determined by the mission boards abroad. . . . We do realize that many of our missionary friends and many of the leading members of mission boards have been aware of the unfortunate political involvements in the past and have done what they could towards their correction. We also realize that you do sincerely believe in the establishment of truly Chinese indigenous churches, controlled and administered by the Chinese Christians . . . .

The Christian movement will have its due place in the future Chinese society and will have a genuine contribution to make. Its future will not be a bed of roses. . . . The Chinese church will not emerge through this historical change unaffected. It will suffer a purge, and many of the withered branches will be amputated. But we believe it will emerge stronger and purer in quality, a more fitting witness to the gospel of Christ.

[Signed by nineteen national church leaders.][32]

Notes

1. D. MacInnis, *Religious Policy and Practice in Communist China: A Documentary History* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), p. 147; from *Tien Feng*, August 25, 1962.
2. *The Opium War*, History of Modern China Series (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1976), p. 3; English translation of the Chinese original published in Shanghai.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
17. *The Taiping Revolution*, History of Modern China Series (Shanghai, 1976), p. 16.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 173.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 175.
32. *Documents of the Three-Self Movement* (New York: Asia Department, NCCCUSA, 1963), pp. 151ff.

Present-Day Christianity in the Gulf States of the Arabian Peninsula

Norman A. Horner

The histories of early Christianity include many references to thriving Christian communities along the Gulf Coast of the Arabian peninsula, but from the eighth century onward those communities gradually disappeared under the impact of Islam. Overt evangelistic outreach is even yet an impossibility in that particular region. There are, however, ongoing missionary activities of many kinds, and the undramatic, low-key Christian witness of an expanding foreign population has a significance that missiologists should not overlook.

Kuwait, Bahrian, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Oman are the most important of eleven sheikdoms and emirates that extend the length of the Persian (or Arabian) Gulf and around the tip of the Arabian peninsula to the border of Yemen. It is a generally arid and sparsely populated region where the economic and cultural character has undergone more rapid and far-reaching change in the last ten years than has happened almost anywhere else on earth. Oil production is the common denominator of the new prosperity and social upheaval in all but three or four of those states. The influx of foreigners—largely Indian, Pakistani, Iranian, European, and American—now vastly exceeds the native population in several of them (notably Kuwait, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai). This accounts for a higher percentage of Christians in the total population than one would expect to find in such strongholds of very conservative Islam. The number of truly "native" Christians is, however, infinitesimal—less than 150 in total along the entire length of the peninsula from Kuwait to Oman.

Arabic-speaking expatriates (including Christians) from other parts of the Middle East are there in considerable numbers, but the largest Christian community by far is Indian. This may seem surprising, since India itself is only about 2 percent Chris-

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tian. Indian Christians, however, have been more inclined than Hindus to work abroad; the Muslim nations have received them more readily; and they have in turn attracted others from their own communities to join them. Thus as many as 30 percent of the Indians now living in the Arabian Gulf States may be of Christian background. Very few hold top positions in the economic structures of the region. Most of them are employed in secondary jobs with oil companies or trading firms, in various medical services, as merchants working independently or for small companies, as household servants, and so forth. Nevertheless, they are the backbone of the work force and are likely be prominent in the area for a long time to come.

Among the eleven Gulf States, five members of the political federation known as the United Arab Emirates are not included in the purview of this article: Sharjah, Ras-al-Kaimah, Ajman, Fujairah, and Umm-al-Quwain. These represent highly traditional Islamic societies, with total populations ranging from only 6,000 in Ajman to no more than 60,000 in Sharjah. Western influence has thus far been minimal in all five. Few expatriates, and hence very few Christians, are residing in any of them. This is not to say that there is no Christian witness of any kind, but only that it is more limited than in the six states that have been selected as our focus.

Three generalizations can be made about Christianity in the Gulf area as a whole: (1) A remarkably large part of the total Christian population is from South India; (2) the majority of these Indian Christians are Roman Catholics; (3) until recent years the non-Catholics among them met together in what were known as

"Malayalee congregations" (Malayalam-speaking), which assemblies included people from such varied ecclesiastical backgrounds as Mar Thomite, Syrian Orthodox, Church of South India, Pentecostal, and Brethren. As numbers increased with further immigration from India, they divided into the communions of their origin and, in some cases, sent for Indian priests or pastors to serve on a full-time basis. In several places, however, the Malayalee congregations continue to meet on special occasions, a vestige of the earlier commonality, but also a continuing expression of the ecumenical spirit that has emerged throughout the Gulf States where Christians have no vested interests to protect, since they are almost all temporary residents.

Statistical estimates of total Christian constituency anywhere in the Middle East are approximations at best. Those I have published concerning other parts of that vast region[1] embrace all the people who belong by birthright to the several Christian "millets." Such a procedure for the would-be statistician is justified, because churches in the Middle East tend to be composed of ethnic groups as a whole; they are social as well as religious units. In the Gulf States, however, where most Christians are temporary residents, the socio-religious life-style is significantly different. *It seems more realistic, therefore, to include only those who are regarded as taking some active part in the life of the various churches and worshiping communities as such, and the following statistical tables have all been compiled on that basis.*

KUWAIT

		Percent of total Christian community	Percent of total population
Eastern Orthodox (Antioch Patriarchate)	6,000	14	0.75
Oriental Orthodox	10,000	25	1.25
Armenian	6,600		
Coptic	1,300		
Syrian Orthodox Church of Malabar	2,100		
Assyrian ("Nestorian")	400	1	——
Roman Catholic	19,500	48	2.40
Latin-rite (½ Indian)	13,000		
Melkite	2,900		
Maronite	1,800		
Chaldean	1,200		
Armenian	350		
Syrian	200		
Coptic	50		
Protestant and Anglican	4,700	12	0.60
Anglican	1,350		
Mar Thomite	1,600		
Evangelical	1,300		
Indian Pentecostal Church of So. India	200		
	100		
Indian Brethren	100		
Seventh-Day Adventist	50		
TOTAL	c. 40,600		c. 5%

Kuwait is an area of 9,370 square miles. The population is now estimated at more than 800,000, having increased by nearly 30 percent since 1970. The vast majority of the people live in Kuwait city and in nearby Ahmadi; others are in scattered oil camps. The number of nomadic tribespeople is variously estimated but probably not large. Considerably less than half the total population is native Kuwaiti, the rest being expatriates including Europeans, Americans, Iranis, about 25,000 Indians, and a roughly equal number of Pakistanis. Thus the government's expressed goal of maintaining a balance—50 percent native and 50 percent foreign—is a long way from realization.

Thirty years ago Kuwait city was a relatively quiet Arab town, living chiefly on the proceeds from pearl fishing and trade with India and the African coast. Then came oil, and a totally different way of life. Today this sheikhdom ranks second among the nations of the world in petroleum export and fourth in crude-oil production. Its per capita gross national product is highest in the world. The last remnants of the old city wall were demolished in 1957, and an ultramodern metropolis has arisen literally on the desert sand. There are plush and very expensive hotels, high-rise office buildings, apartment houses and condominiums (all air

conditioned), wide boulevards with superb lighting, and the very latest in electronic equipment. The cost of living is very high, but so also are salaries and wages.

Medical care is free, and free public education is rapidly expanding. Thus the medical and educational services once provided largely by Reformed Church in America (RCA) and Roman Catholic missionaries have given way to institutions in which some of these missionaries still serve, but now on government salaries. Mission schools have disappeared altogether. Only the Armenian Orthodox any longer maintain a church-related school, and it is strictly for the children of their own expatriate community.

The 1978 annual meeting of the American Society of Missiology will be held in conjunction with the meeting of the International Association for Mission Studies at Maryknoll Seminary in Maryknoll, New York, August 21-26, 1978. The theme of the meeting will be "Credibility and Spirituality in Mission." Details about the program have been published in *IAMS Newsletter, No. 11.* Attendance will be limited to 200 participants. For further information, write to: Dr. Frans J. Verstraelen, General Secretary of the IAMS; Department of Missiology, I.I.M.E., Boerhaavelaan 43, Leiden, Netherlands.

Journals of the several churches represented in this country report their respective activities from time to time, but little has been attempted by way of a more inclusive description. Monsignor Victor Sanmiguel, Roman Catholic Apostolic Vicar for Kuwait, has published the only effort thus far to treat the subject comprehensively. His booklet, *The Christians of Kuwait* (1970), is already out of date (the inevitable fate of any such survey within a few years after publication), but it remains a valuable contribution to ecumenical understanding. It is beyond the scope of the present article to describe the life of the churches in detail. Suffice it here to note two items of ecumenical interest.

The building of the National Evangelical Church of Kuwait (NECK) is used by such a variety of groups throughout the week as to require a very precise hour-by-hour schedule. In addition to both Arabic- and English-speaking congregations of the NECK itself, five others conduct all their activities within its walls: Mar Thomite, two Syrian Orthodox bodies (one affiliated with the Patriarch in Damascus and the other related exclusively to the Catholicos in India), the Malayalee Congregation, and the Church of South India. St. Paul's Anglican Church in the same city also makes its building available to three or four Indian congregations of diverse ecclesiastical origins.

> *". . . a generally arid and sparsely populated region where the economic and cultural character has undergone more change in the last ten years than almost anywhere else on earth."*

The Kuwait Church Council is an informal but very active group of clergy and lay leaders who meet periodically for matters of common interest. Except for the Council of Churches in Sudan, it is the only ecumenical association in the Middle East to which Roman Catholics belong officially.

BAHRAIN

		Percent of total Christian community	Percent of total population
Oriental Orthodox		5	—
Syrian Orthodox Church of Malabar	200		
Roman Catholic		63	1.22
Total	2,700		
All Under Latin-rite Capuchin priests; all services in English except when visiting priests meet separately with Melkites, Maronites, Syrian and Indian Catholics			
Protestant and Anglican		32	0.63
National Evangelical Church	450		
Arabic	60		
English	180		
Tamil	128		
Urdu	50		
Telegu	35		
Anglican	500		
Mar Thomite	200		
Indian Brethren	100		
Awali Inter-denominational (Employees of oil company in Awali)	75		
Indian Pentecostal	75		
Church of South India	75		
St. Thomas Evangelical	10		
TOTAL	c. 4,300		c. 1.85%

Bahrain is a group of more than thirty very small islands situated some twenty miles from the eastern coast of the Arabian peninsula. The largest of them, Bahrain Island, is 231 square miles in area. The total population of this sheikhdom is estimated at 220,000 (including about 40,000 foreign residents), half of whom live in two cities: Manama, the capital, and Muharraq. Because the expatriate community is proportionately smaller than in some of the other Gulf States, so also is the percentage of Christians to the total population.

Here also petroleum is the major source of wealth. However, oil production did not begin on a large scale until the 1950s and the reserves are thought to be less than in some of the adjacent areas. For this reason there is less extravagant affluence than, for example, in either Kuwait or Abu Dhabi, and a more traditional way of life. Serious efforts are being made to diversify the economy by introducing new industries. Among such projects is an aluminum plant that may continue to operate economically on the very large supply of natural gas long after the oil reserves have been depleted.

Bahrain was one of the first areas outside the Arabian mainland to accept Islam, and it remains religiously conservative. There is nevertheless a cordial relationship between the present sheikh and the Christian communities. For example, the sheikh gave one fourth of the total construction cost of the large new Evangelical Church building and attended the dedication service in person. The three church-related schools are located in Manama: Sacred Heart (Roman Catholic), St. Christopher's (Angli-

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one of them, there are not more than twenty-five and they do not meet together for religious services. He added: "We are only here temporarily, and we are not looking for trouble. It's easy for people to worship in English or some Indian language, but to do it in Arabic is simply to invite problems." The lay leader of the Bok Singh Fellowship volunteers his own less-than-generous interpretation of the matter: "The Arab Protestants here want only to make money, so they try to leave the impression that they are Muslims."

ABU DHABI

		Percent of total Christian community	Percent of total population
Oriental Orthodox		6	0.27
Syrian Orthodox Church of Malabar	270		
Roman Catholic		66	2.5
Total	2,500		
All services in English, using the Latin rite			
Anglican and Protestant		28	1.1
Anglican/Community Church	800		
Mar Thomite	200		
Indian Pentecostal	60		
Indian Brethren	30		
Arab Protestant	20		
TOTAL	c. 3,870		c. 3.87%

An estimated 400 Greek Orthodox in the country have no organized parish and no regular services

Abu Dhabi, with an area of 80,000 square miles, is largest of the seven United Arab Emirates, and its sheikh is currently president of the federation. The estimated population is 100,000 and only about one fourth of that total are native to the country. More than half the population lives in the port city of Abu Dhabi. Most of the rest are in Al Ain and other oases, and there are some nomadic desert peoples.

This country has now become the twelfth largest exporter of oil in the world although production began only fifteen years ago, in 1962. The rapid development of enormous wealth, easy optimism about the size of the oil reserves, and the overwhelming percentage of foreigners in the population conspire to make the culture of this emirate more artificial and the cost of living higher than perhaps anywhere else along the Gulf coast.

The underlying Muslim tradition is still strong, but the visible presence of three Christian church buildings, two of them on the broad avenue of the Corniche in Abu Dhabi city and with large crosses spotlighted at night, is in remarkable contrast to what one finds in Qatar to the north and the Arab emirates to the south. St. Joseph Catholic Church was built in 1963, the Anglican Church of St. Andrew one or two years later, and St. George Church of the Syrian Orthodox Indians in 1973.

Of the estimated 5,000 Catholics in the country, about half participate in the activities of the church. The majority are from South India, but there are many Europeans and Americans as well. The faithful number about 2,000 in the city of Abu Dhabi, 300 on Das Island (all men), and 200 in Al Ain. The prominently located Catholic compound in the city includes the large church building, the only two church-related schools in the country, and a club house. One of the schools, supervised by the Holy Rosary Sisters from Palestine, is taught in Arabic and English and now has 800 pupils. The other, with some 300 Indian and Pakistani children, is staffed by a community of nuns from India and is taught in Hindi, Urdu, and Arabic.

St. Andrew's Anglican Church is no more than a hundred meters from the Roman Catholic complex and fronts on the same seaside avenue. The congregation of about 500 (with another 300 in Al Ain and Das Island) includes people of many different denominational backgrounds. This building is also used by a variety of other congregations: Mar Thomite, Indian Pentecostal, Indian Brethren, and even by the Syrian Orthodox of Malabar prior to the construction of their own church in 1973.

The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM) has been in Abu Dhabi for about sixty years, involved primarily with a thirty-bed hospital at Al Ain. At times they have had a total missionary staff of twelve or thirteen, and there are still seven or eight. The hospital in Al Ain was developed before there were other medical facilities in the country, and these missionaries have had some freedom to conduct Bible classes and worship services among the patients. They minister to a group of about twenty Arab Christians, most of them employees of the hospital itself and mainly from other parts of the Middle East. Only two or three are native Abu Dhabians.

DUBAI

		Percent of total Christian community	Percent of total population
Oriental Orthodox		7	0.25
Syrian Orthodox Church of Malabar	250		
Roman Catholic		62	2.0
Total	2,000		
All services conducted in English and according to the Latin rite			
Protestant and Anglican		31	1.0
Anglican/Community Church	600		
TEAM/Community Church	100		
Mar Thomite	200		
Indian Pentecostal	60		
Indian Brethren	30		
TOTAL	c. 3,250		c. 3.25%

The Dubai Emirate is an area of 3,900 square miles. The estimated total population is 100,000—half of which is found in the port city of Dubai. An important creek, wide enough to admit some commercial traffic, runs through the center of the city, giving it a special character among the cities of the Gulf area, and Dubai has been called "the pearl of the Arabian coast." The country has smaller oil reserves than some of the other Gulf States but there is considerable off-shore drilling and the world's largest under-water storage tank. Because the economy is more diversified, with substantial trade in gold, pearls, and so forth, it is less inflated and life there is more stable.

The Christians in Dubai are approximately equal in numbers to those in Abu Dhabi and similarly distributed among the different communions. Nearly two thirds of them are Roman Catholics—again Indians in the majority, but including Euro-

peans, Americans, and some Arabs from elsewhere in the Arab world.

The Anglican/Community congregation has a somewhat more multidenominational character than those in the countries to the north, although it is officially part of the diocese. The present pastor served for many years in various places with the Mission to Seamen, and he continues to spend a considerable part of his time in that particular ministry because hundreds of ships call at the busy Dubai port throughout the year. Two missionaries of The Evangelical Alliance (TEAM) have recently organized a conservative-evangelical congregation, composed largely of British and Americans, using the Anglican church building for their services.

A priest who serves the Mar Thomite congregations in both Dubai and Abu Dhabi (two hours away by car) prefers to reside in Dubai where the cost of living is less, and because he is obliged on occasion to travel much farther southward in his ministry to the smaller Mar Thomite community in Muscat. The resident priest of the Syrian Orthodox Indians in Dubai also goes periodically as far as Muscat in Oman for pastoral services.

OMAN

		Percent of total Christian community	Percent of total population
Oriental Orthodox		8	negligible
Syrian Orthodox Church of Malabar	125		
Roman Catholic		42	"
Total	700		
All services in English and according to the Latin rite			
Protestant and Anglican		50	"
Protestant Church of Oman:			
English language	500		
Urdu	100		
Arabic	20		
Mar Thomite	150		
Indian Pentecostal	30		
Indian Brethren	30		
TOTAL	c. 1,650[2]		c. 0.225%[3]

The Sultanate of Oman is different from the other coastal states of the Arabian peninsula in nearly every way—topographically, culturally, economically. It covers a relatively large area, 107,000 square miles. Much of this is desert, with bare, moonscape mountains near the coast and in some other sections, but the far southwestern province of Dhofar is in the monsoon area, forested and source of the best frankincense in the world. Oman has sovereignty over three of the nine villages in Al Ain Oasis, a fertile region that continues into Abu Dhabi. There is also an Omani dependency at the tip of Cape Musandan (entrance to the Gulf of Oman) that is inhabited by people of an entirely different culture.

The sheer, craggy mountains around the twin cities of Muscat and Matrah are studded with very picturesque sixteenth-century Portuguese watchtowers, some of which are still used by the Omani police and military forces. Muscat is a major port and probably the older of the two cities. Matrah was once a center for caravan travel from the interior and still has a large and colorful Arab market of the traditional kind. A large part of the Christian population is concentrated in these two urban centers.

A coup led by Sultan Sayed Qabus bin Said in 1970 brought marked social progress, and there are current efforts to make the government more representative. This ruler, and about three fourths of the population, belong to the Ihmadi sect of Islam in which the practice is an elective rather than hereditary choice of the Imam or religious leader.

Copper has long been mined in Jebel Akhdar. Oil was discovered only in 1964 in the central part of the country. Production facilities are currently 85 percent owned by Shell, and oil revenues have continued to rise. Unfortunately, however, nearly half the national income has been used in recent years to support military operations in the war with neighboring Yemen.

> *"The Arabian peninsula is not merely part of the Muslim world—it is the religious center of that world."*

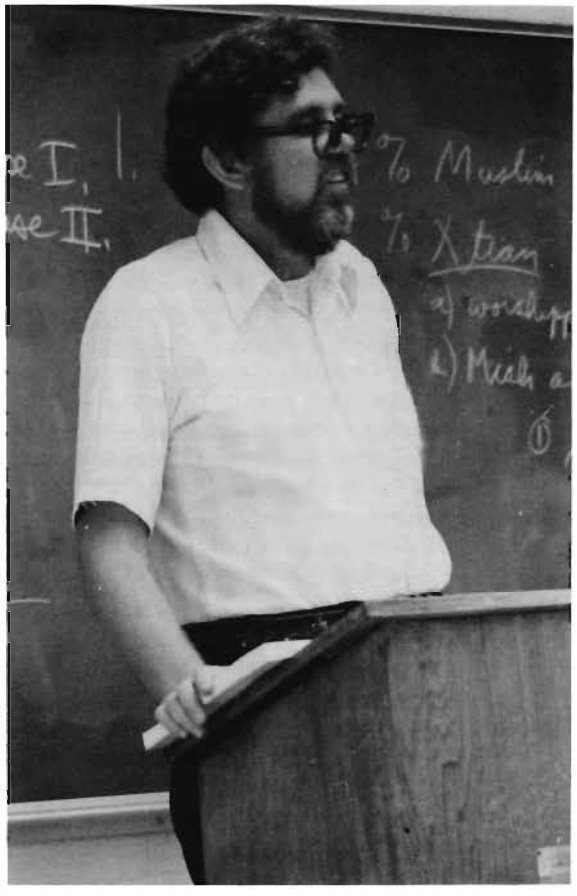
At certain periods in past centuries, Oman ruled both Zanzibar and Mombassa. This international involvement, along with the strategic geographical location of the sultanate, has made for a considerable mixture in the population, including many people whose origins were in Zanzibar and Baluchistan. In an estimated total population of 750,000, no more than 30,000 are expatriates, and hence the percentage of Christians in the country is lower than in the other Gulf States included in this particular survey. The foreign population includes some 12,000 Indians, about 10,000 Pakistanis, 2,000 British, 3,000 other Europeans (of whom a substantial number are Dutch), and 100 Americans.

Roman Catholic influence in Oman dates to the Portuguese incursions of the sixteenth century. There is no resident priest for the congregations now in the country, but a Capuchin father comes all the way from Bahrain every two weeks to spend three or four busy days in Muscat and other centers. The Catholics have long wanted to build a school, especially for the Indian children, but they have neither the money nor the government's authorization to begin.

Three years ago, the ruler of the country gave to the Christians a piece of land next to the Christian cemetery on the outskirts of Matrah. Catholic and Protestant churches have now been built side by side. The location is some distance from the center of town, but the city is rapidly growing in that direction and cheap public transportation is a possibility in the very near future. This is the first Catholic church building to be constructed anywhere in the sultanate in recent centuries. As a symbol of continuity with the past, a stone from the ruins of a sixteenth-century monastery (probably Franciscan) was placed in the foundation.

Prior to the construction of the new Catholic/Protestant compound, Protestant congregations related to the mission of the Reformed Church in America had the only church building in the country. It is an attractive building in Muscat, used also by Roman Catholics, Syrian Orthodox Indians, Mar Thomites, Malayalee Congregation, and a group of about 100 Urdu-speaking Pakistanis who maintain a close relationship with the Reformed Church missionaries. One of the RCA missionaries serves as pastor to an Arabic-language community of about twenty people. Some of them live in Muscat; others are in Matrah where they use a small meeting room on the old mission compound. All twenty are Omani citizens, although some came originally from other parts of the Gulf area.

Medical and educational institutions developed by the Reformed Church in America are worthy of special note. Both hospitals and schools have been taken over by the government in recent years, but a number of the missionaries continue in their old positions. They are still salaried by the RCA mission board and



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prefer the freedom of that arrangement. The Assada Maternity Hospital in Muscat has fifty-five beds and averages about fifteen deliveries every day. An RCA missionary nurse is still matron. Al Rahma Hospital in Matrah accommodates nearly eighty inpatients and an almost endless stream of outpatients. Sunday is still observed as the weekly holiday by the staff of both hospitals (although that is not permitted at any other government institution) and the mission-hospital atmosphere is still evident in most other ways. A missionary nurse continues as matron and four RCA-appointed doctors remain on the staff. On the other side of the mission compound from Al Rahma, a small hospital for tubercular patients and a leprosarium—both developed years ago by the RCA mission—continue in almost exactly the way they always have, except that they are now owned by the government. The school in Muscat, formerly known as the American Mission School for Girls, has become coeducational and is no longer independent of the government's Ministry of Education. Its principal, however, is the same missionary who has served in that capacity for many years, and the RCA continues to provide other missionary teachers. With a student body of only about ninety, classes are small and a generally effective level of education is possible. The quality of the Arabic-language instruction has come under some criticism recently, however, putting the future of the school in some jeopardy.

The Family Bookshop remains solidly under church auspices. As the only bookstore in Muscat (except for a tiny shop selling Muslim literature only), it serves a very wide usefulness.

Summary

Thus, in the Arabian Gulf States from Kuwait to Oman one finds monotonous similarities as well as significant differences in the situation of the Christian populations.

Throughout the area Christians are almost entirely expatriates, and hence their number in a given place is proportionate to the size of the foreign population as a whole. Their religious impact on the daily life of the region is therefore quite different from that of the indigenous Christian communities who lived there in early centuries, but it is not inconsequential.

An ecumenical spirit is encouraged by the very foreignness Christians have in common, and because they are obliged for the most part to share the use of church buildings. Yet divisions in some cases are not only perpetuated but actually compounded, as among the small and fragmented groups of Indian Brethren.

In several of these sheikhdoms and emirates there are more Christians (albeit foreigners) in relation to the total population than one would expect to find in any conservative Islamic state. Nevertheless, Muslims are and will continue to be the vast majority. The Arabian peninsula to which these states belong culturally and geographically is not merely part of the Muslim world—it is the religious center of that world. Yet certain rulers (notably those in Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, and Oman) give considerable encouragement to Christian activities through personal friendship and generosity. This may be because the early missionary contributions through schools, hospitals, and welfare programs have not been forgotten. As a secular historian notes: "In Kuwait, as in Qatar and the Trucial States, such educational and health facilities as existed were largely provided by Christian missionaries, true pioneers in ecumenism who had stayed on in Arabia to teach and heal even after discovering the impregnability of Muslim belief."[4]

The American Chargé d'Affaires in Muscat said in conversation with the present writer: "America has had all kinds of diplomatic, cultural and trade relationships with the Sultanate of Oman since the early 1800s. But what the Omani people will remember longest are the hospitals and schools founded by the Mission of the Reformed Church in America." The fact that missionaries continue to stay and to work willingly at the behest of governments in the Gulf States, long after most mission schools and hospitals have been nationalized, can only strengthen that kind of good will.

Notes

[1]See Norman A. Horner, *Rediscovering Christianity Where It Began: A Survey of Contemporary Churches in the Middle East and Ethiopia*, Beirut: Near East Council of Churches, 1974.

[2]An undetermined number of foreign Christians live in the far southwestern provinces and at inland oil camps. These are in addition to the figures given above.

[3]This figure is somewhat misleading when compared with those of the other Gulf States, because the foreign population in Oman is *much* smaller (4 percent as compared with more than 50 percent in Kuwait, Abu Dhabi and Dubai).

[4]Joseph J. Malone, *The Arab Lands of Western Asia*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973, p. 232.

Book Reviews

The Coming of the Third Church. An analysis of the present and future of the Church.

By Walbert Bühlmann. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1975. Pp. xi, 419. $12.95. Paperback $6.95.

The author of this extraordinary book is a Capuchin missionary with ample experience in the field (principally in what was Tanganyika) and who taught missiology at Fribourg University in Switzerland for sixteen years before becoming in 1971 the Secretary General for Capuchin missionaries and simultaneously a professor at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

The book is extraordinary for many reasons. It presents a wealth of hard data, albeit erratic and unsynthesized. It has a magnificent breadth of vision, but occasionally aggravates by sweeping generalizations. It vigorously calls the Roman Catholic Church to task, but frequently slights the initiatives and creativity of other Christian missionaries.

Bühlmann carefully defines his meaning of the "Third Church": "the Church of the south as distinct from the Churches of east and west." Thus the First Church is the Orthodox *and* "the Church in Communist countries from the iron curtain of Eastern Europe to the bamboo curtain of China, North Vietnam and North Korea" (p. 8). The Second Church is that of Europe and North America. The Third Church includes those of Latin America, Africa, India and Asia, despite all the obvious differences among them. The Third

Church is thus more or less the church of the Third World. In anticipating the future importance of this Third Church, Bühlmann writes that a church historian of the third millenium "may compare the eastern Church to the morning star, silent, glittering, ever full of hope, the western Church to the moon which, after a light almost luminous as the day, is now growing dim and the Third Church to the sun, newly risen on the horizon, ruling the day" (p. 24).

To substantiate this view of the emergence of the Third Church to primacy, Bühlmann devotes the first third of his book to some historical considerations of how the missionary wing of the Second Church has behaved in its task. Here he is objective and ruthless in his criticism of the motivations, methods and results of missionary endeavors, not always escaping the trap of judging past efforts by present criteria.

The rest of the book takes a hard look at present reality in the Third Church, explores the indications of independent growth, treats one by one the major problems and areas of concern, and ends up with concrete, hopeful, constructive suggestions for the future. Hardly a topic is left untouched: church structure, ecumenism, priestly and lay ministry, local churches, faith, magic, myth, family life, schools, development aid, mass media, urbanization, financial relationships, etc. The author feels obliged to say *some*thing about everything and consequently drifts from old shibboleths to uncanny new insights—all based on hard data, experience and intelligent reflection.

There is a magnificent wealth of material here. One's satisfaction (or disappointment) with the book, however, will be in relation to one's expectations. Given Karl Rahner's enthusiasm for it ("best Catholic book of the year" according to the dust jacket), I had high expectations. The book and such praise for it promise more than is delivered, principally for lack of synthesis. Still, it is the only book on the horizon which raises so many hard questions about mission and provides reasonable directions toward solutions. It is a basic primer for anyone who wants or needs to know what the questions are today, and where mission will go in the future.

—Simon E. Smith, S.J.

Simon E. Smith, S.J., is Executive Secretary of Jesuit Missions, Inc., Washington, D.C. He worked in Baghdad, Iraq, 1953-58, and was for many years an editor of New Testament Abstracts.

History and the Theology of Liberation.

By Enrique Dussell. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1976. Pp. xvi, 189. $8.95. Originally published as Caminos de liberación latinoamericana I: Interpretación histórica de nuestro continente latinoamericano, *Buenos Aires, Argentina.*

We learned many years ago, while attending a theological consultation, that history is the handmaiden of theology. The resource people who contributed most largely to our developing a theology of evangelism at that consultation

were the church historians present. Their insights gave balance, continuity, and cogency to our deliberations.

In the same way, Enrique Dussel in this book makes a substantial contribution to the reflections of the theologians of liberation. Anyone who wants to understand this many faceted expression of contemporary theology will find *History and the Theology of Liberation* invaluable.

Dussel affirms that the only locus of revelation is history, and that "if we do not discover the sense and import of history, we will not be able to comprehend God's revelation to us either." Much of his book is dedicated therefore to an original and fascinating analysis of Latin American history, which takes into account (as few, if any, other histories do) the pre-Columbian heritage of "Amer-India" (the Latin America whose father was Castilian Spain and whose mother was the Maya-Inca culture).

The basic heritage of Latin America has always been oppression. And the wars of independence from Spain were not peoples' revolts like their North American Revolutionary counterpart. Rather, they were led by the Creoles, the ruling class which constituted the elite of colonial society, in contrast to the indigenous masses. These latter were virtual spectators or mercenary soldiers who simply exchanged the oppression of their Spanish conquistadores for that of Great Britain's industry and commerce, and eventually for the economic domination of the United States. So the mass of Latin American people simply moved from one form of exploitation to another.

Particularly arresting and enlightening is Dussel's chapter on "Significant Events of the Last Decade (1962-1972)." The participation of Latin American bishops in Vatican Council II, the surprising new language of the Medellín Conference and of CELAM, the emergence of world figures like Dom Helder Camara and Sergio Méndez Arceo, and the eloquent martyrdom of Henrique Pereira Neto and Camilo Torres—these personalities and events provide a vivid backdrop for the analysis of violence and the Christian solutions the author develops.

Dussel's insights help to explain why a theology of liberation is indigenous to Latin America. But his

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Roman Catholic doctrine of revelation (whereby God continues to reveal himself authoritatively through the tradition of the Church) makes him ascribe almost as much importance to the analysis of contemporary history as to the exegesis of the biblical history of God's people. He is here in need of the corrective of José Míguez Bonino, who calls upon the Christian to stand with one foot in contemporary history but with the other solidly placed in biblical history, because the Bible is God's universal revelation and is normative.

We should be grateful to the liberation theologians for their insights into the implications of the gospel, for their de-Hellenization of the Scriptures, for helping us understand better the concepts of "justice," "peace," "righteousness," and "the kingdom of God." But they seem to try to embrace the infinite spread of God's grace within a single term: liberation. This is a biblical concept. But the Bible also uses terms like "redemption," "atonement," "regeneration," and "rebirth" to describe God's mighty work among us in the person of Jesus Christ. No single human concept is in itself adequate to encompass the grace and mercy of God—not even in a historical context of social oppression. We celebrate the insights of liberation, and recognize their peculiar application to the poor and oppressed of the Third World. But we choose not to relinquish other traditions which have also contributed to our understanding of the full and perfect salvation that is ours in Christ Jesus.

Enrique Dussel has helped us grasp this equilibrium, and his work deserves careful and grateful attention from Christians everywhere.

—W. Dayton Roberts

Evangelicals and Liberation.

Edited by Carl E. Armerding. Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1977. Pp. ix, 136. Paperback $4.50.

The volume, with one exception, consists of the papers presented at the April 1976 annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society of Canada. Now also from the perspective of evangelicals we have an analysis of what the liberation process is yielding for theology. There are five authors: Carl Edwin Armerding, Harvie Conn, Kenneth Hamilton, Stephen C. Knapp, and Clark H. Pinnock, with Conn and Hamilton providing two papers each. The volume ought to receive a wide reading also among those who do not think of themselves as evangelicals. More than any other work of this genre it shows that the time of guesswork in matters of liberation theology has to come to an end. We can make a creative contribution only if we commit ourselves to precision.

With different minds at work, there are always different trails to follow. One trail we all have to choose is the effort to find a common notion of liberation theology. The authors are very much together in pursuing this trail. And yet they are not agreed on the rationale for marching in one direction. Kenneth Hamilton claims: "North Americans and Europeans may indeed read such Latin American authors as Rubem Alves or Gustavo Gutiérrez, but they are most likely to digest liberation theology through books by Jürgen Moltmann, Dorothee Soelle, Harvey Cox, Rosemary Ruether, and John Pairman Brown" (pp. 1f.): Can one digest liberation theology that "secondhand"? The basic point thus far has been (as to liberation theology being a new approach) that involvement in praxis where the oppressed find a voice is the first step. Theology arises only as the second step. I do not get the impression that Harvey Cox, for example, thinks of himself as a liberation theologian in this regard. So it does not seem helpful to suggest that we are digesting liberation theology through books by Harvey Cox. We need to think of liberation theology in less inclusive terms.

At other points in the book the specific contribution of liberation theology seems much clearer. Armerding, for example, quite succinctly acknowledges the oppressed as the starting point of the new approach: "It is because the authentic perception of liberation can come only from such a milieu that I have chosen to bypass the host of North American commentaries on liberation and attempt to hear its voice as the voice of those to whom liberation has quite naturally made an

Frederick Herzog is Professor of Systematic Theology at Duke University Divinity School. He is the author of Liberation Theology *(New York: Seabury Press, 1972).*

appeal" (p. 44). But do the oppressed exclude anyone from participating in this new starting point of theology? Parts of the book at least again introduce a polarity between privileged and nonprivileged. Only that now the poor are the privileged. But the liberation process is not once or twice removed from some people whereas others have access to it. The access is there for all. It is just that some close their eyes to it. The process taking place in the Third World is also taking place among us. White North American males are not exempt from getting their hands dirty in the liberation process themselves.

There is no neutral country, no neutral ground, in the present liberation struggle. One cannot play the outsider. The Bible offers us no escape. The real strength of the book is that it zeroes in on the biblical foundation of liberation as the central issue. Not all voices are equally articulate on the subject. But the point comes through in the book as a whole loud and clear. If we are not authorized on biblical grounds to participate in the liberation process as God's liberation we are of all people "most to be pitied." The charge "that liberation theology, as a theoretical framework, operates in a thought-world totally opposed to that of biblical Christianity" (p. 120) draws the battle line rather well. In a brief review it is next to impossible to demonstrate that there are also biblical liberation theologies, or that liberation for theology is first of all a biblical fighting word. Suffice it to say, the book tells us that there is a new battle going on over the authority of the biblical word. In fact, the book engages in the battle itself. That is why it is an important book.

—Frederick Herzog

Christendom en godsdiensten der wereld. Nieuwe inzichten en nieuwe activiteiten.

By Arnulf Camps. Baarn, Netherlands: Bosch & Keuning, 1976. Pp. 104. Paperback. No price given.

Arnulf Camps, the Dutch Franciscan Professor of Missiology at the Catholic University in Nijmegen, is a member of the Secretariat for Non-Christians in Rome and President of the International Association for Mission Studies. He was formerly a missionary in Pakistan, and has taken part in recent important interreligious dialogues with Muslims, particularly in North Africa.

In this study Camps gives a useful survey of significant activities in interreligious relationships, such as the meetings of the World Conference for Religion and Peace in Kyoto (1970) and Louvain (1974). He also comments on current thinking within the official agencies of the World Council of Churches and the Vatican on the eternal question of the Christian attitude and approach to persons of other faiths.

Camps represents a moderate position in Roman Catholic discussions about other religions as "ways of salvation." His primary concern is to establish—to use Pope Paul's term—*colloquia salutis*, and his critical question is, to what extent do contemporary efforts at dialogue contribute to that end? Camps defines salvation in this context as knowing God and living in a mature human way, including restored social relationships. He contrasts his own position with that of Dutch colleagues, including Reformed scholars such as H. Berkhof. Camps is critical of a dialectical heritage and pleads for a salvation-historical emphasis where the question of salvation also is seen in an ecclesiological context. His position invites creative contributions from Protestant missiology in the continuing Christian discussions on salvation.

—Carl F. Hallencreutz

Carl F. Hallencreutz is Professor of Missions at the University of Uppsala, Sweden.

A Socio-Theology of Letting Go: The Role of a First World Church Facing Third World Peoples.

By Marie Augusta Neal, S.N.D.deN. New York: Paulist Press, 1977. Pp. vii, 118. Paperback $3.95.

"What is needed," says Sister Marie Augusta Neal, is that people "discover the goodness and possibility of being responsible in some transcendent fashion for their social organizations, including their national government and economy, and that they develop a facility for calling administrators to account to them for the faithful fulfillment of their mandates" (p. 53).

Neal, who teaches sociology of religion at Harvard Divinity School and Emmanuel College in Boston, traces the evolution of civil religion and concludes: civil religion amounts to support of the status quo, neither speaking the words nor doing the deeds of the prophet.

Her answer to this silence and paralysis is a series of calls: for relinquishment in the presence of plenty; for serious work to eliminate the causes rather than allievate the results of poverty; for a new partnership of biblical people who will recognize that their rhetoric is insufficient and that their actions must become holy.

To hear these calls with clarity that evokes action, rather than in cacophany that breeds paralysis, we must ask the question of ourselves and of our institutions: "What theory of human nature undergrids . . . current attempts to reconcile groups that are hostile to each other?" (p. 82). In the response will be heard the cries of the poor, the powerless, and the unpromising.

Neal offers the tools for massive social change—from so familiar a source as the Scriptures; so untried a solution as the Year of Jubilee; so utopian a plan as to release our grip on resources as the poor reach out for them.

The impact of this small volume is its relentless focus on institutions. Words previously aimed at individuals are fashioned to pin the church, the society, and the nation to the target of justice for all. No longer can the impassibility and impenetrability of such structures be excused and the burden shifted to the members, few or many, who speak as prophets. The call is sounded for the institution—the Christian Church, in particular—to stop hiding behind the pseudo-judgment of righteousness or within the shadows of neutral civility.

For the moment, Neal addresses herself to the First World/Third World disarticulation. Ultimately, however, the tools of salvation will be for all peoples to use toward the end for which Christ came, "That all may have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

—Joan Chatfield, M.M.

Sister Joan Chatfield, a Maryknoll Missioner in Hawaii for eighteen years, is currently writing her doctoral dissertation at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. A former director of the Maryknoll Mission Institute, she will return to Honolulu as program executive of the Institute for Religion and Social Change.

Mahatma Gandhi and His Apostles.

By Ved Mehta. New York: Viking Press, 1977. Pp. xi, 260. $14.95.

With some four hundred biographies of Mahatma Gandhi on record, even as brilliant and resourceful a free-lance writer as Ved Mehta must resort to sensationalism to offer something new. He has scoured India—and touched Afghanistan and France—to interview surviving companions and intimate followers of the Great Soul. Occasionally he gives the impression that his modern, westernized Indian mind (he is now an American citizen) finds Gandhiji anachronistic, even ludicrous, but does not dare directly to ridicule a saint, so he lampoons or caricatures the "apostles" instead.

Actually the middle part of the book is a clear, readable, informative account of Gandhi's life, drawing on other biographies and primary writings, including more than usual on the South African period. The interpretations of such basic principles as Truth/God, nonviolence, celibacy, and austerity (p. 162) are reasonable, fair—and brief. On the other hand, Mehta—like Gandhi—seems obsessed with the Mahatma's sexual experiments with brahmacharya, with excretory habits, with such other eccentricities as hydropathy, nature remedies, and failures in family relationships. Echoing an earlier comment that it cost a great deal to keep Gandhi in the simplicity to which he was accustomed, Mehta quotes one disciple as saying: "Since all the paraphernalia he needed—the buckets, the bathtubs, the commode, the syringes, and whatnot—had to come with us, it was no easy task getting from village to village."

But parts I and III, 60 percent of the total, parade the assorted apostles as a veritable freak show. Having interviewed at least ten of those mentioned, this reviewer can confirm the idiosyncrasies, the bizarre characters, the foibles described. One is a consultant for neurotic brahmacharis, another an astrologer, a third a Beethoven "bug." In some cases the explanation is senility; in others, emotional peculiarities of long standing; in still others, the disillusionment and frustration of unfulfilled hopes. Surprisingly, Mehta devotes only thirteen pages to the three "real heirs, mahatmas in their own right:" Vinoba Bhave (less than three pages), Satish Chandra Das Gupta, and Abdul Ghaffar Khan (the Frontier Gandhi). Said Satish: "I'm going mad because I can't get anyone to listen to me" (p. 236).

Perhaps that is the sad story of Mahatma Gandhi and his apostles today. "In India, Gandhism is dead," remarked Ghaffar Khan (p. 242). In the world outside, Gandhiji's immortality must now rest on his gentle personality and his moral teachings, not on his quixotic life or his exotic apostles as portrayed by Ved Mehta. (If, as generally reported, the author is blind, he owes some acknowledgment to his companion-scribe, for the beauty of Mehta's writing style lies in the vivid, perceptive descriptions of people and scenes in contemporary India.)

—Creighton Lacy

Creighton Lacy is Professor of World Christianity and Associate Dean in the Divinity School of Duke University. As a Fullbright Research Scholar he has spent two years in India and published two books on contemporary social thought: The Conscience of India *and* Indian Insights: Public Issues in Private Perspective.

Bibliography of New Religious Movements in Primal Societies. Vol. 1: Black Africa.

By Harold W. Turner. Boston, Mass.: G.K. Hall & Co., 1977. Pp. x, 277. $25.00.

The compiler of this bibliography has recently retired from the Project for the Study of New Religious Movements in Primal Societies that was established (mainly due to his initiative) in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, in 1973. The volume under review is the first in a series of four on new religious movements in primal societies; the other three will be devoted to North America, Latin America with the Caribbean, and Asia with Oceania.

Turner was superbly qualified to undertake this task. He had already, between 1966 and 1970, published three extensive bibliographies on African religious movements. He also contributed a major article on "new tribal religious movements" to the most recent edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. His first encounter with these movements was in West Africa. Increasingly, however, he became aware of the fact that this was no mere African—let alone West African—phenomenon; all over the world similar movements were arising because of the interaction of a primal society with another society where there was great disparity of power and sophistication. This is what prompted him to establish a center where movements from all corners of the globe could be studied and compared.

This bibliography on Black Africa does not merely update the three earlier bibliographies. It includes material from the earlier bibliographies and adds material from the period 1970 to mid-1976. It does not attempt however—as the previous bibliographies did—to be comprehensive. Minor references, repetitive material, and lesser treatments of the same theme by the same author have been excluded. This policy is definitely to be welcomed. A concise, selective bibliography is more useful than a bulky, comprehensive one. Still, it would be possible to show that some items that should have been included have been omitted. It is humanly impossible to check all possible sources. What the compiler and his assistants *have* checked, however, is absolutely astonishing and merits our admiration and gratitude. This volume is an indispensable tool for everybody doing research in this field. Not only the theologian, in fact, but also the psychologist, sociologist, political scientist, and cultural anthropologist will find it extremely helpful. The fact that, in the majority of instances, brief annotations are added to the titles makes the bibliography even more useful.

As in the previous bibliographies, the material has been grouped in terms of theory, Africa in general, regions,

David J. Bosch, Professor of Missiology and Dean of the Faculty of Theology at the University of South Africa in Pretoria, is Editor of Missionalia, *the journal of the South African Missiological Society. A South African of the Dutch Reformed Church, he served for fifteen years as a missionary in Transkei.*

Olav G. Myklebust and the Study of Missions in Norway

Per Hassing

In the fall of 1975 King Olav V of Norway made Dr. Olav Guttorm Myklebust, Professor Emeritus of Missiology at the Free Theological Faculty in Oslo, Commander of the Order of Saint Olav, the highest honor the people of Norway can give to one of its citizens.

There were several reasons for this unique event. In 1939 Dr. Myklebust was called from the principalship of the Umpumulo Training Institution in Natal, South Africa, to the Free Theological Faculty in Oslo. Until then Norwegian Christians had sent out more missionaries in proportion to their population than any other country with the possible exception of Scotland. The promotion of missions had been well done. But Myklebust wanted to stress the importance of the scholarly study of the missionary enterprise. The promotion of such study became his program. At the end of World War II he was instrumental in founding the Egede Institute for Missionary Research (Egede Instituttet), named after Hans Egede, Norway's first missionary, who went to Greenland in 1721. This was followed by the launching of a new quarterly in 1946, *Norsk Tidsskrift for Misjon*, which Myklebust edited till his retirement in 1975. This in itself was a masterful achievement, especially as the publication soon established itself in Scandinavia as a highly respected journal of missionary and religious studies.

He also set out to encourage doctoral students to choose dissertation topics of missionary interest and made it possible for many of them to have their works published in the Egede Institute's Series of Mission Studies. As a result a number of first-rate studies of the Norwegian missionary enterprise are now available, some of them in English or French.

His vision went further. In 1951 he published a proposal for *An International Institute of Scientific Missionary Research*, but it took twenty years for the first part of that dream to materialize in the International Association of Mission Studies, in which Myklebust served as the founding secretary-treasurer, and is now an honorary member of the executive committee.

Myklebust not only encouraged others to do research and to write, he did it himself. In the English-speaking world he is best known for his two-volume *The Study of Missions in Theological Education* (Oslo: Egede Instituttet, 1955). But he did much more than that. His first publication dealt with the Le Zoute, Africa conference in 1926. Altogether he published more than 260 books, contributions to books and encyclopedias, and articles. This is an extensive contribution and all of it is first rate, both in breadth and in depth. His latest book, *Misjonskunnskap* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1976), is a testament to his missionary thinking. It deals with nearly every subject that occupies missiologists and professors of missions today. It represents the mature result of his lifelong study of and involvement in the missionary enterprise in theological, ecumenical, and global perspectives. It is a mine of information filled with insight and theological depth. It was almost natural that when Myklebust retired his colleagues honored him with a Festschrift called *Misjonskall og Forskerglede* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1975).

Finally, in a country where 94 percent of the population belongs to the Lutheran Church, he is a convinced Lutheran. But he also has had the courage and vision to be a convinced ecumenist, a position he has steadfastly maintained throughout his life. He has been an inspiration to many younger scholars.

Per Hassing, since 1960 Professor of World Christianity at Boston University School of Theology, is a native of Norway, a minister of the United Methodist Church, and for twenty years was a missionary in Rhodesia. He is visiting lecturer in 1978-79 at Makumira Lutheran Theological Seminary, Tanzania.

and individual countries. Cross-references are given where appropriate. A "select thematic guide" is also given (p. 277), with references under thirteen themes or categories. Perhaps the only weakness of the bibliography lies here. It would have helped enormously if more detailed thematic categories were established and extensive references to these included in the "select thematic guide."

One thing that struck the present reviewer is the accuracy of the bibliographical data. Only very occasionally are there (minor) mistakes in non-English items.

A word about the price. I suppose it is understandable that publications of this nature will be expensive. It is nevertheless a pity, as the price of $25.00 places this bibliography outside the reach of the ordinary individual buyer. Moreover, buyers outside the United States are warned that, in their case, the price will be 10 percent higher.

—David J. Bosch

Noteworthy

The North and South Map of the World.

Wall poster 46½" x 32½" in color. £ 2.00. Order from Christian Aid, P. O. Box No. 1, London SW9 8BH, England. German edition from Weltmission, Evangelisches Missionswerk, Mittelweg 143, 2000 Hamburg 13, West Germany.

This large, attractive, color wall-map—originally produced in West Germany—represents a major cartographic breakthrough that is of special interest and importance for missiologists. Maps commonly used in textbooks and posters have traditionally been based on the projection of the sixteenth-century German geographer, Gerhard Kremer, better known by his Latin name, "Mercator." His cartographic representation is Europe-centered and distorts the earth in favor of the countries inhabited by white people. For instance, on the old Mercator map, Europe appears to be larger than South America, which is in fact twice the size of Europe. The Soviet Union appears to be considerably larger than Africa, while the opposite is true. Scandinavia seems to be larger than India, when in fact India is three times the size of Scandinavia. And Greenland appears to be much larger than China, when actually China (excluding Taiwan) is more than four times larger. This Mercator view of the world has remained the popular image for more than 400 years.

By contrast, the "North and South Map" (1974), based on the work of Dr. Arno Peters of the University of Bremen, has "equal area" projection. This means that "it gives a representation of the earth's surface which has absolute fidelity of area and thus enables a direct comparison of each country of the world with every other one." Furthermore, the countries of the Third World appear in their actual central position. Like every attempt to project the earth on a two-dimensional plane, this map also has its distortions. In order to give a faithful representation of the land surface proportions, the Peters projection has to accept certain angular distortions, so that land surfaces close to the equator appear to be elongated whereas those close to the polar region appear to be compressed. But these unavoidable distortions are within reasonable limits, and the achievement of the Peters projection is that it matches more closely the real appearance of our world, and corrects the proportions between the sizes of countries and continents.

The new map is truly "a challenge to our old ideas of the world." With it "our picture of the world should be a bit more just; a bit more honest." Highly recommended.

Discipling the Nations.

By Richard R. De Ridder. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1975. Pp. viii, 253. Paperback $4.95.

In the ongoing task of clarifying the church's missionary task, we need both to reexamine traditional understandings and allow fresh insights from biblical and theological scholarship to illuminate the meaning of mission. Too much promotional interpretation of the Christian mission has been based on a few proof-texts. No text has been used more frequently in the missionary cause than Matthew 28:18–20. Apart from the need to read the text correctly, we must understand how it relates to the broad sweep of salvation history.

Richard R. De Ridder, now Professor of Missions at Calvin Theological Seminary, gives us a thorough study of the theme of the "dispersion of the people of God" under covenant. The mission of the Church arises from her covenantal relationship to God. God's people have been called out in order to be dispersed. De Ridder divides his study into four chapters: Old Testament Background; Jewish Proselytism; The Apostle, Jesus Christ; and The Commissioned Church.

God's redemptive purpose for humanity becomes evident from the beginning of Genesis. The calling of Abraham under a universal covenant becomes the prototype of all divine initiatives thereafter. The particular covenant between God and Israel, based on Israel's election and Exodus experience, made provision for the incorporation of the non-Israelite. At Sinai God gave the charter for a new community that would include the *gerim*. The form of Israel's presence in the promised land (settling among the original peoples) prefigured her later life in diaspora.

The relationship between the people of God and the world underwent change during the age of the prophets. Although an explicitly missionary vision did not emerge, the prophets challenged the people of God to be a living testimony of God's grace before the nations. Diaspora became a decisive experience in Jewish history. Passive witness gave way to an aggressive movement of proselytization by some of the Diaspora. In diaspora the people of God were released from territorialism and the synagogue and translation of the Scriptures emerged in response to the needs of the missionary situation.

Jesus, as God's apostle, identified himself in baptism with Messiah's ministry. He immediately began to inaugurate the Kingdom of God. Jesus Christ's post-resurrection enthronement was based on the promulgation of God's new universal covenant. The forms of the Great Commission in the Gospels and Acts 1:3–8 all include the elements of exaltation, presentation, and enthronement. This is the basis for the commissioning of the disciples.

The final chapter takes up the question of the Church in mission. The

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Wilbert R. Shenk, Secretary for Overseas Missions, Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Indiana, served as a missionary in Indonesia 1955–59.

implications of the first three chapters deserve much more consideration than is possible in the space of this last chapter. De Ridder reviews Reformation definitions of the Church that help explain why the Church was notably lacking in missionary vision for many centuries. But this does not exhaust the list of questions. Meanwhile, we are grateful to have this valuable survey.

—Wilbert R. Shenk

Against Principalities and Powers, Letters from a Brazilian Jail.

By Carlos Alberto Libanio Christo. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1977. Pp. xiii, 241. $8.95.

Life as a political prisoner in Brazilian prisons came to be welcomed by Carlos Christo, a twenty-five-year-old Dominican seminarian, as an opportunity to serve Christ by offering his own body and blood for the sake of humanity.

In prison he was in a situation of continuing dialogue with people of very different tendencies from his own. There was confrontation and debate at every moment with the only valid response being his life itself. This struggle forced him back to the Bible, history, and theology in a search for the changes needed.

He used much of the time in prison to study theology. The imprisonment, however, influenced both his method of study and his interpretation of the Scriptures. He came to believe "that the fundamentalist and historicist interpretations that have prevailed so far are not valid. Biblical exegetes have never managed to dissociate themselves from a priori principles regarding the biblical test. They look to the Bible for confirmation of *their own* truth."

Looking back he believes that confronted with the Renaissance, theologians, except for Luther, retreated. He challenges today's reader to wake from dogmatic slumber and have the courage to give sincere attention to the contributions that Marxism has to offer theology.

Writing to his friend Pedro he says, "I am convinced that we are living through a propitious time for profound Christian renewal." He calls individuals and the Church as an institution to renounce self-interest for the sake of others, to defend human rights, to aid the advancement of the poor and to combat injustice.

In writing to members of his family he speaks openly of the degrading nature of prison—but in referring to his fellow prisoners says, "Where I once thought only malice, indifference, and sin existed, I have found grace, fidelity, love and hope," and to members of a religious community he writes of Christ, "While we look for him among priests, he is among sinners. While we look for him among the free, he is a prisoner. While we look for him in glory, he is bleeding on the cross."

The letters are written over a five-year period. To a degree they reflect the effect of long imprisonment with the earlier letters containing the most meat and the later letters reflecting some of the sheer tedium of long imprisonment.

Alice Wimer is the Director of International Affairs, an inter-unit program of the National Council of the Churches of Christ, New York City.

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Since his release in October 1973, he has lived in a shanty in a desperately poor section of Vitoria, capital of one of the Brazilian states, participating in the life of the poor to concretize his commitment to the oppressed. A year after his release he said, "We have finished the first year in freedom and have not found freedom." He has decided against ordination as a priest believing this the first step in a rise to corrupting power but continues as a lay brother committed to a belief that the priority is not sacramental but evangelical.

—Alice Wimer

Christians, Politics and Violent Revolution.

By J. G. Davies. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1976. Pp. 216. Paperback $4.95.

This book, written by a professor of theology at the University of Birmingham, England, is basically intended as a political theology of armed revolution, although he admits that "revolution could be achieved by peaceful means." He defines politics in a thoroughly secular way as "the medium through which we exercise dominion over the world." Those who view politics as a means of serving people or ending racial discrimination would not qualify as participants in the political process.

Davies' political theology is founded on Jesus for he is confident that "Jesus was apolitical and it is vain, on the evidence available, to seek to argue otherwise." In this way Davies ignores Jesus' political statements, his opposition to Roman taxation (Lk. 23:2), his death at the hands of Roman authorities who viewed him as an agitator and, most significantly, Jesus' rejection of the violence that was expected of the Messiah.

Davies' political theology is based on a number of biblical concepts taken out of context. The first of these is love, which is the basis for his advocacy of armed revolution. He says that "love of the oppressed requires us to identify with them against the oppressors . . . while love of the oppressors is shown by struggling against them to save them from themselves and from the structures they subserve." The phrase "save them from themselves" is, in the context of armed revolution, a euphemism for killing them.

A second theological basis is the good news that the Kingdom is at hand. Davies holds that "the gospel and revolution are analogous for the latter is a transforming movement from what is to what ought to be. . . ." He believes that instead of attempting to live here and now the life of the Kingdom we should engage in violent revolution because it leads to social changes that might bring us closer to the Kingdom.

Davies also relates violence to God. "Further, if human beings are made in the image of God, and if God requires the exercise of force, then every act of force against another is against God. He is at the beginning, within and at the end of the process of force." By such reasoning, God puts human beings up to killing other humans and is thus the architect of human sin. God causes his own suffering by inciting humans to engage in violence and then absorbs the results of his own action. God thus is both the executioner and the victim.

Davies has no basic analysis of oppressive systems and no proposal for their replacement. He sees liberation as flowing from armed victory over oppressors in spite of the record of dictatorship or elitist rule that has followed all modern violent revolutions. He has an essentially optimistic view of human nature. The Christian revolutionary can "kill without malice"; he can use power moderately: "The Christian in revolution . . . being a realist, is capable of saying 'thus far and no further.' "

There is an extensive and unintelligent attack on pacifism which Davies identifies with biblical literalism, legalism, and a "refusal to distinguish between the shedding of innocent blood and the shedding of any human blood." He seems to want to discredit Gandhi and all those who advocate or use nonviolent resistance on the assumption that this will make violence a more acceptable method. The book contains a number of inaccuracies and undocumented assertions as well as some faulty analysis. One of its defects is that in typically liberal fashion he calls upon others to pay the price of engaging in the revolutionary violence he writes about in his study.

—John M. Swomley, Jr.

John M. Swomley, Jr., Professor of Christian Ethics at St. Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, Missouri, was Visiting Professor of Social Ethics, Facultad Evangelica de Teologia, Buenos Aires, 1969, and at Union Theological Seminary, Manila, Philippines, 1973.

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