JOURNAL OF THE ACADEMY FOR EVANGELISM IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Volume Ten
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The Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education

Officers

Journal of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education

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JOURNAL OF THE ACADEMY FOR EVANGELISM IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Volume Ten 1994-95

BOOK REVIEWS

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TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ACADEMY

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

With six major articles and reviews of twenty-one books, representing twenty different contributors, the tenth edition of our *Journal* is the largest to date. Once again it reflects a rich variety of topics and perspectives. The members of the Editorial Board are grateful for the number and quality of the submissions and trust that our readers will find this issue to be an especially useful resource and a worthwhile addition to their libraries.

I am delighted that Robert C. Anderson finally agreed to let us publish the stimulating and provocative address he delivered at the annual meeting of the Academy in 1993 at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. With sometimes biting humor Dr. Anderson challenges some of the commonly accepted practices of many seminaries and offers some startling suggestions for making theological education more relevant, as we prepare to enter a new millennium. His lead article should evoke some interesting responses.

So, too, should Thom S. Rainer's article on "Evangelism and Church Growth," which was his keynote address at our 1994 annual meeting in Louisville. Dr. Rainer traces the history of the so-called Church Growth Movement and describes the fluctuations in the understanding of and attitudes regarding the relationship between church growth and evangelism over the years.

My article, "How I See It: Service Evangelism," is intended to prime the pump for what I hope will be an on-going series of "How I See It" articles by our senior colleagues, in which they share what they consider to be their particular approach or unique contribution to evangelism, or the major emphasis of their own teaching in the field. I was asked to do this in an address I delivered at the University of South Africa in Pretoria in August, 1993. The article herein is a revision of that address, the original having been published in South Africa in 1994 in a book edited by Prof. Cas J. A. Vos, of the University of Pretoria (*Proclaim the Gospel*).

What would you like your colleagues to know about your own approach to evangelism? The *Journal* is an ideal forum for this kind of sharing, and I trust will result in a fascinating exchange of theological, philosophical, and practical ideas.

Samuel Wilson's interesting article on "Evangelism and Spiritual Warfare" should also stimulate some lively discussion among those who

might disagree with his ideas on the subject. He has presented a formidable biblical challenge, which needs to be taken seriously by anyone who espouses a contrary point of view.

Having been a missionary himself, Douglas W. Ruffle is well qualified to introduce us to someone of whom many of us have never heard, but who must have been a powerful figure in the development of Protestant Christianity in that part of South America known as the River Plate. The author raises some intriguing questions and helps us to draw some important evangelistic lessons from his biographical account.

From time to time we have included case studies of ministries worth noting, and Gregory P. Leffel's detailed account of the birth and growth of the Xenos Christian Fellowship is a worthy representative of the genre. Readers can draw their own conclusions about and make their own applications of the principles on which this dynamic but fluctuating success story is based.

Included in this edition of the *Journal* is a record number of book reviews, for which we have Thomas Wright, our Book Review Editor, along with all of the contributors, to thank. The reviews constitute an impressive sample of the depth and diversity of books in the field of evangelism and its cognate disciplines.

As has been our practice, we are once again including the minutes of our last annual meeting, as recorded by AETE secretary Hal Poe. They are a reminder to those of us who attended of what a worthwhile experience that was. I hope they will also be an inducement to those who have never attended one of our annual meetings to put it on their calendar for next October. The annual meetings are always held on the Thursday through Saturday of the week *preceding* Columbus Day.

Let me add a final word to all of our members: Please send in your membership dues ($35 to treasurer Woody Davis), which includes the cost of your subscription to the *Journal*. To our non-member subscribers: Would you please send in your renewal fee ($10/year), along with names of other potential subscribers, to Dr. David S. Young, 107 Valley Drive, West Chester, PA 19382. We need everyone's help in building up our subscription list.

In the meantime, happy reading to all!

Richard Stoll Armstrong

THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY – WILL IT CONTINUE TO EXIST?

Robert C. Anderson

Will the theological seminary as we have known it, continue to exist? While both enrollment and income continue to drop in many seminaries, the very foundations of theological education are being challenged by those who claim that traditional theological education as we have known it, is passé and irrelevant.

As a result, a state of panic seems to have set in at many previously successful institutions. Compounded by the belief of some that successful local pastors can provide more effective training for the aspiring ministry professional than the "ivory tower" academician, the full-time faculty in some schools is in the process of being reduced to a small "core" and extensive use is being made of these local clergypersons who are being employed as adjuncts.

Does traditional theological education have a future? Even as I prepared this paper, two documents sat on my desk, one very optimistic, the other almost completely pessimistic. The first is the 1993-94 catalog of the Boston Theological Institute, a cooperative effort of nine theological schools including the very liberal to the quite conservative, the very liturgical to the more informal.

In an effort to avoid duplication of specialty areas, the schools involved have decided to pool resources majoring in those areas in which a particular seminary is strong. As a result, the catalog reflects an astounding theological smorgasbord and an array of professorships which, I am sure, are unique to the past three decades: Ethics and moral development, for instance; psychoanalysis and religion for another; and an assortment which includes ecumenical theology, women in ministry,

Robert C. Anderson is Academic Vice-President of the National Institute of Chaplaincy Studies and an adjunct professor at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary and Multnormah Biblical Seminary. This is the address he delivered at the conclusion of his two-year term as president of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education in October 1993.

feminist liberation theology, globalism, African American religious history; Mesopotamian studies, ascetical theology, and, of course, the old standbys such as theology, church history, etc. The mood is optimistic and the thrust positive.

I feel that this association of schools is to be commended for offering a breadth of topical offerings which speak to many of the needs of our culture while upholding the traditional quality of seminary education. Moreover, in pooling their efforts, they have been able to offer this educational selection while keeping budgetary realism in mind. They viewed a problem and came up with a concrete solution.

The second document before me is far different from the first. Entitled *Standing On The Banks of Tomorrow*[1] it is exceptionally pessimistic and extremely critical. This study was based upon the views of the preparer who recently visited seven seminaries during a single July, and talked to what she called "representative" people on those campuses.

At this point, of course, anyone who has ever attended, no less, taught at a seminary would be alerted by a "red flag," subjecting this report to considerable suspect. With few exceptions, most seminary campuses resemble ghost towns during the month of July and it would be very difficult to find a population which was anything resembling "representative."

Then, as one trained in research, I was doubly depressed. I found neither evidence that any valid, viable questioning had taken place nor any indication that anything resembling scientific statistical analysis had been used to create the conclusions. Thus, in looking over her results, I found them to be anecdotal, unscientific, representative of her personal biases and I feel they could have been written without the visits.

Here is an example of her findings (and this from seminaries which could be called "solidly evangelical," schools such as Bethel, Beeson, Western and Asbury): "All of the seminaries claim to be evangelical, and though I was not there to evaluate curriculum, (sic) it appeared that little is done to teach a student about evangelism, how to evangelize, and basic principles of church growth. This may explain why many of our churches claim to be evangelical, and their idea of evangelism is to develop a new members class."[2]

Interestingly, her visit to the campus of Western Baptist Seminary, where I taught, was in the midst of a period of intense activity where almost all the students were being trained to serve as counselors in an up-coming Billy Graham Crusade and where nearly the entire campus was enrolled in the Billy Graham School of Evangelism. Moreover, as guests of the department of World Mission, some of the foremost church growth strategists in the world had recently completed a series of lectures on the campus.

Her other observations seem equally puzzling given the campuses she visited. Her major conclusion? Seminaries do not really prepare people for the realities of ministry and the traditional model of seminary education needs to be abandoned or extremely modified.

It is baffling that, while this particular study uses no statistically valid survey techniques nor even any kind of simple statistical analysis, it seems that some seminaries, Western Seminary included, apparently bought this report at face value and began applying its conclusions to the detriment of the seminary's curriculum and programs. More puzzling, however, is the fact that, at the same time reports such as this call for a more intensive mentoring relationship between professor and student, faculty strength is being seriously downsized and adjuncts are being called in to teach the "nuts and bolts" courses. These are busy local pastors who often rush in, teach the class and take off immediately after classes because their other duties are so demanding.

Thus, in the very areas, the practical areas, where, it is generally agreed, students should be receiving more mentoring and more intensive relationships with the professor, students are catching only a fleeting glimpse of the "prof" as he or she tears off to take care of other duties.

Moreover, at a time when students should be exposed to a variety of methodologies from a professor who has a wide acquaintance with what's going on in the field, many times they become acquainted with only one person's methodology, that of the pastoral practitioner who teaches them what has been successful for him or her.

Unfortunately, the success of such methodology may be very much tied into the unique personal gifts of the teacher. Thus, when a student graduates and tries to clone the methodology of his teacher, the resulting ministry may be a resounding failure. Moreover, the students, having had limited other exposure, may find themselves completely devoid of alternate methodologies to employ in this frightening new ministry to which they have been called.

So, what do I make of this confusing array of solutions that is being purported in the desperation of this hour and in what directions should we be moving in order for theological education not only to survive but to prosper? Here are some thoughts from a former "insider" who is now, perhaps a more objective "semi-outsider."

A Back to the Basics Curriculum

When I finished seminary, the godly president said to my graduating class, "Don't think you are a finished product. We are able only to introduce you to the basic tools. What you do with them is your own responsibility. However, we hope that we have introduced them to you in such a way that you will be able to adapt them to whatever situation you encounter in ministry and to every new generation you serve." Dr. Koller's advice was timeless. Instead of being tied to a methodology which was pertinent to the generation I was initially called to serve, I learned to use and adapt tools to the various decades of ministry to which God called me.

As a result, I believe that in an age when seminaries are trying to be

"all things to all people" and are failing dismally, we must return to a "tool mentality," a "back to the basics" philosophy of theological education. We cannot educate only for the most prominent current generation, in this case "baby boomers," for by the time seminary students are ready to minister to them, the targeted population is already, "over the hill" and has started to become the next geriatric generation.

Instead, the person who is to be adequately prepared for the future must be the person is not exposed only to current methodologies but is trained in timeless principles. Moreover, he or she is trained how to apply the basics of his or her seminary education to the challenges of the future. Thus, we must major in aiding the student in developing a comprehensive philosophy of ministry rather than concentrating merely on certain methodologies which, there is no doubt, will pass—and probably very quickly.

A Younger, More Dynamic Student Body

Upon reflecting on the makeup of many seminary enrollments today, some academicians have more or less accepted fatalistically that the majority of students which seminaries attract will be those who are older in years. In some cases, seminaries have comforted themselves into thinking that because these people are mature in years, they, just naturally, will be more mature emotionally and spiritually.

But is this necessarily true? Those teaching these older students often have found that they have a set of pathologies all of their own which far surpass anything our younger students know about. Many of them are second career people and they may be in seminary to "find themselves" or to work out some long-standing emotional or spiritual problem in their lives.

I thank God for those who are truly mature and can lend this maturity to a church setting. I am thankful for the healing effect that some of them have on churches. Not all of them are like that, however. Age alone does not necessarily dictate that people will be either mature or wise. Moreover, older students may be severely incapacitated to ministry by being less resilient, and more cautious. Additionally, because of their advanced age they will have a much shorter ministry potential than their younger counterparts.

But there's an even more pressing concern. This involves the future of the church. History alone teaches us that it isn't usually the older kingdom workers that cut a wide swath and overturn the world for the kingdom of God. It is the brash, young people who view themselves as invincible, view death as a very distant possibility and simply refuse to believe that they can't accomplish miracles for God. It has been these kinds of brash youngsters such as Jim Rayburn, Dawson Trotman, Uldine Utley, Bill Hybels, Bill Bright, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Jim Elliot and

others who have done the most unusual and dramatic things to wake up the church and extend the kingdom.

I am firmly convinced that the seminaries must do everything in their power not to be content in attracting a majority of older students but, in cooperation with the churches, they will find a way to create a new, charisma, a new vital image of the ministry which will, once again, attract young people back into the seminary classroom and prepare young people to change the world.

Of course, if we are to do this, there are financial considerations to consider. Who can afford to go to seminary these days? Certainly not the average 22-year-old who already is encumbered with a tremendous college student loan debt. It is interesting that President Ian Chapman of Northern Baptist Seminary has reinstated the policy that was in effect when I was a student there. It is his objective to raise enough money to completely cover the tuition of every American Baptist student so that at least these students can attend seminary tuition free. What a wonderful start toward making seminary education feasible for young students!

But we're going to have to go much further. We must raise sufficient revenues to purchase or build housing where both single and married students can live reasonably. In the past decades we have gone overboard in providing students with professional counseling services, virtually forgetting that many students do not need counseling as much as they need an economically priced place to live.

Technologically Advanced Teaching Methods

While majoring on the basics in our curriculum, we must discover new methods of teaching which are in keeping with the technology of today. In a recent issue of *Academe*,[3] the organ of the American Associate of University Professors, Robert Jensen describes the new roles that professors will play in the educational system. This article is so pertinent that I want to refer to it extensively.

Jensen says that, in the future, course instructors will play a larger role in inspiring students to want to learn more about a subject and a smaller role in explaining that subject to students. It is interesting to note that many of us "rebels" have decried for years the practice of having students memorize huge blocks of material which they are required to regurgitate back to us on an exam.

How much more stimulating to forget regurgitation and require that the student wrestle with the information learned in a course and apply it to some real life or simulated life experience. For too long the church has been plagued by staff members who are theologically astute but have little skill either in solving the problems of their ministry or helping parishioners face the challenges of life.

Jensen continues, telling us that course instructors will spend more

time editing hypermedia materials that will be available at all hours on campus networks and writing compact discs to be available to students.

In musing over his words, I thought of my own text, *The Effective Pastor*.[4] Since its publication in 1985 there have been many times that I wanted to revise it, to add or subtract from it. Each time, the publisher has said, "It is still selling well, so leave it alone. Besides, it costs too much to revise a text." How wonderful to have the opportunity of a Compact Disk which I could not only alter at will but also to have multimedia, interactive capacity built into that disc.

As a result, when the text refers to a wedding, we could include a segment of a wedding in progress or when broaching the subject of counseling, we could include a short clip from a counseling session.

But Jensen continues, declaring optimistically, ". . . some instructors will build international reputations for creativity in authoring and continually updating hypermedia learning materials made available on vast, worldwide education networks."[5]

He goes on to explain how not only will we have such resources from which to draw but we will be able, through media to construct what some have called "virtual reality." Jensen says that real world experience is not necessarily the best teacher. That can be true because we are under the gun in real life experience and can act hastily or under emotional pressure. Real life experience is hard to use as a teacher because it takes a student so long to get it. By the time a person learns everything he or she should from real life, it is past time to retire.

So, says Jensen, simulations and virtual realities are often better teachers than real world experience. Learners can be "placed" in worlds thousands of years forward or back in time. . . . New multimedia technologies make these worlds amazingly close to realities of different times and different locales.

My own reactions here are that if we are to understand the Scriptures, for instance, in the setting of their own culture, time period, and geographical setting, as we have often proposed that they should be studied, how wonderful to be able to create a simulation experience where students could maximize this kind of learning.

Jensen goes on to list some of the benefits of such technology use. Multimedia training and education may save millions of dollars due to a variety of factors. For example, compact discs that can hold thousands of pages of text and graphics can be reproduced for about $2 per disc. Electronic books can be authored and updated at will on rewriteable optical drives. Traditional texts are bulky to store and transport, relative to say, new portable compact disc players which have flip-up color screens. These can be carried in briefcases along with a few discs that hold millions of pages of text, graphics and audio files. Networks make it possible to transfer thousands of pages of texts and graphics to new locations in the blink of an eye. Hard-copy books are difficult to search in comparison with electronic searches of computer files.

The change that will occur in our roles? First of all, we will need to gain skills in the areas of media construction and use. We will also be

forced to cease our Lone Ranger role and see ourselves part of a teaching team, with other members of the team working in close partnership with us to engender productive media.

But there's a side benefit. Instead of lecturing from notes that may be either currently white or yellowed with age, we could entrust to the student the absorption of content and our class sessions could become times when we wrestle with both the problems that constantly stir in us or we struggle with how to apply content to the ministry God has in store with us. As professors, instead of faintly resembling the robots at Disneyland and parroting similar information over and over again to succeeding classes of students, we could work on becoming more personable, and practical, helping the student to see ways in which classroom ideas may be applied to his or her future ministry.

As long as I am fracturing icons here, let me allude to one more problem. I wonder how many people have come to near nervous collapse in seminary because they simply could not master the biblical languages. The major problem? Some people cannot memorize easily, especially when those things to be memorized are of no perceived intrinsic value to the learner.

With the birth of such technology as we have today, it is, I believe, a sin, to require a student to spend hours in such memorization drudgery. How much better for him or her to learn what a word is through repeated usage of that word. How much more superior to be able to use a computer program to translate the biblical languages than to require a ceaseless poring through of lexicons and other ponderous sources in seminary only for that person to end up using an inter-linear in his or her ministry. I hereby declare heretically: to make a person exegete the biblical languages without the aid of the best computer tools, is a waste of his or her time and such a waste is a sin.

Teachers Are Allowed to be Teachers

The seminaries of the future, must cut through and cut out the countless number of committee meetings and endless verbiage, whether that verbiage is generally on paper or through an E-Mail system. Seminary administrators must learn to give people jobs, set deadlines, hold people accountable for results and cut them loose to do things their way. If their way doesn't match with the task, that job should not be assigned to them.

In this light, we need to be presidents out on the road, representing and raising money for the seminaries, and deans back into the classrooms teaching as close to a full load as possible. With that combination, they won't have time to generate needless, endless paperwork nor cause professors to spend hours of committee time making endless and often mindless, decisions on inconsequential matters.

Teaching Skills a Major Criterion

In choosing faculty members, seminaries need not only to view their academic backgrounds, they must assess ahead of time whether or not these prospective teachers have the proper teaching skills and/or spiritual giftedness. Once the seminaries have determined that they have these qualities and hiring takes place, then administrators should leave professors alone to do their job. The endless means of evaluation under which noted professors are often scrutinized today are many times ludicrous and, at best, of questionable value and insulting to gifted teachers. Let's hire skilled teachers and then trust them to do the proper job.

A Servant Mentality Prevails

Likewise, both teachers and administrators need to develop a servant mentality. Teachers must recognize that, at best, they are only spiritual servants to their students. In turn, administrators are, or should be, spiritual servants to both students and teachers. Thus instead of considering students an interruption or annoyance, teachers must return to the realization that students are the principal reason why they, the teachers, are employed by the seminary. Likewise, administrators must realize that they exist for only two reasons: (1) to facilitate the teaching process and free teachers from endless administrative tasks; and (2) to coordinate the overall effort of the seminary to make sure the entire job is done properly.

Even as I was writing this, I thought, What an interesting concept—administrators as servants of servants! If this were taken seriously, I think that multiple layers of administration now found in larger seminaries would be greatly reduced. When administrators become helpers instead of antagonizers, when administrators don't have to seek work in order to justify their existence, far fewer administrators will be needed.

Work At Eliminating "Turf Wars"

Even before the advent of the first seminary, academic turf wars have been fought over which is more important, the so-called theoretical or the so-called practical. Sometimes in the past the preponderance of teaching clout has been in the area of the theoretical by the sheer construct of the curriculum. As a result, when the wars got serious, usually the people in the practical areas were shortchanged.

Despite the fact that this is an on-going struggle, seminaries must continue to do battle in an attempt to preserve balance between the two positions. I believe that theoreticians should be forced to come to grips

with the reality of the practical. Perhaps this could be done by giving them a periodic sabbatical and forcing them to serve in a church staff position.

In turn, the practical people must be forced to base their conclusions not only on actual observations but upon a fine-tuned theoretical base. Maybe for their sabbaticals, they should be sent off to study under some philosopher or theologian for a year, preferably one who is NOT one of their own colleagues.

Moreover, it may not be a bad idea to try, once again, a technique which was once highly touted but abandoned through frustration. How diabolically cruel to force a theoretician and practitioner to pair up and teach a course together! The first time through, may prove less than wonderful, but who knows, in time they might produce something very special, if they were required to keep at it.

Reestablish A Community of Scholars

By this time, you have learned that I have a dream! For Martin Luther King, at least a part of that dream was fulfilled, although he didn't live to see it. Maybe I'll be more lucky! My dream is that the seminary, once again, will become a learning community of people living in close proximity to one another, rather than remain the commuter or even drive-in campus which we see, in large part, today. Early studies in higher education pointed to the fact that students meeting together informally outside of class could often learn much more by wrestling with a subject together, than they could learn in class. I look for more campuses that will be so constructed to give people that opportunity.

Instead of creating Lone Rangers for the ministry, let us create young "theologs," who learn to become mutually interdependent, and who carry this dependency into their ministry, instead of becoming holy isolationists, aloof from and immune to people. In a more intimate, more communal seminary setting this is more likely to happen.

"People-Person" Teachers

In one of my books there is a dedication to a former teacher who had a profound impact on my life. He wasn't particularly articulate, yet he raised great questions in my mind, questions with which I was forced to come to grips. It would be hard for me to pinpoint any specific thing I learned in his classes. Yet I came out of his courses with principles and ideas which have lasted me a life of ministry.

But his greatest contribution? I was barely twenty-four when I graduated from seminary. By all rights, I should have been scared out of my

wits, but my prof not only told me but demonstrated in many ways that he believed in me. As a result, how could I help but believe in myself! So, like the brash young man I was, I launched out boldly into my ministry, sometimes falling flat on my face but knowing that when I got into real trouble, Warren Filkin would come forth with some valuable, fatherly advice that would see me through the crisis. I have had more scholarly and more eloquent teachers. I have had teachers who have wowed me with their erudition. But the person I learned the most from is the person on whom I modeled my own ministry.

Although we must be careful to select teachers who have the proper mix of ministry experience and academic credentials, we must look to hire teachers who are people-persons and whose principal ambition is to lay their lives and careers on the line for the sake of mentoring their students. In study after study this kind of teacher has been the second most important ingredient in producing a program of effective learning. Erudite, detached, ivory tower theologians may write for scholarly journals, but they will seldom make an impact upon a life. We need teachers who see students as their most important mission, not as mere annoyances or disruptions in the teacher's busy schedule.

Long ago accrediting agencies saw the worth of such mentoring and recognized that it could be performed more effectively by full-time teachers. While it may be economical to hire adjuncts, they simply do not have the time needed to mentor a student adequately, and, in so doing, facilitate a better quality education.

Conclusion

Will the seminary survive? Although history has pointed to a periodic ebb and flow in seminary enrollments, the quality seminary that has married the scholastic with the practical has almost always survived. So let's get back to basics, hire scholars who are not only academically proficient but who love students and want to see them succeed. In turn, let's give those gifted teachers the freedom and latitude they need to teach rather than saddling with with so much administrative trivia. Likewise, let's reward people for being dedicated and gifted teachers rather than loading them down with committee assignments and demanding that they publish. Let's regain the concept that relating to and educating the student is the principal mission of the teacher.

And, let's hire presidents who can communicate great dreams to the young people of our land, so that youth, once again, will be attracted to the seminaries. At the same time, let's learn to stimulate students in such a way that they will develop sound principles and dream great dreams.

NOTES

[1] Weese, Carolyn, *Standing on The Banks Of Tomorrow*. Granada Hills, CA, Multi-Staff Ministries, 1993.
[2] Ibid., p. 16.
[3] *Academe*, July/August 1993, Volume 79, Number 4, pp. 8-13.
[4] Anderson, Robert C., *The Effective Pastor*. Chicago, Moody Press, 1985.
[5] Op sit, p. 8.

EVANGELISM AND CHURCH GROWTH: SIBLINGS, COUSINS, OR MEMBERS OF DIFFERENT FAMILIES?

Thom S. Rainer

The year 1955 is the often-cited date of the birth of the Church Growth Movement. In that year Donald A. McGavran wrote a defining work on people movements called *The Bridges of God*.[1] The father of the Church Growth Movement was ultimately concerned about the most effective means to reach different people groups for Christ. In his mission situation in India, McGavran noted a significant level of ineffective evangelistic efforts. How, he asked, could we be better stewards of our resources of time, people, and money to reach the most people for Christ?

In our fascination with the methodologies, theories, and social sciences of church growth, we often lose sight of the fact that the movement was first a concern for evangelism. The two disciplines, church growth and evangelism, often act like two different families when, in fact, they are close cousins or perhaps even siblings.

Wagner on Evangelism

In 1989 I asked C. Peter Wagner, a key figure in the Church Growth Movement, to systematize his thoughts on how the fields of evangelism and church growth differ and how they intersect. His article is published in my book, *Evangelism in the Twenty-First Century*.[2] He related the two disciplines in several different areas.

Organizationally, Wagner noted that each field has its own professional society. The Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education

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was founded in 1973. The North American Society for Church Growth (now the American Society for Church Growth) was founded in 1985. Furthermore, many denominational and parachurch agencies may have emphases or directorships in either evangelism or church growth, or both. Typically, the church growth positions include evangelism, "but evangelism traditionally has not included church growth."[3]

Educationally, chairs and professorships of evangelism have been part of seminaries and Bible colleges for generations. But church growth positions are relatively new, though increasing at a steady pace. An institution's view of the two disciplines is typically reflected in its organization. For example, the fields of evangelism and church growth are in separate graduate schools at Fuller Theological Seminary. But at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, where I serve as dean, the two disciplines are in the same school *and* the same department.

Definitionally, Wagner argues, the two are alike only when evangelism includes bringing the new believer beyond conversion into responsible church membership. Some would argue that evangelism as a discipline would not include responsible church membership. But, if we are to use the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) as a central evangelistic prooftext, we must have as our goal not only "convert-making," but "disciple-making" as well. And disciples may best be understood in today's world as "responsible church members." Thus the "church" element, or ecclesiological element of church growth becomes critically important.

Wagner summarized his thoughts on the subject in this manner:

> The fields of evangelism and church growth are distinct, but they enjoy a close and often symbiotic relationship. The field of evangelism is broader than church growth in educational, theological, social, and methodological aspects. The two intersect and become synonymous when the goal of evangelism—the bottom line on which success or failure is evaluated—is to bring unbelievers into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and into responsible church membership.[4]

McGavran on Evangelism

McGavran, it seems, was not consciously birthing a movement when he wrote *The Bridges of God* in 1955. Nor was he intentionally perpetuating a movement in 1970 when he wrote *Understanding Church Growth*, the *Magna Carta*[5] of the movement. McGavran began using the term "church growth" in the late fifties and early sixties, when he recognized that much of the activity of missions and churches taking place under the guise of evangelism was a misnomer at best, and deceitful at worst.

But McGavran's heart for effective evangelism remained his life's passion. The follower of McGavran's pilgrimage can read one of his final works, *Effective Evangelism*,[6] and see that church growth's founder used the terms "evangelism" and "church growth" almost interchangeably. He did not change disciplines; he simply and pragmatically sought real evangelistic results.

The Church Growth Movement: Americanizing and Pragmatizing Evangelism

A historical survey of the Church Growth Movement can help us understand better how the two disciplines became, at least in the minds of many, distinct and separate. Perhaps this historical glance can also assist us in evaluating the wisdom of continuing to look at church growth and evangelism as separate fields.

The McGavran Era (1955-1970)

The birthing and pioneering efforts of the Church Growth Movement began with *The Bridges of God* in 1955. Prior to the publication of the book McGavran had studied extensively numerous mission stations in central India, where he served. Some of the mission stations were evangelistically effective, but the great majority were not. Why, McGavran asked, are some churches growing while others are not, when the factors of leadership, faithfulness, and demographics can not explain the differences?

The Bridges of God was a noble attempt to answer this question with both theological and methodological answers. The book evoked fairly intense emotions, and debate continues even today on what may be only peripheral issues. The major issue—those factors that engender effective evangelism—was obscured in the sometimes heated discussions on other less significant details.

The McGavran era was also a time of the institutionalization of the Church Growth Movement. In 1960 McGavran was invited to locate his Institute of Church Growth on the campus of Northwest Christian College in Eugene, Oregon. The Institute began full operation in 1961. Perhaps the single most important development in the institutionalization of the movement transpired in 1965. McGavran was invited to Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. There he reestablished the Institute of Church Growth and became the founding dean of Fuller's School of World Mission. The Pasadena area would soon become a hub for American church growth activities. These years were critical for the establishment of a relationship between evangelism and church growth. McGavran, it would seem, was ultimately concerned about growth in the church that was the consequence of Great Commission evangelism and disciple-making. His passion was to win the lost and incorporate them into the fellowship of a local church. He was not a church growth

advocate who was enamored with numbers for numbers' sake. For McGavran church growth and evangelism were so closely related that one was the extension of the other.

Organizationally, however, the two disciplines were drifting apart from each other. Perhaps the Pasadena leadership unintentionally allowed this chasm to grow. When McGavran founded the new school at Fuller Seminary, the disciplines of missions and church growth were together in the pioneer endeavor. But evangelism was taught in Fuller's School of Theology. Instead of bringing the obviously close relative into McGavran's new school, evangelism remained a separate and distinct discipline. In later years, when tensions grew between the two schools for various reasons, the chasm between evangelism and church growth widened.

In 1970 McGavran completed his definitive work on church growth, *Understanding Church Growth*. Wagner called this volume the *Magna Carta* of the Church Growth Movement."[7] The movement received with this book clarity of direction with both theological and methodological insight. Strangely, however, McGavran would now direct his attention away from American church growth to missions in Third World nations and other areas outside the United States. The father of the Church Growth Movement was no longer totally involved in the movement. McGavran's passion for evangelism that results in real church growth would no longer be evident in American church growth writings. The movement was in real danger of losing its evangelistic impetus.

The Identity-Crisis Era (1970-1981)

The 1970s was a time of both rapid growth and defensive retreat for the Church Growth Movement. This paradoxical situation resulted from some church growth advocates promoting their mission unapologetically while others used their works to defend church growth concepts which were being harshly criticized. With the exception of McGavran, no leader in this decade emerged as the primary spokesperson for the movement. McGavran himself did not write much about American church growth. Instead his writings focused on missions and church growth in other parts of the world.

The "Pasadena gang" was the group most clearly identified with church growth. This group includes those who were among the first faculty members at Fuller's School of World Mission: McGavran, Ralph Winter, Arthur Glasser, Charles Kraft, Allen Tippett, and C. Peter Wagner. To this group can be added Win Arn, who founded the Institute of American Church Growth in 1972, and John Wimber, who became founding director of the Department of Church Growth at Fuller Evangelistic Association (now known as the Charles E. Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth).

The 1970s produced some church growth advocates outside the Pasadena area as well. Kent R. Hunter founded the Church Growth Center in 1977 in Corunna, Indiana. Elmer Towns, now at Liberty University

in Lynchburg, Virginia, made contributions specifically in the area of Sunday School growth. In Southern Baptist circles Charles Chaney and Ron Lewis co-authored the book *Design for Church Growth*.

In addition to *Understanding Church Growth*, McGavran's second major contribution to American church growth in the 1970s was the writing of *How to Grow a Church*, a book co-authored with Win Arn in 1973. The book was written as an easy-to-understand dialogue between McGavran and Arn. The highly technical language of earlier books was conspicuously absent, and many of the church growth principles were applied to the American scene.

Other events shaped church growth during this time. In 1972 Paul Benjamin founded the National Church Growth Research Center, an organization devoted to church growth in America. Also in 1972 the publication of *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing* generated much discussion and debate. The author was Dean Kelley, an executive with the National Council of Churches. His presentation of evidence that conservative churches were growing faster than liberal churches complemented church growth precepts, but it drew the criticism of many of his peers.

Despite the abundance of writings about the influences on church growth, the movement failed to establish a clear identity. Church growth material began to be published from so many different perspectives that it was difficult to answer the question: "Who speaks for church growth?"

Another critical factor adding to confusion in church growth circles was the manner in which the movement responded to criticism. McGavran was the aggressive protagonist of the movement. His writings were straightforward and unapologetic. The candid and sometimes polemical tone of McGavran's views set the pace by which church growth boldly asserted itself.

By the beginning of the 1970s, the critics of church growth began to gather momentum. Advances were being made in the Church Growth Movement, but a significant amount of the movement's time and resources were being devoted to responding to criticism. A sampling of the criticisms provides the general milieu in which church growth found itself in the 1970s.

Some critics showed disdain for the kind of evangelism inherent in some church growth models. Commenting on the concept of the homogenous unit, one critic concluded that church growth was "evangelism without the gospel."[8] Church growth, he said, has a theology of evangelism "which reduces initial Christian commitment to an inoffensive appeal, avoiding the suggestion that to become a Christian one must turn from a social order that perpetuates injustice.[9] Archbishop William Temple's definition of evangelism had been a standard among evangelicals for years, but when McGavran affirmed the definition, he was criticized for having a "narrow description of . . . evangelism."[10]

Wagner received the brunt of the criticism after the fury over *Understanding Church Growth* subsided. Wagner's approach to church growth and development, said one critic, "is precariously deficient as a strategy

for evangelism."[11] Kenneth L. Smith of Colgate Rochester-Bexley-Crozier found fault with Wagner's strategy of evangelism because it concentrated on evangelism "in the narrow sense of 'saving souls.'"[12] Smith further characterized Wagner's methodology as "a mixture of theological absolutism (i.e., the necessity for a born-again experience) and sociological utilitarianism."[13]

The seventies were also the time that Wagner began receiving the theology of the rapidly-growing Pentecostals more warmly. His view here did not escape the notice of the critics. After Wagner wrote *Look Out! The Pentecostals Are Coming*, one reviewer said that his "book tends to read like a propaganda piece."[14]

The definition of evangelism, still a point of debate between church growth proponents and others today, was debated as early as 1971, the publication date of Wagner's *Frontiers in Missionary Strategy*. Again, Wagner was the chief recipient of the criticisms, exemplified by one reviewer who claimed that theologically Wagner fell "dangerously close to Pelagianism."[15]

Another series of rapid-fire criticisms came from those who viewed church growth as a misguided theology and sociology with an overemphasis on numbers. Speaking in opposition to the concept that mission should emphasize "the actual number of souls gained," Sabbas J. Kilian retorted: "If one continues to look at church growth exclusively as saving souls and at theology as feeding the people with the one formula allowed, one can hardly speak of an understanding of church growth today. In a diaspora situation, numbers reveal nothing at all."[16]

While not every critic summarily rejected the importance of numerical increase in mission, Robert K. Hudnut wrote a book-length repudiation of the quantitative emphasis approach to mission.

> People are leaving the church. It could not be a better sign. Indeed, while they are leaving church income is growing. It was up 5.2 percent in 1973, according to the National Council of Churches. This proves that the more serious the membership, the more substantial the church. . . . Most churches could be two-thirds smaller and lose nothing in power. In most churches, the first third are committed, the second third are peripheral, and the third third are out.[17]

Some antagonists of church growth were not so much irritated at the quantitative emphasis of the movement as they were at the perception that church growth alone claimed exclusive rights to this emphasis. In a review of *Understanding Church Growth*, James Schere wrote, "[McGavran] would have us believe that numerical increase is rejected by the majority of persons concerned with mission work—a view that many readers are not likely to accept— and that he alone remains faithful to the commission to disciple the nations, while others have gone whoring after the *Baalim* of social relevance, ecumenical relations, institutional witness, and so on."[18]

Still others totally rejected church growth as a legitimate missiological movement. Shortly after *Understanding Church Growth* appeared Kilian stated that he "disagree[d] with M[cGavran] on almost everything."[19] Alfred C. Krass questioned the legitimacy of church growth as a movement.

> They have lost the woods for the sake of trees which they did not need to climb. In trying to develop a psychology of mission, a sociology of mission, an ethnotheology of mission, they have had a necessity to start from scratch with each new synthesis. They have picked up the relevant secular discipline at a certain point and tried to mate it with a real mission-theological concern—and rarely do they seem to go back to that secular discipline again, but labor on, patiently shouldering an immense burden trying to develop a new science.[20]

Other critics in the 1970s attempted to accept the contributions of church growth; yet they found serious hermeneutical and theological problems. "One problem area with church growth theory," said Third World missiologist Orlando E. Costas, "is the fact that its theorists have not been able to come up with a sound hermeneutic for their theological endeavors."[21] Costas and other critics charged that the Church Growth Movement had "failed . . . to interpret the text in the light of the many situations of contemporary man."[22] The church growth approach to Scriptures was thus seen to be primarily, perhaps solely, concerned with correct strategies for best results. As a consequence, church growth advocates were accused of ignoring poverty, oppression, and social, economic, and political problems.

As a result of the shallow hermeneutic of church growth, the critics charged, the movement developed a concept of mission that was incomplete and unbiblical. They believed that advocates of church growth had a narrow missiology so focused upon results and conversions that Christian social ministry was all but forgotten; propagation of the faith completely overshadowed the whole gospel of Jesus Christ.

Thus Rodger Bassham argued in 1979 that "church growth theology has some serious weakness . . . the narrow conception of mission as evangelism."[23] He concluded that the Church Growth Movement "appears to have neglected a substantial discussion which has taken place over the past twenty-five years, in which the meaning of mission, evangelism, witness, service, and salvation have been explored and developed."[24]

Such was the milieu in which church growth struggled in the 1970s. Criticisms were hurled at the movement with greater frequency and intensity. The reactions of the church growth advocates were mixed. McGavran and Wagner continued to affirm boldly the basic tenets of the movement. Still others were involved in writing a mix of both defensive and affirmative statements about church growth.

During this critical period, however, the chasm between evangelism and church growth grew. Church growth proponents were busy defending their methodologies. Consequently the heart of McGavran—growing churches by effective evangelism, was overshadowed by peripheral issues. The disciplines may have been divorced irreconcilably had it not been for the efforts of the leader of the second generation of the Church Growth Movement.

The Wagner Era (1981-1988)

While the Church Growth Movement was struggling for identity and acceptance in the 1970s, one man was steadily rising to the top as the chief spokesperson for American church growth. C. Peter Wagner is now the Donald McGavran Professor of Church Growth at Fuller Theological Seminary. Whereas Fuller Seminary gave the movement its institutional staying power, Wagner provided the personal leadership to keep church growth as a recognized movement in evangelical Christianity.

Wagner had written numerous books prior to 1981, but most of those publications were written with methodological concerns. In 1981, however, *Church Growth and the Whole Gospel: A Biblical Mandate* was published. In the book Wagner responded to the plethora of criticisms of the movement over the past two decades. The tone of this book was much less polemical than most earlier church growth writings. Openness to criticisms and new input marked the book. One example of many provides a glimpse of the irenic spirit of *Church Growth and the Whole Gospel:*

> I feel like a candidate for the "how my mind has changed" series. Not that I have taken a complete 180-degree turn. In fact I am reasonably sure that some readers of this new book will say that the leopard has not changed his spots. But today I would no longer argue as I did that "one searches the Scriptures in vain to find a commandment that would have Christians move into the world with a mission designed to create peace and order, justice and liberty, dignity and community."[25]

What marked this book, more than other factors, was the asking of *theological* questions. Wagner was attempting to place the movement in its proper biblical and theological context. This book and other writings[26] would continue to state and seek biblical directions for the movement. In essence the Church Growth Movement, an *ecclesiological* moment, was becoming a *soteriological* movement. Growth for growth's sake was not the critical issue. What was important was *church* growth that was also *kingdom* growth. And issues of adding people to God's kingdom become issues of evangelism. The two disciplines, church growth and evangelism, were returning to their proper relationship of siblings instead of members of different families.

Had Wagner continued to ask these theological questions, I believe

that the Church Growth Movement of the twenty-first century would look significantly different than it will otherwise. But Wagner's calling and interests moved him to a new and controversial area: the "third wave," an evangelical signs-and-wonders movement stereotyped largely by John Wimber and Vineyard churches. Wagner's definitive treatment of his pilgrimage can be found in his book *How To Have A Healing Ministry without Making Your Church Sick.*[27] The publication of that book in 1988 marked the end of Wagner's leadership in mainstream church growth. His recent ventures into another important movement worldwide, the Great Prayer Movement, has further diluted his identity with church growth. Since 1988 the Church Growth Movement has been without a clear leader, a clear direction, or a clear purpose.

Church Growth in the Twenty-First Century: An Incomplete Proposal

When Donald McGavran began asking questions about church growth in the 1930s and 1940s, his primary concern was ineffective evangelism that engendered anemic growth of churches in India. In other words McGavran's church growth questions were largely evangelism questions. His first concern was not right methodologies but effective evangelism. That evangelism which asked no ecclesiological questions was at best conversion evangelism. It certainly was not the disciple-making evangelism mandated by the Great Commission. The Church Growth Movement thus began as a movement that saw itself in a sibling-relationship with the venerable field of evangelism.

For reasons suggested throughout this address, the two disciplines have drifted further apart. Perhaps now is the time, as we move into a new century and millennium, to consider a reunion of the two siblings. By this terminology I do not suggest a merger as much as a family reunion. This long-awaited gathering (for some of us anyway) would cause leaders in both disciplines to ask some pointed theological questions. The reunion may be painful, but it undoubtedly will be profitable. Church growth without true evangelistic growth is not kingdom growth at all. And evangelism that does not result in church growth is a failure to take seriously Matthew 28:19-20.

"How can this be accomplished?" is, at the moment, a rhetorical question. One person alone can not begin to accomplish the task. For now I will leave the question unanswered. In November of 1995 I will speak to our kindred group, the American Society for Church Growth, at its annual meeting in Chicago. A specific plan of action will be offered. That address certainly will not be a panacea, but perhaps, God willing, it will be a starting point for planning a future family reunion.

NOTES

[1] Donald A. McGavran, *The Bridges of God*, rev. ed. (New York: Friendship, 1981). The first edition was published in 1955.
[2] C. Peter Wagner, "Evangelism and the Church Growth Movement," in Thom S. Rainer, ed., *Evangelism in the Twenty-First Century* (Wheaton: Harold Shaw, 1988).
[3] Ibid., 26.
[4] Ibid., 33.
[5] C. Peter Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow* (Glendale, CA: Regal, 1976), 14. This book was revised in 1980.
[6] Donald A. McGavran, *Effective Evangelism: A Theological Mandate* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1988).
[7] See Note 5.
[8] Tom Nees, review of *Our Kind of People: The Ethical Dimensions of Church Growth* by C. Peter Wagner, *Sojourners*, 9 (February, 1980), 27. Nees examines particularly the sociological precepts of church growth.
[9] Ibid., 29.
[10] John H. Piet, review of *Understanding Church Growth* by Donald A. McGavran, *Reformed Review*, 25 (Fall, 1971), 30. Archbishop's Temple's definition is: "Evangelism is the winning of men to acknowledge Christ as their Savior and King, so that they give themselves to His service in the fellowship of His Church."
[11] David L. Watson, review of *Our Kind of People: The Ethical Dimensions of Church Growth* by C. Peter Wagner, *Perkins Journal* 33 (Winter, 1979), 33.
[12] Kenneth L. Smith, review of *Our Kind of People: The Ethical Dimensions of Church Growth* by C. Peter Wagner, *Review of Religious Research*, 22 (September, 1980), 100.
[13] Ibid.
[14] James Patterson, review of *Look Out! The Pentecostals Are Coming* by C. Peter Wagner, *Christianity Today*, 18 (June 21, 1974), 30.
[15] Roger S. Greenway, review of *Frontiers in Missionary Strategy* by C. Peter Wagner, *The Westminster Theology Journal*, 35 (Fall, 1972 to Spring, 1973), 373.
[16] Sabbas J. Kilian, review of *Understanding Church Growth* by Donald A. McGavran, *Theological Studies*, 33 (1972), 182.
[17] Robert K. Hudnut, *Church Growth Is Not the Point* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), xi. Hudnut rejects growth as the "point" of the church and offers fourteen alternative purposes.
[18] James A. Scherer, review of *Understanding Church Growth* by Donald A. McGavran, *International Review of Mission*, 60 (January 1971), 127.
[19] Kilian, 182.
[20] Alfred C. Krass, review of *God, Man and Church Growth: A Festschrift in Honor of Donald Anderson McGavran*, ed. A. R. Tippett, *Missiology*, 3 (January, 1975), 118.
[21] Orlando E. Costas, *The Church and Its Mission: A Shattering Critique from the Third World* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1974), 131.
[22] Ibid., 132.
[23] Rodger C. Bassham, *Mission Theology: 1948-1975, Years of Worldwide Creative Tension: Ecumenical, Evangelical, and Roman Catholic* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1979), 194-195.
[24] Ibid.
[25] C. Peter Wagner, *Church Growth and the Whole Gospel: A Biblical Mandate* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), xii.
[26] See for example, C. Peter Wagner, *Strategies for Church Growth* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1987).
[27] C. Peter Wagner, *How To Have a Healing Ministry Without Making Your Church Sick* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1988).

HOW I SEE IT: SERVICE EVANGELISM

Richard Stoll Armstrong

I. Introduction

There are many legitimate methods of evangelism, all of which contribute in varying degrees of effectiveness to the common goal of proclaiming the gospel and making disciples for Jesus Christ. Some methods are appropriate for reaching persons who would not respond to other approaches. Each method has its place and should be acknowledged for its contribution to the work of the kingdom, however specific its focus and limited its results may be.

Most teachers and many practitioners of evangelism do not espouse a particular method to the exclusion of others, but rather recognize the need to suit the method to the intended recipients. While concurring wholeheartedly with their commitment to the methodological principles of contextuality and relevance, I am always disturbed and frustrated when *service evangelism*, the approach with which my name has become associated, is referred to as a method.

The unfortunate consequence of this erroneous perception is the mistaken notion that service is evangelism. In other words, service becomes another method. That is not at all what I had in mind in choosing the term "service evangelism." The term refers not to a particular method but to a style that in my opinion is appropriate for *any* method. The difference between the method and style is crucial to one's understanding of the concept of service evangelism, which is described in detail in my various writings.[1]

What is the difference between a method and a style, in this case a method of evangelism and an evangelistic style? Both are important, but they are not the same. Methods have to with strategies and procedures for doing evangelism. Style has to do with the personality, character, commitment, and attitude of the evangelist. Methods are what we do; style is the way we go about what we do. Methods are prescribed ways of performing tasks and achieving objectives. Style is the way we

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approach a task and how we relate to others in the process. Style defines our use of methods. Whereas a particular method is fixed and rigid, a style can blend consistency with flexibility. One can choose the method that seems best suited to the task, but whatever the method one's style of relating to people should always be consistent with one's theological beliefs and faith commitment.

II. The Premises of Service Evangelism

Service evangelism, then, is a style not a method. It is a style shaped by four essential theological premises.

A. Called to be a Servant Church

The first premise is that the church is called to be the servant people of God. Service evangelism can be defined, therefore, as the corporate evangelistic ministry of a congregation who understand that they are called to be the servant people of God, and who are striving to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, who came as a Suffering Servant. "I am among you," he said, "as one who serves" (Luke 22:27).[2]

The New Testament has a number of important metaphors for the church, such as a bride, a body, a flock, a temple, the branches of a vine. All of these images have something to teach us about the nature of the church, but for me the compelling metaphor, and in my view the normative image for us all, is that of the church as *servant*. The story of Jesus' washing his disciples' feet makes it abundantly clear how he expected his disciples to view themselves. "So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you" (John 13:14-15).

If a church is not a servant church, therefore, it is not following the example of its Lord. Raymond Fung, former Secretary for Evangelism of the World Council of Churches, in his book, *The Isaiah Vision*,[3] argues for the abolishment of the language of servanthood in favor of the language of partnership. "The concept of the church as servant to the world no longer communicates," asserts Fung. "It does not do justice to the role of the church in mission" (p. 34).

While I applaud Mr. Fung's use of the language of partnership, I disagree completely with his insistence on discarding the language of servanthood. There is no biblical or theological justification for abandoning the servant image. The one text he cites in support of his argument is taken out of context from Jesus' discourse with his disciples in the Gospel of John: "I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father" (15:15).

It is clear from what Jesus says right before that saying that the disciples' friendship with him was not one of equality, "You are my friends," he says in the preceding verse, "*if you do what I command you*." Jesus is preparing them for his impending death. He has charged them to love one another, as he has loved them. The highest expression of friendship is one's willingness to die for one's friends. "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (15:13). They were his friends, but they did not cease to be his servants. Nor did their being his servants prevent them from being his friends. To emphasize the point he would now call them friends, rather than servants, because he was sharing with them his heavenly secrets. Though he was still their Master and they his disciples, they were also his friends—and what a friend they had in Jesus!

The distinction Jesus makes between servant and friend occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, although Luke in one place quotes Jesus' addressing the disciples as "my friends" (12:4). It is significant that the disciples referred to themselves consistently as "servants of Christ." They were to be in the world as he was in the world, not to be served but to serve. So Paul urges the Philippians:

> Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross (Philippians 2:5-8).

To be in the mode and mold of Jesus Christ, then, is to be in the world as one who serves. By serving others we serve Christ, whom to serve is perfect freedom, as Paul reminded the Galatians: "For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another" (5:13).

Jesus served others by ministering to their physical as well as their spiritual needs. "His approach was the quintessence of service evangelism. He related to people where they were, as they were, while seeing what they could be and holding up to them the possibilities of a new and better life. He invited, but he did not insist. He challenged, but he did not coerce. . . . His was a gospel of works as well as of words."[4]

So we are talking about a style of evangelism that is service-oriented. It calls for church members to be Christ's servants as well as his witnesses, both within and without the walls of the church. Their mission is to serve the world around them in whatever ways are needed, appropriate, and possible. That is what it means to be the servant people of God.

B. *Faith as Ultimately a Gift of God*

The second assumption which shapes the style of service evangelism is the theological presupposition that faith is ultimately a gift of God. I say "ultimately" because of the paradoxical nature of faith, which is often spoken of in the Bible as if it were something we can make ourselves have, as when Jesus rebukes the disciples for their little faith or exhorts his hearers to have faith. On the other hand, we hear him say "No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me" (John 6:44), a thought echoed by Paul when he writes, "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit" (II Corinthians 12:3).

To take the givenness of faith seriously is to recognize that faith is not something we can make ourselves or anybody else *have;* rather it is something we find ourselves with. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). That biblical premise has tremendous implications for the way we do evangelism. It means we cannot answer people's "why" questions by dogmatically proclaiming *what* we believe, as if our beliefs were self-evidently true to those who do not share our faith assumptions. It calls for a style that is confessional and humble, personal and vulnerable, one that is "more incarnational than propositional, more dialogical than dogmatic, more relational then proclamational."[5]

Such a style transforms the act of witnessing from faith *telling* to faith *sharing*. I define faith sharing as three-way communication in which two or more individuals relate their personal experiences of God.[6] I say three-way because the Holy Spirit has to be involved in a genuine faith-sharing conversation. Faith sharers always re-experience the presence and reality of God.

One immediate implication of this understanding of faith sharing is that witnesses must win the right to be heard by first being *listeners*. The most important communication skill in interpersonal witnessing is listening,[7] which is not an end in itself but a means to an end, the end being greater understanding and better interpersonal communication. A helpful rubric, which I borrowed from a professional fund raiser and have applied to the art of Christian witnessing, is that we listen with our eyes, and we speak with our ears. What it means is simply that our eyes help us to interpret what we hear, while our ears determine how we respond.

By asking non-threatening faith questions and listening caringly, compassionately, and sensitively, the Christian witness frees the other person to share her or his experience of God, be that experience positive or negative, a response of faith or of unbelief. The witness waits for the appropriate moment to "plug into" the other person's faith experience. Having first listened, the witness is able to respond more sensitively and relevantly to the other person's need, concern, joy, question, wonder, doubt, or whatever.

C. *The Validity of Personal Experience*

The third determinative assumption underlying the style of service evangelism is the validity of personal experience as the convictional basis for faith sharing. For centuries we have been told that experience was not a valid basis for making normative truth claims, because of its relative and subjective nature. This objection to the use of personal experience continues today, despite the ironical and contradictory contemporary emphasis on story-telling in preaching and personal witnessing. The practice has even been given academic respectability and disciplinary credibility under the heading of "narrative theology." Most books on the subject, however, are based on unconfessed presuppositions, having been written *by* believers *for* believers.

They do not take seriously the givenness of faith, thus limiting their evangelistic usefulness and precluding their apologetic effectiveness. We preachers and would-be witnesses need to understand that our dogmatic assertions from the pulpit and propositional arguments in the living room are affirmations of faith, not provable facts.

One's personal faith experience should never be viewed as normative for everyone else. It is offered not as a proof of the existence of God but as the basis of one's own convictions. It is the confirming evidence of one's own faith assumptions. For nearly four decades I have been trying to make a rational case for an experiential faith, and I have spoken and written much on this topic.[8] Suffice it here to say that I am convinced that the only legitimate way to answer someone's "why" question ("Why do you believe in God?), having earned the right to speak, is to talk about your own personal experience of God. What has God done for you lately? That is what you can talk about with conviction, authority, and integrity. It is the confirming evidence of your faith. You cannot prove the existence of God to a non-believer, but you can speak about why you believe.

If you have no experience of God, no sense of God's presence in your life, no awareness of the goodness, mercy, love, and justice of God, you cannot answer the "why" question. You cannot bear effective witness to a God you do not know personally. Theoretical observations have no evangelistic impact. You cannot share a faith if you do not have a faith to share. The faith you can share most easily and confidently is your personal experience of God. People will respond more positively and readily to your experience of God than they will to your opinions about God. They can argue with your opinions, but they cannot deny you your experience.

In the faith-sharing exercises I have used over the years, I have found that most people tend to answer "why" questions by telling *what* they believe. They wonder why the people to whom they bear witness do not respond more positively. What they fail to understand is that "what" answers to "why" questions are not satisfying to the questioner. ("Why do you believe in Jesus Christ?" "Because he is the Son of God!") They also need to realize that putting a "because" in front of a "what" does

not make it a "why"! "What" answers only raise more "why" questions ("But why do you believe he is the Son of God?").[9]

We cannot answer the "why" question without finally having to resort to statements that are tautological (presupposing what they are trying to prove) and subjective (based on personal convictions that are not self-evidently true). The reasons we give are themselves faith statements. Our conclusions are really assumptions. That is why one should always approach the witnessing task with a confessional attitude and with genuine humility, depending upon the Holy Spirit and entrusting the outcome to God.

Given the indispensability of the Holy Spirit to the evangelistic task, how should we summarize the stylistic approach which I have termed "service evangelism"? Before answering that question, let me state my current definition of evangelism in general:

> Evangelism is proclaiming in word and deed the good news of the kingdom of God, and calling people to repentance, to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, to active membership in the church, and to obedient service in the world.[10]

What, then, is service evangelism? The following definition, as it appeared in my book *Service Evangelism*, is more of a description than a definition:

> By (service) evangelism I mean reaching out to others in Christian love, listening to them, identifying with them, caring for them, and sharing faith with them in such a way that they will freely respond and want to commit themselves to trust, love, and obey God as a disciple of Jesus Christ and a member of his servant community, the church (p. 53).

The inclusion of the words "reaching out" adds a methodological dimension to the stylistic description. They imply an evangelistic outreach on the part of the church, the rationale for which springs from the fourth assumption on which service evangelism is based.

D. Called to Minister to Human Needs

A servant church is called to minister to the needs of people outside of as well as within its own fellowship. Given that premise it follows that in order to minister to people's needs, a church has to know what the needs are. In order to find out what the needs are, a church must go where the people are. In order to go where the people are, a church needs an organized and persistent calling program.

The preceding paragraph is the simplest, clearest, and most logical argument I can make for a method of evangelism that, for want of a better term, is usually referred to as "visitation evangelism."[11] It is one for which I have long been and will continue to be an advocate, but it

is not to be equated with the propositional style which has traditionally characterized that method. Service evangelism calls for a holistic approach to people, It is an inclusive ministry that is sensitive to people's physical and material as well as their spiritual needs. Because people live in a social context and are affected by the problems of the world about them, service evangelism calls for the church to be concerned about the social, political, and economic problems that affect their lives. Social action, therefore, is the natural consequence of service evangelism. They are two sides of the same coin. The oft-encountered but totally false dichotomy between social action and evangelism is dispelled by the holistic, inclusive, and incarnational nature of service evangelism.

> It is possible to be meaningfully involved in social action without being involved in evangelism, as countless secular organizations and government agencies are. But it is not possible, in my opinion, to be meaningfully involved in service evangelism without being involved in social action. An evangelistic approach that is truly concerned with reaching the whole person, I repeat, cannot overlook the social dimensions of a person's life, or the context in which that life is lived.[12]

While those who engage in service evangelism are to be forthright in their witness to Jesus Christ, they do so in an ecumenical spirit which recognizes that the church must work in partnership with people of other churches, religions, and secular organizations in addressing the needs of society and problems of mutual concern. The holistic and inclusive nature of service evangelism is one reason my students from Third World countries have responded so positively to this approach.

In the United States some pastors are also enthusiastic about it until they hear the part about visitation evangelism, which conjures up too many negative images for them. Consequently I have sometimes felt like a voice crying in a wilderness of opposition. Pastors and lay people can come up with more excuses for not going out into the community and knocking on doors than there are taxis in New York City. I have heard them all, and I can probably add some they have not thought of. I have yet to find anyone who can show me a more effective way to reach all the people in one's community with the gospel of Jesus Christ than by calling on them *where they live*.

It is not a question of whether or not to reach out to the unchurched people in the community. The question is *how* to do that. I say it can be done winsomely and effectively, and with integrity. That is not a theoretical observation. It is a conviction born of my experience in and awareness of churches which have done just that. Jesus has called us to be his witnesses, beginning in Jerusalem, which means right here in River City, or Dallas, or Denver, or London, or Seoul, or wherever one's church may be (Acts 1:8). He has commissioned us to go out into the world and make disciples. If we can't, who can? If we don't, who will?

Yes, it means equipping the congregation to minister to human needs. Yes, it means enlisting, training, and motivating people to share their faith. Yes, it means extra work for the pastor. That is why some pastors want no part of it. Yes, it takes time and effort, patience and persistence. Many churches have dabbled in evangelism for a time, but they have not been persistent enough to discover that persistence pays off. Every local church should view its parish as its mission field, with a clearly defined mission statement, to which not just the pastor and the officers but the entire congregation is committed. Together they seek to fulfill their corporate ministry of evangelism.

For evangelism is a ministry of the whole church. It is not a task to be delegated to a committee or to a few faithful souls who bear witness on behalf of the rest of the congregation. Evangelism is everyone's responsibility. The whole church is the evangelist, as George Sweazey eloquently argued in one of his books.[13] Not everyone is gifted to be an evangelist, no matter how that word is defined, but there is something every church member can do to help the church fulfill the ministry of service evangelism. Thus everyone should feel a sense of ownership of, commitment to, and involvement in the evangelistic enterprise. To achieve that idealistic goal requires a conscious effort to discover and utilize one another's gifts.

Some, perhaps only a relatively few persons, have a special gift for faith sharing and can be enlisted in the calling program. Others can be involved in countless other ways, but they need to be shown how what they do contributes to the ministry of evangelism. That requires an intentionality on the part of the pastor and lay leaders. It is not a matter of "doing evangelism" but of doing everything with evangelistic sensitivity.

Because it is *service* evangelism, members of the church will be concerned about and involved in meeting the needs of the world around them. For a servant church that means being present through its members as an instrument of reconciliation wherever there is conflict, an agent of reform wherever there is injustice, and a witness to God's truth wherever there is corruption. For those who are suffering the church needs to be a community of compassion, ministering to the needs of people in generous, helpful, and imaginative ways. In a world of alienation, where people are separated by class, or politics, or race, or whatever, the church must stand as a demonstration of God's love and of what it means to be an accepting, inclusive community. That is the role of the servant church. It is a proactive not a reactive role. Every church should be leading the way and not just following the lead. It should be championing the cause of justice and peaceful change, not sitting back and watching it happen. That is *service* evangelism.

Because it is service *evangelism*, members of the church will be looking for and sensitive to opportunities for faith sharing with the people they meet in the course of their daily lives. How and when to do that is something most church members will have to be trained to do. Not everyone is an evangelist, but every Christian is a witness. The question

is not Am I willing to be a witness?, but What kind of witness am I willing to be?

Our evangelism should not be seen as an ulterior motive, nor is it a condition for receiving our services. If anything, it is the other way around. Our service can open the door for a faith-sharing conversation. Our deeds lend integrity to our words. Our calling as Christians is our mandate to speak, but, as I have already said, we have to *earn* the right to be heard.

III. The Best Method for Reaching the Most People

Visitation evangelism is but one of many methods, but it is entirely compatible with the principles of service evangelism, and it is the best way I know to reach the most people in the church's mission field. Any other method is bound to be either random, or selective, or haphazard, often with little or no opportunity for follow-up. Some methods, such as radio, television, movies, magazines, newspapers, and other forms of mass evangelism may enable the gospel to be heard by far more people, but it is one-way communication. Crusades and preaching missions may touch many hearts, but what about the people in your community who do not attend, and care nothing about, such events? There are far more non-attenders than attenders. Billboards, posters, and other forms of display advertising may attract some attention, but there is no personal contact whatsoever.

"Saturation evangelism" is ambitious in its coverage but weak in its follow-up with those who do not respond. Its practitioners are more interested in getting the word out than in ministering to people's needs. It is one of the more extreme examples of propositional, as opposed to incarnational, evangelism. Street corner, market place, shopping mall, and other on-sight witnessing permits contact with some people, but only on a random basis. And those who engage in that method of witnessing usually feel they have fulfilled all evangelistic righteousness if they have shared the "Four Spiritual Laws" or some other version of the gospel. It is a faith-telling not a faith-sharing approach. The witnesses do not have time to listen.

Distributing pamphlets, tracts, fliers, door-knob hangers, and other kinds of literature in the neighborhood may arouse some interest, but those who use this method tend to rely too heavily on the printed material to do the job. They give out the material then wait for the response. What about the people who do not respond? Most people in the neighborhood do not. Some do, of course, and with them there needs to be a way of following up on their expressed interest.

Telemarketing is a method employed in America by many new church development projects to inform thousands of people by telephone that a new church is being formed in the area. People are asked if they would like to be part of the forming of a new church, and, if they show any

interest, they are invited to attend an initial worship service or meeting. The small percentage of persons who respond favorably provide a pool of potential members for the new church. It is a low-key approach based on the sales principle that for a given number of calls you can expect a certain percentage of people to respond favorably. Again the evangelistic question to be asked is, What about the huge majority of people who do not respond?

Personal invitations to friends, neighbors, fellow employees, and other acquaintances are an important and effective means of helping a church to grow numerically but an unreliable way of evangelizing all of the unchurched people in the community. With the exploding technologies of this inter-active age, we need to explore the use of video tapes, CD ROMs, E-Mail, and the Internet in reaching people with the gospel, while being aware of the obvious limitations of these media.

Small group evangelism, as the name implies, is a way of reaching those who participate in small groups, but the majority of the people "out there" do not. It is a marvelous method for evangelizing those who come, but how do you get the people out there to come? Evangelistic worship services and other programs and special events designed to attract the unchurched attempt to get the people "out there" to come to something "in here." Even if they succeed in attracting a goodly number to such an event, the question remains, What about the rest of the community, the majority of whom could not care less about what we do "in here"? The same is true regarding the use of drama, music, and other art forms, which may attract some, but which fail to reach the vast majority of unchurched people in the community.

All of these methods and others that could be mentioned are effective in reaching some people, some methods more so than others. Religious conferences, retreats, and seminars can have a powerful spiritual impact on those who attend. None of them, however, can compare with visitation evangelism as a way of reaching every home in the parish. Need I reiterate that regardless of the method, including visitation evangelism, the principles of service evangelism can, and in my opinion should, inform the style of those involved. Given the assumptions discussed above, the principles of service evangelism are universally applicable.

IV. Conclusion

There is much more to be said on this subject, some of which I have tried to cover in my various writings. In one relatively brief article there is no room to discuss some important related topics, such as how to plan, prepare, and organize for service evangelism; how to enlist and train callers for service evangelism; how to identify people's gifts and involve the rest of the congregation in the church's ministry of evangelism. What are the implications of service evangelism for membership

preparation and assimilation, church officer training, Christian education and nurture, personal and corporate stewardship, mission interpretation and giving, church growth and renewal, worship, pastoral care and counseling, the use of the church's facilities, etc., etc.?

And what is the role of the pastor in the whole process? How does the pastor help the congregation to become a servant church? To be sure, a servant church needs a servant leader, but what does that leadership entail? These and many other questions deserve the serious consideration of anyone interested in exploring more deeply the implications of service evangelism for the mission and ministry of the local church.

As one who has been involved in that ministry for many years, I can testify that such an exploration would be well worth the effort of any pastor.

NOTES

[1] My first book on evangelism, *The Oak Lane Story*, published by the Division of Evangelism, United Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in 1971, is a case study of the Oak Lane Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, an urban American congregation that experienced a remarkable renewal as a result of an inclusive, persistent, systematic, service-oriented outreach to the surrounding community. The second book, *Service Evangelism* (Westminster Press, 1979) was the result of much theological reflection on the experience of the Oak Lane Church and represents my attempt to conceptualize, articulate, and reduce to some communicable principles a service-oriented ministry of evangelism for the local church. The task of defining a biblically based, theologically sound style of evangelism was continued in my three-volume series on the pastor as evangelist: *The Pastor as Evangelist* (Westminster Press, 1984); *The Pastor-Evangelist in Worship* (Westminster Press, 1986); and *The Pastor-Evangelist in the Parish* (Westminster Press, 1990). These three books examine the pastor's personal relationships, the pastor's professional roles, and the factors that shape the context and determine the style of the pastor's evangelism ministry. The style of evangelism which these books combine to describe has been incorporated into the *Faithful Witnesses* training course, which I was commissioned by the PC(USA) General Assembly to write. The written materials, consisting of a *Leader's Guide* and a *Participant's Workbook* (Geneva Press, 1987), have been adapted and used by other denominations as well in the United States and abroad.

[2] This quotation and the other biblical references in this article are taken from the *New Revised Standard Version* (Collins Publishers, 1989).

[3] *The Isaiah Vision, an Ecumenical Strategy for Congregational Evangelism*. Geneva: WCC Publications, 1992. The book was reviewed in the *JAETE*, Vol 8, pp. 94-95.

[4] *The Pastor as Evangelist*, p. 56.

[5] Ibid., p. 164.

[6] See *Service Evangelism*, Chapter 2, "The Case for Faith Sharing." See also the *Faithful Witnesses Leader's Guide* and the *Faithful Witnesses Participant's Book*, Weeks 5 and 6, and consult the indices (under "Faith sharing") of *The Pastor as Evangelist* and *The Pastor-Evangelist in the Parish*.

[7] For more detailed discussions of the art of active listening see the *Faithful Witnesses* course, especially Weeks 3 and 4, and *Service Evangelism*, Chapter 6. See also under "Listening" in the indices of *The Pastor as Evangelist*, *The Pastor-Evangelist in Worship*, and *The Pastor-Evangelist in the Parish*.

[8] See, for example, *Service Evangelism*, Chapter 2, and *The Pastor as Evangelist*, Chapter 4.

[9] For a fuller discussion of the "what" and the "why" of faith see *The Pastor as Evangelist*, pp. 68-69, and the *Faithful Witnesses* course, Weeks 5 and 7-9.

[10] This is the definition used in the *Faithful Witnesses* course. Part of the wording has been incorporated into the definition adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
[11] There is a detailed outline of a visitation evangelism program for the local church, along with a list of resources, in the *Faithful Witnesses Leader's Guide*, pp. 91-105. The evangelistic calling program of the Oak Lane Presbyterian Church is described in detail in *The Oak Lane Story*.
[12] *Service Evangelism*, p. 58.
[13] See *The Church as Evangelist*, by George E. Sweazey (Harper & Row, 1978).

EVANGELISM AND SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Samuel Wilson

Evangelism as Spiritual Struggle

We are forced, given the nature of evangelism and spiritual struggle associated with it, to military metaphor. The language of scriptures is often the language of war. This is the vocabulary of scripture, because it is the reality of our engagement with real spiritual enemies. The noise of the engines of battle, the clang of swords on shields and the rush of chariot hoards ring through the first chapter of Colossians, for example.

Paul symbolizes the Colossians' conversion to Christ by the ancient despotic practice of conquerors of uprooting and transporting whole peoples to new territories. We (children of the kingdom) are transported by our Sovereign out of the kingdom of darkness and rooted in the kingdom of God's dear Son. What a representation of evangelism!

Let us begin with the frank and honest recognition that—despite this consistent biblical vocabulary—we are, in evangelism and other ministries, frequently too little aware of the arduous spiritual struggle to win peoples and individuals to Christ. We are too often unaware that evangelism is a form of spiritual warfare; others of us misunderstand the nature of that warfare and our part in it.

The Evangelistic Themes of Warfare in the New Testament

At least two major themes are discernible in the New Testament whenever the spiritual fray is addressed: 1. Jesus' exaltation, total authority, and final victory, and, 2. Victorious outcome is defined as freedom to

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declare and to know life-changing truth in the present through the proclamation of the kingdom. The quiet assurance is ubiquitous that Jesus' exalted name is more authoritative, higher, more powerful than any in the heavenly, intermediate, earthly, or nether spheres known now, in the past, or yet to be known. And new liberty under his Lordship is a mindset and frame of reference for life that is free to hear the word and respond freely.

Knowledge as Central to Evangelistic Warfare

Spiritual warfare focusses on freedom gained through truth witnessed by the liberating Holy Spirit. "You will know the truth, and the truth shall free you!"[1] Spiritual blindness, the inability to grasp kingdom truth, is a central issue for the New Testament. Spiritual blindness enslaves mind and heart. Even Jesus could not always declare truth and be understood because of the community of opposition he confronted. There is scholarship that finds that the references to spiritual powers in Colossians are rooted in the strong theme of countering false teaching by emphasis on Christ. Paul speaks in Corinthians of the Jews "whose minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. Whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away."[2]

It cannot be accidental that he then exults in the freedom and liberty that is present when the Lord, the Spirit, is present. And what ensues is the reflection of the Lord's glory in those who are set free by the capability of seeing, even in a fogged mirror, the transforming face of the Lord. The solution to the blindness of communities which surround us is the Church metamorphosing to the image of Jesus. Theology grips life in righteous love, energizing daily practice and human contact and relationships. Through his power these latter declare that Christ liberates and reconciles. He is peacemaker for our world's pervasive warfare.

Similarly Paul contrasts our spiritual weaponry to carnal ordnance. The powerful weapons which obliterate strongholds demolish "*arguments* and every pretension that sets itself up against the *knowledge of God*, and we take captive *every thought* to make it obedient to Christ" (emphasis mine).[3] Effective use of spiritual weaponry for Paul, evidenced by the close of the paragraph, is shown by his greatly expanding the preaching of the gospel in the regions beyond the Corinthians' outreach, boasting in the Lord, not in one's own or others' authority.

While it would be a bit farfetched to consider "air" in Ephesians 2:2 as "it's in the air," there is a real sense in which the vehicle of dominance by spiritual powers is the set of thought forms imposed by history, traditions, and, more powerfully, contemporary social life. They dominate by blinding us to the realities of our condition and of the gospel. Precisely these limitations ought to be brought under our control in

propagating liberty in the gospel, "bringing every thought into subjection" to the regnant Christ. The clear textual referent in Ephesians is to the former "way" or "manner" of life. Energized might in resurrection power is the only means of liberation from wrong ways of thinking and living.

Evangelism that takes strongholds frees one from worldviews that imprison the mind and heart. Waging war evangelistically means freeing men and women from matrices of logic which darken their comprehension. Every thought and thoughtform can be captive to freedom in Christ. Restrictive frameworks of skepticism and superstition splinter to the breadth of the kingdom, but only when those who are rooted and grounded in Christ bathe their announcement of liberty in anointed prayer.

Knowing and Dealing with the Foes

Field commanders find reconnaissance essential. They must know the enemy, and the strength and deployment of their forces. Ignorance would be foolhardy indeed.

Similarly, many today teach a spiritual warfare that emphasizes knowing and "standing against" the opposing spirits. Cities and territories are supposed to have ruling evil spirits who must be discerned and overcome in direct combat. This "warfare" should precede evangelism.

But how much do the scriptures emphasize knowing the opposition? I submit that scripture, while clearly including in the believer's authority power over demons to cast them out, particularly in Ephesians, sets these spiritual struggles largely outside our purview and instead points us to the strength of Christ displayed by the sovereign Father.

But first, in writing to the Corinthians Paul says: "We are not ignorant of Satan's devices." His personal appraisal of revelation and the place of his own struggle against Satan's messenger in his life is instructive.[4] He is, quite evidently, reluctant to speak of these things, being forced to boast by the opposition of some who claim he lacks what today might be called the "power gifts" of an apostle. These he claims to have, and in abundance. But he prefers to center on the gladness with which he came to an incarnational understanding of weakness as a channel for perfecting grace and for its stimulus to prayer. It's as if he said: "I quit focussing on the handicap (Satanic messenger) and began appreciating the gift." All the signs of a true apostle are in evidence in his ministry, he argues, but he makes no emphasis on their importance; if anything, he gives instruction by example to minimize them.

A man swept in ecstasy to highest heaven, and given extravagant revelations, his rule for himself and for us is submission to Christ in weakness, so that in weakness, Christ's strength can be seen. The passage is most notable for its lack of instruction concerning who Satan's messenger was, or for procedural directions as to how to deal with it, him, or her.

The Secular Spiritual Powers and Territoriality

More problematic, however, is the issue of the oft repeated hierarchial series common to the prison epistles especially: Principalities, powers, authorities. . . ."[5] An intriguing mystery! Who are these?

Opinion ranges from fallen angels behind state institutions and nations, to astral spirits, to impersonal structures of power, to secular institutions characterized by legitimacy of authority or office.[6] Are they spiritual, angelic, or demonic? How are they related to the visible institutions? If we can tell, ought the Christian (evangelist) to invoke or appeal to God through Christ for angelic aid, or engage evil spirits directly? There is not space for the full study necessary to arrive at definitive conclusions about these questions, or to define conclusively these specific terms.

But first let me address our possible engagement with the evil or demonic spirits. The majority of the world lives with some kind of animist or animatistic view, and lives in fear of the spirits or powers. The Ephasians certainly did. And their local religions, like shamanism and the pervasive new age teachings today, taught them to handle their fears by manipulating and appeasing the spirits. In fact, the term *energeia* (cf. below) was used outside of the Bible of incantations and chants that supposedly had intrinsic power to control these spirits.[7] In almost total contrast, the *Letter to the Ephesians'* response to the tyranny of fear of local powers is exaltation of Christ. This takes the form of exposition of his superiority in the first chapter's profound explication of God's sovereignty and power. The "Son of his love" is not to be compared to the fear invoked by local attempts to control lesser spirits by mystery and magic. No ground of comparison exists. Local teachers boasted of powers and taught mantras which held the promise of control and manipulation as their response to such fear. Paul offers Jesus, the Jesus who is above them all. Knowing him, and the power of his resurrection supersedes the need to manipulate lesser fearful threats from any shadow world.

This theme of exalting Jesus and downplaying minor spirits is consistent in the New Testament. But if we limit ourselves to the Ephesian letter, surely one conclusion important to our theme is possible. The first chapter of the letter introduces an undoubted Ephesian emphasis on power, but not power for discerning and overcoming spirits in direct combat. The power of the sovereign God exemplified in a single verse, 1:19, bankrupts vocabulary in speaking of the *dunamis*, *energeia*, *kratos*, and *iskus*, the working of the might of his strength exerted in raising Christ from the dead. And, with regard to evangelism, raising us from death in sinful slavery.

This power or glory of God is opposed to the several kinds of authority listed in later chapters that get included in current notions in growingly popular literature calling for warfare against "powers," i.e., the *exousia*, *dunamis*, and *kuriotes*, that appear in Chapters Three and Six. Their mention seems almost tangential, almost a byproduct of making known

to the nations the mystery of reconciliation, peace from the warfare that set Israel and the nations at odds. The end of that war has the derivative but not primary effect that these powers also come to know the manifold wisdom of God.

Note what is not and never comes into view or teaching: Paul does not call us to identify the opposition, gives no formulae for imprecation or binding, and pays no other attention to these authorities except to say that the mystery is made known to these powers through the redemption of the Church. And this is the letter which most concentrates on power and warfare!

This is a far cry from extensive teaching given by contemporary teachers whose imaginations have focussed so much attention and energy on discerning and binding territorial or other spirits.

Good Spirits

We are left with the question of how we are to relate to angelic or good spirits, or if we are to do so at all. The early ministry of Jesus reflects dependence on good spirits in and following his first encounter with the devil in the wilderness. And while our Father's angels watch over little ones, there is not a hint in scripture that we should appeal for their intervention. *Chapter One of Hebrews* teaches us to count on their ministries, but not to seek for them. Once again, they are shown in subjection to divine sovereignty, and juxtaposed to the exalted divine Son whose throne and scepter of righteousness last forever.

We do not see some things, but we see Jesus. In one oft-cited Old Testament story, Elisha was aware of the numerical and powerful superiority of the hosts of the Lord, and even prayed that his scared servant's eyes should be opened to see that their force was superior to those who camped in opposition, but he did not ask for nor seek to carry out his work on that plane of conflict.

Dealing with Spirits

Both Jesus and Paul in the sacred record, while not shying away from confrontation with evil spirits and awareness of angels (good spirits), seem to deal with them with some degree of reluctance. At times they almost avoid or postpone confrontation, and certainly give no instruction or example of publicizing triumph. Mark's record is illustrative of Jesus' practice in this regard. His record is almost as if Jesus were to say: "I came to preach, and compassion leads me to liberate people from demonization, but the witness of those I've commanded to be silent distracts attention from my message to all this other stuff, and I'm forced to go to the desert where I can concentrate on preaching."

Would that more of us ministered healing to the sick and freedom to the demonized. But it is instructive that the practice of our Lord himself sets a priority on preaching (cf. Mark 1:38).

Repeatedly Jesus enjoins silence on those delivered; and he redirects the disciples' mistaken joy in the subjection of the spirits to them in his name toward rejoicing in their own inclusion on the heavenly rolls. He silences evil spirits, and does not exhort his disciples to invoke the help of good spirits to overcome the unclean ones. In following God's will in his later ministry, the disciples should put up their sword, since, as he notes for them, he could, if he wanted and if it were appropriate, call thousands of angels. But he didn't. Instead he chooses the road of submission. Thus he discourages dependence on angels. And no example or instruction is given to us that we should invoke or depend on them today.

Aside from the temptation, the most direct teaching on Jesus' confrontation with the devil is in the sixteenth chapter of John's Gospel. According to this teaching, when Jesus died on the cross, the ruler of this present world was brought to the bar and convicted; his power was broken in the resurrection and ascension. The sway of the spirits is superseded by the session of the saints with Christ. The application of this victory in individual lives is dependent on the righteousness of walk and life worked in the believer by the Holy Spirit. His role is to guide into all truth pertaining to Jesus, not to reveal names of authorities and opposing principalities. Jesus says, in summary: "Take heart, I've already conquered the world."

Jesus directed attention away from demons and their activity, and Paul shuns fellowship at their tables, denies their God-like character of power,[8] and preaches and heals in Jesus Christ's exalted name. Extensive Pauline passages combine the themes of temptation and struggle, and freedom for Christians, while explicitly viewing the spirits and gods of this world as non-entities.

Paul, in fact, dealt with the Pythonic spirit only reluctantly, exasperated that she dogged their heels for days.[9] This was the only instance of demonic encounter recorded by Luke in his extensive history of the Pauline missionary journeys. Paul did not seek such encounters. He did not clear the way for, nor base his ministry on overt engagement with opposing spirits. No instruction was given to do so. Fully aware of and given to detailing Christ's triumph over every level of spiritual authority, he builds his mission on the triumph of Jesus revealed in redeemed and renewed relationships. Working these out declares the mystery to the range of principalities and powers.

All this seems to contrast with current practice in reports, for example, from Latin America of beginning evangelistic services with methodical provocation of evil spirits. This may seem heroic, elicit enthusiasm, and effect deep spirituality, but it is surely not scriptural. It seems, rather, to be unscriptural or even anti-scriptural. It is, in fact, downright dangerous for the uninformed and unconverted. Witness the seven sons of Sceva.

The realm of warfare of the archangel Michael against Satan is not a fray that we are to attempt to enter.[10] The curtain of mystery shrouding the unseen forces is drawn ever so slightly back. Then stern warning is given against railing against, antagonizing or flaunting our position. The exotic appeal that romanticizes the operation of unseen spirits is to be rejected and eschewed.

Now, our authority includes the power to drive our demons.[11] The authority of the Name is the core of the commission to evangelize as we go. The earlier, expanded version of the disciples' commission expressly included evicting evil spirits as one of the reflections of having freely received. The authority and power of Jesus' name is given to us, associated with every believer because we are raised from death and seated with him in the heavenlies. We need discernment to recognize when demons are present and active. Our sphere affects the heavenly realm when we yield to the Spirit of the regnant Christ, and not vice versa. Our battlefield is in our flesh, in our relationships, and in our proclamation. Our wrestling in the spiritual realm is in the arena of prayer to free human souls in truth's proclamation.

The body of Pauline work affords many perfect opportunities to have expounded a different view, but it remains consistently very restrained. In curious fashion, for instance, in the culmination of the Roman epistle, when Paul has crowned the letter with its real point, the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters' exposition of his mission strategy, he has a perfect opportunity to develop this different view. Yet, instead of being proactive, promoting direct engagement with opposing spirit forces, he seems content to neglect benignly to mention them. Reassurance is given: "The God of peace will shortly crush Satan under your feet." Warfare will end. Yet that's it! No call to specify named, known esoteric spirits. No orders to close in hand-to-hand struggle in the line of battle; rather an almost passive: "God will. . . ." The conclusion is clear: rest in him!

We are called to be preoccupied with Christ, and align our lives with concerns of the kingdom, setting our minds and hearts on God's and Christ's present sovereignty. Do not rejoice that demons are subject to you, rejoice that you are written in the civil registry of the heavenly city.

What About Mapping and Marches?

Knowing one's context enlightens evangelism. Recognizing that evangelism is spiritual warfare is basic. How shall we respond to those who call us to deal with territorial spirits and to discern and map the "spirit" of the city?

No effort at understanding the spiritual context of prayer is futile. But the present writer confesses that his predisposition does not lie toward emphasis on enlarging and expanding upon hints of struggles in higher realms that seem to be set outside our purview by scripture.

Let us at least entertain the notion and possibility that this could sap and misdirect energy and effort.

Sadly I conclude that, while these recent emphases are highly to be commended for sincerity, enthusiasm, and for stimulating prayer, they are detrimental. They divert energy from evangelism invested in incarnational life, compared to which they are an "easy fix." They tend to produce a professional prayer elite, inducted into an almost Gnostic inner circle who claim special powers of discernment. This becomes divisive for the body, destroying the unity which is the basic credential demanding a hearing of an unbelieving world. While this teaching is not necessarily unbiblical, it is certainly extra-biblical. And the *esoterica* (e.g., vocabulary to address spirits, detailed stylistic recommendations for shaman-like chants to quell obvious fears, even the technology of mapping spiritual territories) generated by fertile modern imagination and attached to slim biblical references seem to me captious. At best, they rush into a vacuum left by what scripture does not state. At worst, they lead astray and misdirect precious resources.

Instead, power prayer ought to unleash resurrection power in day-to-day relationships. These are the clearly stated scriptural vehicle for the declaration of the reconciling mystery of Christ. It is equally as miraculous (if we fall to odious comparison) for the entire direction of life of an enslaved sinner to be transformed as it is that demons be recognized or cast out.

Therefore, it seems at least ill-advised to become overly concerned with spirits, especially narrowly focussing on the enemy spirits, and expending energy to identify and exorcize them in ways that go far beyond biblical precedents. The worst error of this line may be to accept too much data from the "children of the lie" as the only input for focussing our struggle. As secular research methodologists know, good theory (or theology) cannot be constructed from unreliable data. We need not know them by name, nor confront them directly.

If God wanted our ministry to major on these things, would they not find far more visibility in the practice of Christ or the early Church, many more models described in biblical history, or much more explicit instruction in the epistles than is the actual case?

The Model for Evangelistic Warfare

The model is Christ. And Christ acted in perfect, incarnate humanity. His human relations and actions disseminate grace and truth. And from this base, he proclaims liberty. He does not major on knowledge of the enemy, which he certainly possessed. Even when accused of casting out unclean spirits through Beelzebub, his riposte is that the religious leaders fail to see that he acts through the Holy Spirit. The model is thoroughgoing. He does not offer a catalogue of spirits but rebukes the human authorities for relating his power to that of Beelzebub. What

lifts us in our struggle and what gives us victory is the Holy Spirit in the inner person, not esoteric knowledge, exotic jargon, or amulets of phraseology against an unseen and unknown foe. Jesus the Anointed (the Christ) is victor! He sits above all authorities, principalities, and powers, not only in this world but in the world to come. Exalting his conquering name, and, through the Holy Spirit, dying and rising and sitting with him in identity with his session at the right hand of the Father, overcomes all enemies, known and unknown, worldly and spiritual, visible and invisible.

Our warfare is spiritual, but the strategy and tactics of that warfare are derived from dependence on the power of the resurrection through the indwelling and anointing Spirit. While we are not ignorant of the devices of the enemy, we are not to fight the enemy through sought-after confrontation, but through obedience and holiness.

Far more of our opposition is the tenacity and power of Old Adam than Beelzebub and all the spirits of the air. Our attack should target human lust, and humankind's parade of their own shame. "Do not say . . . for you are drawn aside by your own lust . . ." says James.[12] As some teach, discerning the spirit of a city may well involve the recognition of some characteristic sin that holds many in common bondage. The cleansing, liberating, remitting application of the blood of Christ is needed rather than the colorful jargon of someone with a "deliverance gift" casting out the "demon" of drugs, alcohol, evil desire, etc. The victory that writes a name in the Lamb's Book of Life releases greater power and is far more cause for rejoicing than is discovering how directly to address thousands of previously unnamed or unknown unclean spirits. Lost people need to hear, and barriers to the unreached need to be crossed with more than a doctor's house call. Someone must go and preach. And it is the preaching which must be empowered.

Spiritual opposition is real. From time to time, our enemy will manifest himself in outcry; we walk unaware of his active opposition on occasion. But the biblical response in either case is to exalt Christ and to live under and extend his lordship and to minimize publicity for the demonic. Further, we ought not to suffuse our lives and vocabulary with demon awareness that arouses either fear, or, more dangerously, an "in" jargon of spiritual warfare that amounts to superstitious Christian animism. The *energeia* of the world is a spell or incantation; prayer in and power evangelism in the fullness of the Spirit is not. Every new exposition and recognition of truth will likely involve neologisms, but an "in" vocabulary has no spiritual or magic power. While we ought to be careful of vocabulary, we ought not to rely on intrinsic power in practiced or pat words.

The Victory of Stability and Prayer

Spiritual opposition is real, but let it not be our organizing focus. The final emphasis in Ephesians, Chapter Six is on prayer for Paul to

have freedom and unreservedness in speech. The wording suggests fearless, cheerful confidence, conspicuous public relations, calling attention to the message delivered.

This is the outcome and greatest victory in spiritual warfare: a plain message clearly declared, brought to consideration of the unveiled mind of a people or individual, who then are free to make an informed decision about eternal truth.

That, it seems to me, is a pretty good country definition of effective evangelism!

NOTES

[1] John 8:32.
[2] II Corinthians 3:14-18.
[3] II Corinthians 10:3-6.
[4] II Corinthians 12:1-13.
[5] Cf., for example, I Corinthians 15:24, Ephesians 1:20, 3:10, 6:12, Colossians 1:16, 2:10.
[6] For a lengthy study which includes continental and United States scholarship, see Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians, Power and Magic*, especially chapters 2 and 3, "Previous Interpretations" and "The Supremacy of Christ over the 'Powers'".
[7] Compare Clinton Arnold, op. cit., pp. 18, 44, and 73, 74.
[8] I Corinthians 8.
[9] Acts 16:16 ff.
[10] Jude 9, 10.
[11] For an old but reasonably sound exposition of the power given to believers by our identification with Christ see: *Encountering the Darkness*, J. B. MacMillan, Christian Publications, Harrisburg.
[12] James 1:13 and 14.

JUAN F. THOMSON, CHRISTIAN IDENTITY AND THE BEGINNINGS OF SPANISH-LANGUAGE PROTESTANT PREACHING IN THE RIVER PLATE

Douglas W. Ruffle

Recently I assumed an executive position with the United Methodist Church as Area Secretary for Chile, Argentina and Uruguay. Previously I served as a missionary in Argentina, from 1978-1987. There are questions about Protestant Christianity in Argentina that piqued my curiosity over the years. Why are Protestants largely anti-Catholic? Why are Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians widely known for their abstinence about smoking, drinking, and premarital sex? When confronted with challenges of living a virtuous life in the midst of a sinful society, Christians have always tried to forge a markedly distinct identity. The fast growing evangelical and Pentecostal churches of Argentina are forging today a distinct "evangelical" identity that contrasts with prevailing "Western" ways (i.e., drug and sex culture).

To learn more about the roots of Christian identity, I began reading about the beginnings of the Protestant movement in the River Plate. I discovered the name of Juan F. Thomson. In Wade Crawford Barclay's *History of Methodist Missions*, a footnote briefly sketched the life of Juan F. Thomson:[1]

> John F. Thomson (1843-1933) was born in Plymouth, England, and emigrated in 1853 to Argentina. He graduated from Ohio Wesleyan in 1866 and the same year married Helen Jane Goodfellow,

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a niece of William Goodfellow. For many years he served as Presiding Elder in Argentina and Uruguay. Thomson was an eloquent speaker but was most widely known for the vigorous, polemical character of his sermons. He was fond of debate and did not hesitate to take on any opponent in theological and ecclesiastical controversy, frequently being the challenger. He had great influence in scholarly circles, particularly among university students.

Barclay mentioned Thomson concerning the first Spanish-speaking service conducted in Argentina. Thomson preached. During that first service, according to Barclay, a larger group of people gathered outside the outside the house than inside. Protesters had gathered to throw rocks and tufts of grass at the house. Police had to come to protect the worshipers.[2]

Thomson's preaching career had begun turbulently. He was a Protestant in a fiercely Roman Catholic land. It had been but twelve years since non-Catholic worship in the Spanish language had been legalized. Thomson's entire career would be spent preaching the "gospel according to Protestantism." He would attack the Roman Catholic Church in pulpit and press (he was for years the Director of the Methodist newspaper, *El Estandarte Evangélico*).

The purpose of this article is to explore the roots of today's Christian identity among Protestants, including Evangelicals and Pentecostals, by looking more closely at Juan F. Thomson's life and ministry. It will be necessary to give some background information about Argentina's first Protestant service conducted in Spanish, offer historical evidence suggesting that Juan Thomson incorporated American Protestant Revival techniques into his preaching ministry, and point to some lessons about Christian identity in an age of transition. The countries that compose the "River Plate" are Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. The focus here will be primarily Argentina. Today these countries are experiencing revival as Evangelical and Pentecostal churches grow in numbers and influence. There are lessons from Thomson's ministry that illumine a similar need in his day and ours for "an identity apart" from prevailing society.

Juan Thomson, the "Man of the Hour" for Spanish Language Protestantism

Protestant work began early in the history of Argentina. Worship services for English, German and Swiss colonists dates from the 1820s.[3] A Methodist church was founded in 1836 in the heart of Buenos Aires. But Protestant worship in Spanish was prohibited by law until 1855. Roman Catholicism was the State church and held tight control on the spirituality of the people. An argument between the Roman Catholic

hierarchy and the Argentina dictator, Juan Manuel de Rosas, paved the way toward lifting this prohibition.

According to Methodist historian, Daniel P. Monti, after the fall of Rosas in 1952, Argentina began a thirty-year period of "new horizons." There was a new spirit of openness in the land. After the tight control of dictator Rosas, the country entered a period of liberality. For Protestants, that meant the spread of the gospel could begin without restrictions for the first time.[4]

A new article was passed in the Argentine constitution. While still recognizing the Roman Catholic Church as the State church, it gave freedom of worship to other denominations. U.S. missionaries who served English-speaking congregations immediately sought ways to extend their work to the Spanish-speaking populace.[5]

Internal struggles among the English-speaking congregations and failed attempts to bring Spanish-speaking preachers to the city postponed the long sought work in Spanish. That work began in earnest when the first presiding elder of the Methodist Episcopal church was appointed to the River Plate area (Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay). William Goodfellow arrived in 1857 with a mandate from his Bishop to begin mission work in the Spanish language.

Soon after his arrival Goodfellow met Thomson. The new presiding elder held a "Week of World Prayer" in the English-speaking church located on Cangallo Street in the Summer of 1857 (January 5-12). The bilingual Thomson came to the revival and was deeply influenced by the preaching of Goodfellow. He described the encounter as a *rebirth*.[6]

Goodfellow took special interest in the fifteen-year-old Thomson, becoming counselor and spiritual mentor to the new convert. He arranged for Thomson to study theology at Ohio Wesleyan University (1862-1966). Before returning to Argentina, Thomson was ordained a deacon at the Erie Annual Conference. He returned to Argentina, then, as a U.S. missionary through the auspices of the Methodist Episcopal Church Missionary Society.[7]

Thomson admitted that his Spanish had become dull after having spent nearly five years of talking only English in Ohio. He had to retrain his tongue upon his return to Buenos Aires in October of 1866. By the beginning of 1867, though, he was ready to commence work in the Spanish language.[8]

He started teaching the Bible in the home of doña Fermina León de Aldeber in the district of Buenos Aires called, "La Boca." The big day, though, came on the 25th of May of that year. Monti described it as "the most memorable date" in the history of the Methodist mission in South America. Although there had been occasional preaching in Spanish before that date, from this time forward regularly scheduled services in Spanish were held. Thomson preached in the same temple where he had been "reborn" ten years earlier.

Many Protestants from around the city came that day to the church, which was known as "the dissident temple,"[9] to give support to the

Spanish-language initiative. Others were expressly invited. Monti recounts a news article rendition of what happened:

> An immense audience came to see the young preacher, not leaving any space vacant. The altar, the steps, and the bench behind the pulpit were all occupied. Members of Congress and the legislature, judges, lawyers, and doctors, mixed with commoners to fill the house of God.[10]

The words of Dr. Thomson captivated listeners. His clear and sonorous voice spoke in the distinctive Buenos Aires (*porteño*) accent of Spanish. According to the Uruguayan Piquinela, his voice "resonated like thunder." He brought "fire to the pulpit," his words spewing forth like sparks. Listeners had to feel the heat of his words and his preaching always kept the temperature high.[11]

Carlos T. Gattinoni, who heard Thomson speak in the 1920s, described his voice as filling an entire auditorium with resonance without the aid of a microphone and this when the man was in his eighties![12] Monti wrote that his phrases were filled with colorful anecdotes. He could develop a theme logically and clearly.[13]

Some people who first attended Thomson's preaching came out of curiosity, wanting to know what a Protestant service was like. Others were attracted to Thomson's version of Christianity. Invariably Thomson would point out differences between Catholicism and Protestantism. After the initial period of curiosity waned, the polemical nature of Thomson's preaching turned his church into a battleground. Thomson became renowned for his polemics. Unafraid of controversy or heated argumentation, he developed a following among the common people of Buenos Aires.[14]

The difficulty of Protestant evangelization in the midst of a Roman Catholic populace was confirmed by Bishop Thomas B. Wood in a letter written to Methodist Episcopal Church Mission Secretary, Dr. Peck, on November 13, 1893. Wood attempted to convey the circumstances surrounding the Spanish-speaking mission in southern South America: "As late as 1867 I heard Dr. Durbin [a former Mission Secretary] say that *he did not believe that the Catholic American peoples could be evangelized*!" But Wood also spoke of a better day to come: "When the *great revivals* once begin in South America they will have a sweep as tremendous as that territory is vast."[15]

Juan Thomson the Revivalist

Thomson was reborn at a revival led by his mentor William Goodfellow. He was theologically trained at Ohio Wesleyan University. His apprenticeship as an evangelist, though, came as a helper to a colporteur, H. P. Arnauld.[16]

Colporteurs were a combination evangelist and Bible salesperson. They went door-to-door selling Bibles and sharing their testimony of Christ to all who were willing to listen. The ministry of colporteurs paved the way for Protestant work in the Spanish language. Arnauld taught Thomson how to evangelize.

The missionaries set up their approach to minister in much the same way as the Methodist Episcopal Church operated in the United States. Throughout the nineteenth century, denominational news articles had become an important aspect of the mission of the church for disseminating information and opinion. The first Spanish-language periodical was called, *El Evangelista*. In 1883 *El Estandarte Evangélico* became the successor to *El Evangelista*. The U.S. missionaries serving the River Plate region took turns as editorial directors. Even while not serving as a director, however, each missionary took part in the editorial production of the eight-page weekly periodical.

On the 75th anniversary of Methodist work in South America (1911), a special edition of *El Estandarte Evangélico* was published, *Número Del Jubileo* (The Jubilee Edition), in which the history of Methodist evangelical mission was recounted. Juan F. Thomson, at the time 68 years old, contributed an article entitled, "*Reminiscencias*," in which he described various incidents that he had experienced during his long career. Thomson told about fights breaking out during his preaching, rumors of his assassination, and the intense rivalry between the Roman Catholic Church and his Protestant preaching. The following excerpt serves to point out the intense polemical nature of the ministry of Thomson as a pioneer Protestant in a fiercely Roman Catholic milieu. It also gives up a glimpse into the memory of Thomson himself. In the article Thomson always referred to himself in the third person:

> In 1878 the enraged papists of the village of San José (Republic of Uruguay) had stormed the Masonic Lodge that was there, and let loose toads and snakes against the enemies of their religion [sic!]. Mr. Thomson accepted an invitation to give a conference in this hostile environment. His friends from Montevideo feared for his life. Accompanied by his valient colleague in the faith, don Bernardino van Domselaar; Thomson came to the large theater. There he made a defense of the Gospel. [Mr. Thomson] had brought letters of recommendation from the great Colonel Latorre and from his very liberal Minister of government, don José M. Montero. Through them he obtained the protection of the chief of Police, and from the commander of the military garrison. Everything came out just as desired—there was an immense and sympathetic audience—after the discourse the officers of the regiment passed in front of the audience with notebooks in hand marking down the names of those who were signing up to subscribe to *El Evangelista*, then the publication of the Mission. More than 70 names were noted. [Thomson] returned to Montevideo and Buenos Aires, where he lived as Interim Superintendent of the Mission. The priest

> of San José started to roar more fiercely, reviling every Protestant [on the list], and challenging any of them to argue in public. The first conference was held in September. In December of the same year Mr. Thomson returned to San José and implored the priest to come out into the "wrestling court" to make good his boastful deeds in the presence of his opponent. He did not dare, remaining inside, if not ashamed, at least ridiculous. These little roosters of papism are very valiant when, surrounded by their harem, they are scratching in their own dung-heap, but they sing another song when they throw them in the circus and contemplate the formidable claws of another rooster.[17]

Thomson's "[sic!]" in this passage shows his contempt for the Roman Catholic Church. He thought it an error to call it religion. One wonders whether Thomson had learned about intense denominational rivalry while studying at Ohio Wesleyan. Peter Cartwright, who traversed the Midwest when Thomson lived in Ohio, had written his own autobiography in 1856 describing the fierce rivalry between Baptists and Methodists. Polemic and rivalry were part of the education Thomson received in Ohio. Also, 19th century nativism was in full swing in the U.S. From the reminiscence quoted above and many other writings, clearly Thomson brought to his preaching rabid anti-Catholicism. The legacy of nativism remains among Protestants in Argentina. In Methodist Churches throughout the country, neither candles nor clergy robes are used—for fear of appearing too "Catholic."

There is no question that Thomson brought with him to Argentina the Methodist system of itineration. He travelled the city on horseback attending regularly to seven different points of mission. The first church he served, *Segunda Iglesia Metodista*, spawned five other congregations during his tenure, three of which were in Buenos Aires and two in small towns west of the city.

Because of Thomson's gift in preaching, he was sent to new areas in Argentina and Uruguay to help start churches. The *Número del Jubileo* mentioned above includes historical sketches of every Methodist Church in Argentina and Uruguay at the time of its publication (1911). Thomson's name occurs often.

Almost immediately after beginning the Spanish-language work in Buenos Aires, Thomson began traveling across the River Plate to Montevideo. In the sketch on that city's Central Church, the *Número del Jubileo* reports that "Rev. J.F. Thomson was sent to Montevideo to begin the mission."[18] In reference to Thomson's penchant for polemic, the sketch said that "the name of Dr. Thomson always will be the terror of the Roman Catholic cleric, because he was the first to shake them up and expose their untruthfulness."[19]

One Montevidean convert was the Rev. Francis G. Penzotti, who would become an agent of the American Bible Society for the River Plate region. He left an account that gives us an idea of the kind of revival that Thomson organized.

> At the time [Thomson] was at the very height of his power, and was calling the attention of the whole region on both banks of the River Plate. His eloquence in preaching was then a novelty to those people. It was from his lips that I heard the gospel for the first time. His text on this memorable night was taken from the words of the Lord in the gospel of St. Matthew, Chapter 11, verse 28: 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.' The theme could not have been more appropriate for my case, and I went out from there that night profoundly impressed.[20]

Penzotti was impressed, but not yet convinced. He continued attending the meetings where Thomson preached, though, finding "treasure listening to the gospel." Thomson called the meeting "a week of prayer," which included a morning and an evening conference. Penzotti was deeply moved by the testimonies given by others at these meetings and yearned to experience what these people seemed to enjoy.

> I contined to attend the services, feeling in my soul every day greater zeal and anxiety to posses the truth. But my spiritual standing was not what it ought to have been, nor what I desired it should be. My soul had not obtained peace, because, like many others in similar circumstances, I sought 'feelings' in place of simply believing what the Word of God told me. I was at the point of failing when, but the grace of the Lord, the day of victory came, and with it peace and joy overflowed me like a river and the horizon of better days began to appear.[21]

Penzotti's testimony echoes accounts given at revival meetings in the U.S. Is the experience of awakening cross-cultural or does the style of revival evoke similar kinds of responses cross-culturally? Thomson's "week of prayer" format was similar to the revival techniques of Charles Grandison Finney. At the same time that Thomson was studying in Delaware, Ohio, Finney served as President of Oberlin College, also in Ohio. Finney's reputation had been well established and Oberlin in the 1860s was, according to Sydney Ahlstrom, "a center of influence for revival theology."[22] Thomson drew upon the same style of revivalism espoused by Finney gathering people in meeting halls in the cities and towns, preaching a gospel that very nearly pressured hearers to accept Christ. The content of Thomson's meetings were the same as Finney and Moody. There was preaching, testimony, and singing.

Thomson was not limited to Argentina and Uruguay. He visited Asunción, Paraguay, in 1881 in order to begin the Methodist mission work there. He also went on a preaching mission in La Paz, Bolivia.[23] Argentina, though, was his main mission field. Although always appointed to a particular church, Thomson would travel to other towns and cities of Argentina to "sow the seeds of the Gospel." The *Número del Jubileo* includes accounts of his initiating work through preaching events in

La Plata in 1888 (Capital of the Province of Buenos Aires). In 1887 Thomson visited the small city west of Buenos Aires, Chivilcoy, where he "conquered the sympathies of the audience and where he nailed, morally, the landmark where the future temple of Truth would be situated in this town." Thomson returned to Chivilcoy in 1889 where one of the saints, Francisco La Moglie, found a meeting room for regular services. Although Thomson appointed a pastor to this charge, he continued to visit twice a month, until the mission outpost was firmly established.[24]

Similarly Thomson opened mission outposts in Bahía Blanca in 1895 (some 600 miles from the city of Buenos Aires), Junin, Mercedes, and other towns and cities of the Province of Buenos Aires. The pattern was always the same. Thomson would give a series of conferences open to the public, using a common meeting hall, a club, or a private home. These public meetings would last about a week. Persons who attended these meetings and responded to the gospel would become the nucleus upon which more permanent work was established. After "awakening interest in the gospel," Thomson, in his role as presiding elder, would send a younger pastor to establish a church.[25]

The story of Juan Thomson carries important lessons for evangelization today. He was extraordinarily gifted in his persuasiveness for the gospel. His training ground was door-to-door calling as a colporteur. This one-to-one personal evangelization sowed the seeds for an understanding of the spiritual needs of people. Our modern sensitivities blanche at the fierce anti-Catholicism of Thomson and his era. Yet, behind the polemic stands the principle of Christian identity. Thomson preached a gospel that forged a Christian identity distinct from the prevailing culture.

Roman Catholicism was so entrenched in the River Plate that any alternative view of Christianity had to be completely different, or it would have been absorbed. Protestants in the nineteenth and early twentieth century were known as nondrinkers in a country where the consumption of wine was immense. They were known as nonsmokers in a land where even today smoking is pervasive. Indeed, Protestants have been known for what they "do not do." Today Pentecostals carry on this tradition of moral piety in Argentina. To identify oneself as an Evangelical or Pentecostal in Argentina is to confess a moral lifestyle with strict sexual ethics and a strong work ethic. The message is being heard. According to *Latinamerica Press* Evangelical and Pentecostal churches in Argentina have experienced unprecedented growth in recent years. Membership in evangelical churches increased by 8% from 1987-1991.[26]

Argentine society is experiencing today the same moral and social challenges that other Western nations confront: rising divorce rates, disintegrating families, drug and alcohol abuse. In the last year Argentina has suffered an economic recession as part of the fallout of the financial crisis in Mexico. Rising unemployment and underemployment have increased stress on families. The gospel spoken clearly and forcefully as an alternative to decadence is finding larger and larger audiences. The demon for the Evangelicals is no longer Roman Catholicism, but the disintegrating values of Western life. Those who preach a simple and forceful message, as Juan Thomson did in his era, find listeners. Christian identity rooted in a wholesome lifestyle serves as an anchor in a sea of uncertainty of modern times. Juan Thomson called people to give themselves over to Christ and live differently. A similar message is being heard today.

The vestiges of nativism remain in Argentina. There is tension in relations between the two expressions of Christianity from both sides. Pentecostalism particularly has advanced throughout the Latin American region with enormous growth. In 1936 only 2% of Latin America's Protestants were Pentecostal. Today they make up two-thirds to three quarters of the region's Protestant population.[27] For Pentecostals and Evangelicals alike, the question of identity marks the difference. It is important to understand that identification with Protestant Evangelicalism and Pentecostalism in Argentina means making a conscious decision at being different from the mainstream of society. It means following certain moral behavior rejecting the decadence of Western ways. There is also a difference in regard to patterns of participation. Though Argentina claims to be over 90% Catholic, there are more Protestants in attendance on a given Sunday than Roman Catholics.

When Paul wrote his letters he referred to the "saints" in Ephesus, Philippi, or Colossae (Ephesians 1:1; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:1). By "saints" he was referring to the "different one," the ones whose lifestyles, spirit of love and commitment to Christ set them apart from others. Protestant Christians in the River Plate, from Juan Thomson's time to today, have striven to forge an identity that sets them apart, that marks them as "saints." In an age of moral turmoil that is indeed good news.

NOTES

[1] Wade Crawford Barclay, *The Methodist Episcopal Church 1845-1939*, Volume Three, "Widening Horizons: 1845-95," in *History of Methodist Missions In Six Volumes* (New York: The Board of Missions of The Methodist Church, 1957), p. 767.
[2] Ibid.
[3] *Tourist Guide to Missionary Institutions and Religious Services in English in the Chief Cities of Latin America* (New York: Interdenominational Committee on the Religious Needs of Anglo-American Communities Abroad, 1915), pp. 44-45.
[4] Daniel P. Monti, *Ubicación del Metodismo en el Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires: La Aurora, 1976), p. 27.
[5] Ibid, p. 29.
[6] Thomson himself uses this term to describe what happened, "renacido bajo el ministerio del Dr. Goodfellow . . ." in "Reminiscencias," in *El Estandarte Evangélico de Sud América: Número de Jubileo*, Director and Editor: Daniel Hall (Rosario: Imprenta Metodista, 1911), p. 47. Hereafter this collection will be cited as *Número del Jubileo*.

[7] Guillermo Tallon, "El Metodismo en Sud América, 1836-1911," in "Número de Jubileo," op. cit., p. 26.
[8] Thomson, "Número del Jubileo," op. cit., p. 47.
[9] "Dissidents" was the name given by Roman Cathlics to Protestants in Argentina. Although meant as a term of derision, the Protestants appropriated the title with pride. Over the Protestant cemetery in Rosario, the entrance-way still reads, "The Dissident Cemetery."
[10] Monti, op. cit., p. 37. Translated by the author.
[11] Piquinela, op. cit., p. 4.
[12] The late Carlos T. Gattinoni was the first Bishop of the autonomous Argentine Evangelical Methodist Church, He shared his first-hand testimony of hearing Thomson in a personal conversation with the author in 1985.
[13] Monti, op. cit., p. 37.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Bishop Thomas B. Wood, "Letter to Dr. Peck," dated November 13, 1893. From the United Methodist Archives Center, Drew University.
[16] Daniel P. Monti, *Presencia del Protestantismo en el Rio de la Plata durante el Siglo XIX* (Buenos Aires: La Aurora, 1969), p. 119.
[17] Juan F. Thomson, "Reminiscencias," in *Número de Jubileo*, op. cit., pp. 49, 51. My translation.
[18] "Número del Jubileo," op. cit., p. 60.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Rev. Francis G. Penzotti, "Spiritual Victories in Latin America: Mr. Penzotti's Autobiography," *Centennial Pamphlet No. 16* (New York: American Bible Society, 1916), p. 8.
[21] Ibid., p. 9.
[22] Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 461.
[23] Ibid, p. 106, 51.
[24] Ibid, pp. 126-127. Quote translated by the author.
[25] Ibid, p. 154.
[26] Dafne Sabanes Plou, "Evangelical Party Established in Argentina," in *Latinamerica Press*, Vol. 23, No. 29, August 5, 1991, p. 3.
[27] "Pentecostal Movement," in *Latinamerica Press*, Vol. 23, No. 43, November 21, 1991, p. 3

XENOS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP: AN EXPERIMENT IN LAY-LED CHURCH GROWTH, 1970-1995

Gregory P. Leffel

In 1967, a dozen Campus Crusade for Christ International senior staff members left to begin a new ministry based on, as they saw it, a radical understanding of God's grace. Their message stressed a vibrant personal relationship with Christ and God's loving gift of unconditional acceptance. The message was set in a new form of church community free from "up-tight" rules and built around loving fellowship. In their minds it was a recasting of the primitive New Testament church in modern form.

Their spirit reflected a common attitude of the day. Many sensed the traditional church was irrelevant and that something drastic ought to be done about it. Especially popular was the notion that primitive Christianity could be restored and with it a spontaneous, lay-driven movement that would deeply penetrate society. Radicalism was *de rigueur*. The late Ray Stedman stated in his popular 1971 book, *Body Life: The Church Comes Alive*, that his purpose was

> to search out from the Scripture the nature and function of true Christianity and thus to recover the dynamic quality of early Christianity. . . . The same dynamic impact described in the book of Acts is possible today. . . . Most Christians are tragically unaware of the biblical pattern for the operation of the church.[1]

Similarly, Weslyan scholar Howard Snyder in his 1975 classic, *The Problem of Wineskins*, argued that

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> for a radical gospel (the biblical kind) we need a radical church (the biblical kind). For the ever-new wine we must continually have new wineskins. In short, we need a cataclysm. . . . What would happen to such a church? I suggest it would grow—and it might very well re-create the book of Acts.[2]

Not much came of the Campus Crusade leaders but they did have an influence on a small group of college students in Columbus, Ohio. Responding to the idealism of the day, these young Christians deliberately attempted to rediscover the character of the first century church on the premise that lay-oriented ministry and outreach to non-Christian seekers within their own cultural setting were the keys to the early church's success. Twenty-five years into the project, now called Xenos Christian Fellowship, it is possible to test the radical ideas of the 1970s in the light of experience.

Learning from the adventures of this unusual church, now one of Central Ohio's largest, is the purpose of the following study. Speculative theories of church growth can be evaluated—at least to some extent—through reflection on the church's history. Several questions naturally arise. What are the capabilities and limits of lay ministers? What is the relationship between gifted pastors and lay ministers in dynamic church growth? How does church polity effect lay ministry? What might a spontaneous, indigenous church movement in North America look like? Perhaps the fellowship's experience will provide at least some flashes of insight and help found the development of new models for the American church.

The following review of the history of the church is divided into five periods beginning in 1970 and ending in 1995. Within each section, narrative material is presented along with discussion of a thematic topic or topics pertinent to that time period but extended to include the other periods as well. Finally, lessons drawn from the church's experiences are briefly discussed with emphasis on concepts that may be applied to other church situations.

The Beginning, 1970-1976

In the late 1960s, two of the former Campus Crusade leaders founded Grace Haven Farm, a youth-oriented retreat center near Columbus. They also assisted a number of Columbus area financial supporters in the formation of an adult lay ministry called Layman's Challenge for Today. Active members encouraged their college-age children to fellowship together, leading in 1970 to the creation of the Fish House, a Christian rooming house and informal fellowship center in Columbus' large university community. The Fish House residents sponsored a weekly Bible study and love feast and published *The Fish*,[3] a newsletter designed

for college students. The group was attractive to seekers and newly converted Christians involved in the radical activism of the time.

Outreach was important and took the form of evangelistic Bible studies. These informal groups of high school and college students were often initiated by parents who invited speakers from the Fish House to share their experiences and teach what they had learned about Christianity. More than twenty such groups were started, often led by young people with scarcely more than a few weeks head start over their audiences. One group quickly grew from a handful to more than seventy, moved from its meeting place in a home to the Fish House, and became known as the Fish House Fellowship. The Fish House became a center for intensive Bible study, driven in part by enthusiasm for learning and in part by the need of Bible study leaders to make sense out what they were teaching. From this group emerged two obviously gifted leaders and a core of knowledgeable activists committed to ministry as a natural part of the Christian life. The group was not large (under 150 in 1976), but it was becoming known and growing.

The influence of older adults disappeared and from its earliest days the Fish House Fellowship was self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating. More importantly, the fellowship was also self-theologizing. Having inherited dangerous ideas about church structure but no precedent to follow, the young activists depended on their own research to guide their ministries. Several doctrinal distinctives developed that informed the church throughout its life.

The primary distinctive was an emphasis on grace, meaning unconditional forgiveness and acceptance by God through faith alone, and a consequent life-style characterized by enjoyment of a personal relationship with Christ uncluttered by what Francis Schaeffer called the "arbitrary absolutes"[4] of the American church. God's graciousness also included gifts of the Spirit, a special kind of personal empowerment that gave each person a unique ability to bless others and contribute to building Christian community. The message struck a responsive chord with young people and resulted in a fellowship community characterized by freedom of self-expression, a strong, loving effect and a high commitment to lay ministry.

A second distinctive was an intensive interest in ecclesiology sharpened by a sense of responsibility for the growing group and a lack of established models to follow. The New Testament was relentlessly examined to uncover the true nature of the early church that, theoretically, could be restored. It was recognized, though, that the New Testament church fit a culture that was clearly different from twentieth century America and that much of the early church's experience was not directly transferable. Instead, an effort was made to abstract principles to define church structure and practice.

Three ecclesiological principles were highlighted in the fellowship's theory of the church. 1) Priority was placed on outreach. The church must be organized to maximize its ability to reach and incorporate non-Christians. Evangelistic growth was recognized as the chief sign of spiri-

tual health, and an "outward focus" was necessary to maintain it. Even nurturing ministries, having as their goal "presenting each person complete in Christ,"[5] assumed that the "completed" disciple would be filled with love for the lost and impassioned for outreach in the community. 2) Prominence was given to the priesthood of the believer. Having been included among God's people, each Christian received a personal blessing but also became part of God's special presence on Earth and a natural witness to his grace. The Spirit empowers this witness through spiritual gifts providing each person with a unique ministry. All Christians are alike, and even though gifts and abilities may vary, all are equally responsible to use them. In this sense there is no conceptual difference between lay people and clergy. It is the church's duty to equip all for the fullest possible service and the duty of all to participate. So important is the relationship of ministry to the individual Christian that participation in it was considered a *means of grace* as indispensable to personal growth as Bible study and prayer. 3) The fellowship's growing theory of the church was self-consciously missionary. Traditional North American models of church organization were ignored in favor of models applied in cross-cultural missions movements. Early influences included Watchman Nee's "Little Flock" movement in China and the writings of Roland Allen. Later influence came from Donald McGavran and the Church Growth movement.

A third distinctive was the priority of truth in the ministry of the church. As an AIM[6] missionary and early friend of the church had put it, "the essence of ministry is a fight with the darkness to bring each person into the light of the truth." Both in conversion and nurture, the illumination of the truth unlocks healthy spiritual experience and growth. For this reason, Bible study was the centerpiece of the ministry and teaching was the prominent feature of all public meetings. Presenting the truth clearly was a priority in a generation tending toward subjectivity as the basis of truth, and out of fear of such subjectivity, the influence of the Charismatic Movement was resisted even though the church stressed the reality of spiritual gifts and expectation of the Spirit's filling. By comparison with other churches emerging from the youth culture of the early 1970s, the fellowship was unusual in not identifying with the Charismatic Movement.

Establishment of the Church, 1976-1980

In form, the loosely organized fellowship resembled a para-church organization and it was, in part, observing the attrition of volunteer leaders from other para-church groups that made the Fish House leaders more aware of the need to provide a permanent fellowship structure. Thus, in 1976, a board of elders was formed and a church, retaining the Fish House Fellowship name, was incorporated. The new church, an experiment of sorts, was attractive to the core members who, seasoned

by their lay ministry experiences, expected to find vital ministry roles in the new church.

The church's ministry remained much as it was, with an intensive focus on evangelistic Bible study meetings. To this was added an emphasis on pastoral ministry under the direction of the elders and continued emphasis on training and discipleship.[7] Small groups averaging 10 to 15 members in size were created to maintain intimacy and reduce dependence on the elders for pastoral care. An intensive, year-long program was created to provide training for small groups and Bible study leaders.

Eventually, the Bible study groups were consolidated into two new groups, called central teachings, led by the two prominent public leaders. The largest group, known only by its generic name, the Tuesday Night Central Teaching, was oriented toward young career people and, increasingly, toward young families and the parents of young people who had been attracted to the fellowship. The other, the Sunday Night Central Teaching, focused on high school and college-age youth. Later, a second youth-oriented central teaching was created by a new team of young leaders. The fellowship existed for several years without a meeting on Sunday morning. Attendance at the central teachings grew steadily through the late 1970s, climbing above 500 by 1980.

The original church members were mostly educated, middle class, suburban whites. Many had little or no church background. Interestingly, despite the church's appeal with college students and the location of the Fish House in the shadow of the country's largest university campus, most new members came from local suburbs as parts of friendship and family networks. As members aged, the church drew professionals and business people, who were attracted to the ministry because of its emphasis on teaching and community. The dispersed organization of the church made it possible to adjust to the needs of aging members without losing touch with young people, and it allowed for different ministry styles to exist simultaneously. Appellate judges and punk rockers coexisted in the same church without being fully aware of it. The church also attracted less educated working class people who enjoyed its informality. These, however, were often not as comfortable with its idealism and academic style, and attempts to start ministries in working class communities were not very successful.

Two qualities reinforced the appeal of the church among the educated middle class of the 1970s and 1980s: the emotional tone of the church and the value placed on community. Many original members were influenced by the rebellious movements of the Vietnam War era and shared the sharp mood of disaffection felt by many young people toward traditional institutions. A number were cynical about such institutions, especially the church. In fact, anger was expressed toward the church, an institution many felt had become uncompassionate toward young people and unwilling to accommodate them. The fellowship leaders' thoughtful critique of the traditional church flavored many aspects of their teaching. This and a corporate mood of edgy rebelliousness and cocky independence had tremendous appeal among seekers who expressed dissatisfac-

tion with or dislike of churches. It also appealed to men who liked the toughness of this attitude, and their response reinforced a culture that was aggressive and masculine, emphasizing activism and verbal communication and de-emphasizing worship and affective expressions of the faith. It was argued, rightly or wrongly, that a church that wins men will also win women, but that the reverse is not true. Aggressiveness in lay and staff leadership was an important part of the church's success, though less aggressive members have not always been comfortable with it.

A masculine atmosphere, however, did not mean that emotions or relationships were unimportant. In fact, quite the opposite was true. From the beginning, the church believed that the highest moral ethic is sacrificial love and that the church is first of all a family of interdependent spiritual siblings. Church members spent a lot to time with each other, were unafraid of emotional encounters, and valued emotional transparency. The character of the community was not unlike a college gang or fraternity, and it remained so as the fellowship grew. In this context, disciplinary action taken to remedy serious sinful lapses was effective because the threat of losing relationships motivated change. The redemptive value of the church's close-knit community and willingness to confront sin was documented in John White's 1985 book, *Healing the Wounded*.[8] Communal living was never pursued although young singles often chose to live with each other in large houses resembling the early Fish House. Church members preferred to live among the unchurched and quite often neighbors, impressed by their openness and friendly love, became Christians.

Despite its eventual size, the church remained a strong community. So strong was the sense of relationship that most problems resulting in members' leaving the church were caused by interpersonal conflict and feelings of exclusion from the mainstream of the church.

The Home Church Model, 1980-1985

By 1980 two problems converged on the fellowship. First, central teaching attendance had accelerated and the church was losing intimacy. Small groups were popular but limited by the number of qualified leaders. Second, committed workers were losing vision for their ministries and it seemed to many that the success of the central teachings was making the ministry resemble a clergy-driven church. It was proposed the church be divided in order to give lay leaders more opportunity to become elders and principle church leaders.

Instead, a very different proposal was adopted. Keeping up with growth required more flexibility than small groups afforded and it required that responsibility for pastoral ministries be passed from the elders to others more in touch with new church members. What was needed was, in a sense, a number of churches within the church to carry on the values of the early years of the fellowship. To accommodate this,

the twenty or so small groups were combined into eight larger "super small groups" and each group equipped with a team of at least four to six experienced leaders. The size of the groups, called home churches, fluctuated from about 25 to 60, a size that allowed for a surprising amount of intimacy, but one that also allowed for substantial growth before it had to be divided. The larger size was preferred because it tolerated more diverse personalities and was suited for incorporating new members desiring community but wary of small groups. It also solved the problem of significant roles for lay persons. Leadership teams were given responsibility for the spiritual health of those in their groups, including pastoral care, instruction and training, outreach, and the sacraments. Ideally, each team included leaders with different gifts, including at least teaching, evangelism, and pastoral counseling. While some supervision and a fair amount of training were provided, these leaders were largely on their own, motivated by their calling to pursue their work and free within certain limits to do as they saw fit with their churches. Home churches were a proving ground for ministry leaders and a number of creative, effective leaders were brought into fellowship staff positions.

Within a year, the original eight groups expanded to 12 and, by 1985, to nearly 60; scattered in homes, offices, classrooms and retail stores all over Columbus. Meanwhile, central teaching attendance exceeded 2,000, meeting points were moved to rented space in an office building, and the church was renamed Xenos Christian Fellowship.[9]

Organization

The central teachings were the church's public face. Essentially, they were overgrown evangelistic Bible studies known for high quality teaching. Ranging in size from 200 to 900, the meetings offered a little music, an hour talk (usually expository teaching) presented in a lecture format, and a question and answer session allowing anyone to clarify or challenge points made. The meetings closed with conversational group prayer. The talks had the quality of an entertaining seminar presentation complete with notes on overheads. Material was included to challenge Christians as well as persuade non-Christians. The credibility of the teachings (evaluated on the basis of their "content per minute") inspired confidence in the church and was immensely attractive to non-Christians. A rotation featuring the two main speakers and, at times, one or two others, was set up to diversify points of view. Once a month popular home church leaders spoke as well.

Home churches assimilated new members, nurtured spiritual growth, dealt with pastoral problems, and trained lay workers. Leaders were licensed to solemnize marriages. Meeting formats were adapted from the original Fish House Bible studies, modified as desired by the leaders. Generally, time was allowed for socializing and meeting new people before the meetings. Meetings typically opened with singing, though this was often downplayed in groups attended by large numbers of non-

Christians. Thirty-minute teachings were next, followed by questions and group discussion and then a time of worship and group prayer. Members stayed afterward to "fellowship" late into the evening. The leaders created a social atmosphere resembling a party but maximizing interpersonal contact. Members pursued extended talks with seekers and used the time for informal pastoral counseling and encouragement. Most church members attended home church and central teaching meetings every week.

Home church members also met in smaller cell groups for training and discipleship. These single sex groups of three to ten members focused on intensive study and personal sharing and growth. The groups were popular and provided a safe context for honest discussion of personal issues.

Home church leadership was a voluntary position and even the church's full-time staff members also serving as home church leaders were not paid for this part of their work. In this sense, all were lay people. Some church leaders, including most of the elders, were supported financially. These divided their time between public speaking, teaching, and church administration. Other leaders were supported part-time and worked to supplement their income. Many others at all levels of the church regarded themselves bi-vocational and viewed their careers as support for their ministries. Some professionals were able to make an adequate living working part-time and devoted the rest of their time to ministry.

Church organization was not copied directly from New Testament examples, but similarity with the early church, particularly the pattern of large temple and smaller house meeting added confidence to the model.[10] It was also surprising how closely the program of central teachings, home churches, and cell groups matched Wesley's eighteenth century societies, classes, and bands.[11]

Training

Teaching the Scriptures to church members with the expectation that they would in turn teach others was a basic practice. Teaching was meant to be transferable, that is, one learned not just for her or his own benefit, but in order to be equipped to teach someone else. Training intensified as the church became more complex and it became essential to have a well trained core to perpetuate the ministry. Basic classes in Christian doctrine were offered for new members, often drawing more than 100 people for a 10-week intensive course. Home church leaders were required to complete a year-long program including three to four hours of classroom instruction and additional readings per week. Course material included a survey of theology, principles of biblical interpretation, teaching preparation, public speaking, lay counseling, and ministry methods. Adult education classes and seminars were offered on a variety of topics. Enough interest in theological study was generated to support an extension education site administered by Ashland Theological Seminary. A number of leaders pursued master of arts and master of divinity degrees from Ashland and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.[12]

In addition to academic studies, potential home church leaders were apprentices to leaders in their home churches, where they gradually took on responsibility. Ideally, a leader in training began by incorporating new people into the church and then built a cell group ministry, trained a co-leader, and divided the group. The apprentice was appointed a home church leader when the group divided.

Mature Growth, 1985-1990

Even with the added capacity to absorb new members, home churches struggled to keep up with growth. Constant dividing of groups drained them of seasoned leaders and new groups began to rely on immature leaders, some having been Christians less than two years. For the first time the church's rate of growth began to slow. Whether this resulted from confusion in the home churches or reflected a general hardening of attitude in the community outside the church is difficult to determine, but the slower growth became a source of frustration, and morale declined as leaders tried ever harder to maintain the results of a few years before. Finally, a number of house churches collapsed and overall church attendance declined. Personal conflicts arose and number of committed people left the church.

To deal with the growing problems, new home church plants were canceled and about half of the home churches were dismantled and recombined with stable groups. Immature leaders were taken out of leadership and allowed time to develop naturally.[13] A two-year "re-tooling" program was undertaken to improve training and oversight, as well as to adjust the home church design to shifting realities outside the church and to better support young families. A number of oversight committees called sphere groups, that included elders and experienced home church leaders, were created to monitor closely home churches and intervene when problems developed. As a result of these changes, the church began to grow again. By the end of the decade, the number of home churches returned to its previous 60, five central teachings were established (including three on Sunday morning) and weekly attendance averaged above 3,500, occasionally reaching 4,000. Each month a seasoned team of nearly 400 lay leaders gathered to discuss church business, each with more than a year's intensive training and apprenticeship behind them. Many were effective public speakers and fine representatives of the church. George Verwer, president of Operation Mobilization, once called the fellowship the strongest lay ministry team in North America.

The church's activities diversified and new ministries flourished. An elementary school, started in the early 1980s filled to capacity. A profes-

sional counseling program was developed. An outreach to poor African-American youth was also initiated. The project, *Urban Concern*, was a joint venture with a black church and part of John Perkins's Harambee House network. In 1992 the program was recognized as a "Point of Light" by then President George Bush. Daughter churches were planted in Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Dayton and others were planned for major cities in surrounding states.[14]

Despite vivid success and growing visibility and popularity in the community, by the late 1980s new problems emerged. Aging home church leaders, many now with children and careers were having difficulty managing ministry responsibilities and were starting to burn out. Feelings of frustration were aggravated by the lack of responsiveness among non-Christians in their 30s and 40s, and by a feeling that the home church model was too rigid in its design and did not allow enough freedom to pursue ministries not directly related to teaching and evangelism. Church growth specialist, Donald McGavran, had even commented that he was surprised the church could get so much work out of its lay leaders.[15] Younger home churches found more receptivity but had never entirely resolved the problem of immature leadership and several groups failed because of personal conflicts. Another severe problem was personal conflict among the elders. Never a passive group, the elders were divided over a number of issues including finances, the role of women in leadership, theological questions and, in particular, a fight over selection of a charismatic young leader as an elder. Elders meetings were long and brutal and unanimity became next to impossible. By 1990, the two dominant leaders were clearly exhausted, depressed and ready for a change.

Facilities

Through all of its history, the church never owned a building. Larger meetings were held in a series of homes, bank lobbies, classrooms, YMCA facilities, and borrowed churches. Home churches met wherever they would fit, but they prospered in houses. In the late 1970s, office space was rented for a staff headquarters. Then, in 1980, desiring more control over meeting spaces, the church rented space in an office building. The facility seated about 700 and included rooms for children's programs. Later, prompted by complaints about a large funeral that occurred during the business day, the landlord offered to relocate the church to new, twin office/warehouse buildings on the same site, increasing seating capacity to nearly 1,000 and providing additional classroom space. The decor of the main meeting space was informal and devoid of religious imagery. The use of stacking chairs rather than pews allowed flexible seating arrangements and freedom to use the space for other purposes, such as wedding receptions, dances, and conferences. A small stage decorated by only a lectern, sound equipment and a computer driven graphics projector was located at the front; a snack bar, information booth, and book sales table at the back.

Polity

The New Testament was gleaned for principles of governing a growing church. Plural leadership was inferred from Paul's practice of appointing groups of elders in his mission churches and in his lack of references to singular church leaders—outside of his apostolic band—in his letters.[16] Consequently, a collective eldership board was created and given responsibility for governing the church and accrediting leaders for all aspects of the ministry. The concept of plural leadership was applied to all organized ministries, including home churches and cell groups. Serving below the elders was a small army of deacons (essentially the home church leaders), who performed most of the day-to-day activities of the church. Women were not permitted to be elders, though this was hotly debated, but fully participated in all other ministries and some became well respected public speakers and teachers.

Authority was held by the elders, who were appointed to open-ended terms based on their character, proven effectiveness in leadership, and recognition by the entire church. The elders collectively held the right to appoint or dismiss individual elders by unanimous vote, though new elders would not be approved if there was any justifiable objection from anyone in the church. The elders' authority, it was argued, derived from a principle of spiritual *charisma*, a sense that the Holy Spirit had gifted certain members as leaders and that the church naturally recognized them by their effective work. Since God used such gifted leaders to create the church and then to drive the movement along, he seemed to affirm their authority to direct the ministry. No individual claimed to have a unique prophetic or apostolic gift, but collectively they represented the church in sensing the Spirit's guidance. For this reason, a democratic polity was never adopted, although a premium was placed on consensual decision making. It was argued from the biblical examples of the selection of the first deacons and the Jerusalem council that important business was to be discussed publicly and in some sense the assembled body could influence the decision.[17] All major decisions were discussed with home church and cell group leaders in "workers" meetings and seldom would the elders move without substantial support for their proposals. For many years the church was unidentified by strong consensual support of the elders' vision. Formal membership and voting were regarded as unnecessary complications since, it was believed, most people in a church "vote with their feet" anyway.

The "Great Man" versus the "Hidden Method"

In the late 1980s, the elders initiated a fascinating discussion that brought into question core assumptions that defined the church's ministry. From the standpoint of church structure, it was asked, What principle accounted for the successful growth of the fellowship? Two viewpoints could be taken. The most intuitive, given the idealism that infected most of the members, was that the church had rediscovered

an apostolic "method" of church ministry that was hidden from view by contemporary church structure, though it commonly surfaced during times of renewal. From this point of view, it was argued that the basis of church growth rested in lay activism and the proper utilization of spiritual gifts in building a tight community that sustained the movement. Growth of the church apart from the evangelistic and assimilative work of the home churches was inconceivable. The use of self-reproducing, cell-based model was indispensable to growth.

Over against this view, however, was the argument that it was the presence of the two prominent leaders that best accounted for the ability of the church to attract people and that it was their public ministry that provided a structure in which other ministries could take place. This argument was based on the charismatic principle, that is that God raises up gifted leaders who catalyze church movements, and the resulting ministries are dynamically driven along by their presence. This was not to suggest that a church could grow large without a successful small group program or that key leaders could succeed in evangelism without other leaders taking responsibility for bringing non-Christians to meetings. The question was, Can a lay-driven church movement sustain itself indefinitely and grow beyond the need for dominant leaders? Or is the success of the church always tied to charismatic leaders who are, in fact, the Spirit's gift to the church?

This tantalizing question was never fully answered, though as time went on it was shaded strongly toward the side of the gifted man or woman. Intervening circumstances, however, made a fair trial impossible.

Reorganization and Conflict, 1990-1995

By 1990, the church was clearly in the grip of malaise. Home churches stagnated, though central teaching growth continued. Many leaders were frustrated and the elders were weary and depressed. Something had to change. That autumn, the elders visited Willow Creek Community Church in Barrington, Illinois, for a conference on large church organization. They were instantly enamored with Willow Creek's approach and on their return quickly resolved three proposals designed to lift the church out of its quagmire.

The first proposal was to streamline leadership. The two dominant leaders asked for and were given senior pastor status and permitted to over-rule the normally deadlocked elder board. They developed a closely held, corporate style of leadership designed to maximize efficient decision-making and reduce confusion. Church ministries were reorganized into five departments, each directed by a singular leader and supported by paid and volunteer staff.

Second, they proposed disbanding home churches in favor of Willow Creek's model of lay ministry and small group fellowship called "net-

working". To facilitate the program, courses on spiritual gifts were offered followed by testing to identify church members' gifts and interests. Following this, members could choose ministries to which they felt best suited and then form small groups with others of like interests.

Third, an eleven-million dollar building program was proposed to house large, seeker-sensitive meetings conceived to be a combination of the church's central teaching model and Willow Creek's public meetings.[18] The meetings were built around the speaking ministries of the senior pastors.

The church's reorganization proceeded but was delayed by staff and financial problems. Instead of months, it took more than two years to implement fully major programs and during that time frustrations increased. Worse yet, the building program was delayed by zoning problems and then by lack of money. Pledge drives failed and a subsequent bond issue collapsed from lack of support. In 1995 the church planned to break ground on a first-phase structure, substantially reduced in scope and financed in part by sale of a portion of the church's property.

Meanwhile, prominent church members became enmeshed in bitter interpersonal conflicts and, in the rough shaking out period that followed, the counseling department was terminated, the school principal summarily fired, and what amounted to a referendum on the integrity of one of the senior pastors was taken because of his role in the controversy. Attendance which had been slipping now began a precipitous decline. In 1993 and 1994 attendance dropped by more than 1,500 and the resulting drop in giving aggravated the other organizational problems.

Despite the problems the church continues and has emerged from the chaos of the last several years just as it has from other rough periods. Attention has returned to youth, still the most fruitful and significant mission field in the city, and interest has been expressed in resurrecting the home church program. One senior leader has published three books.[19] Dozens of organized service and evangelistic ministries provide substantial activity for lay workers.

So What?

As the fellowship's teachers would often ask to introduce the application part of their talks, So what? Who cares? Does the experience of this young church inform our understanding of church growth or shed light on the hopes of many for a dynamic, modern-day church movement? Both the successes and the failures of the church present insights to ponder. Perhaps a few ideas can be explored.

Are charismatic leaders critical for church growth? Of course they are. But the question may be asked another way. Does reliance on them present a limit to the growth of a church movement? Over-dependence probably does. Their effectiveness is limited by access. In other words, they must speak in expensive, ever-expanding facilities in locations

accessible to the community. Theoretically, there is a limit to how big facilities can become and how far people will travel to fill them before the planting of new churches becomes necessary. That suggests another limit, the short supply of gifted leaders capable of initiating and sustaining substantial church growth. And there is a final limitation, Who will replace them when they pass from the scene?

Only four or five such leaders emerged in the history of the fellowship and these directed the central teaching ministries. All were able to build and hold groups on the strength of their personalities and gifts. Yet there were as many as perhaps a dozen or two more who lacked the intense personal charisma but were at least credible public leaders. Backed by vigorous small group ministries these had the potential to lead smaller central teachings and offer at least the possibility of expanding the church without need of additional, exceptional leaders. The church has so far been afraid to experiment with this option, but it remains a viable one and offers promise for sustaining a church movement beyond its charismatic center.

What of the promise and limitations of lay leaders in a church movement? There is no doubt that lay leaders stimulated the church's growth if by nothing else than holding on to new people and encouraging outreach through friendship and family networks. The likelihood is that they contributed much more. There appears to be no limit to the kinds of ministries that lay people are capable of performing and many can be trained to be fully competent ministers. There are limits, however, to their time and energy. There is also tremendous variation in gifts, temperaments, and capabilities. A rule of thumb in business management lore suggests that about ten percent of a given work population possesses the vision and determination to achieve leadership. The rest are leadership dependent and prefer to follow. This seems to be reflected in the fellowship's experience, in that attendance of 4,000 resulted in about 400 lay leaders. Perhaps such observations can help guide realistic expectations for lay leadership and the scope of possible lay-oriented movements.

What effect does polity have on church growth? Despite the efficiency and clarity of a closely held, corporate-world management style, a limit may be reached where the felt need to maintain control may retard initiative and reduce the church's potential to what the leader is capable of personally handling. Rapid, sustained church growth in a mature church may require abandonment of control over individual staff and lay leaders, who must be permitted to follow their personal visions. The emotional stress on the fellowship's core leadership over the years appears to have resulted in a conservative attitude toward risk and tight control of church activities, and this may have contributed to slowed church growth.

Other observations can be made as well. It is interesting to note the success of young leaders. Church attendance was well over 1,000 and included a wide range of age groups before the first leader turned 30. Several leaders built strong ministries before the age of 25, and this

pattern was repeated several times with new groups of young people over the years. These ministries grew primarily from the youth culture, but as they aged they formed the backbone of the adult lay leadership structure.

It is also interesting to note that the confidence of many active lay leaders rested in the theological credibility of the fellowship's doctrine of the church. Leadership required a substantial change of life-style and leaders were frequently criticized by friends and family members for their unique approach to ministry and for the many financial and academic sacrifices they made. It was important to be able to articulate the purpose behind their activism with full confidence. It is doubtful that programs would have survived had they been based on slogans or techniques alone instead of intensive doctrinal training and the spirit of a "self-theologizing" movement.

Conclusion

Xenos Christian Fellowship was born in the idealism and activism of the early 1970s and self-consciously pursued a style of ministry that was an alternative to the prevailing church traditions of the time. Its ministry, catalyzed by two visionary and capable leaders, was characterized by a gospel message that emphasized God's grace and unconditional acceptance, the priority of scriptures in personal illumination and leading, and the sanctifying power found in personal participation in the church's ministry—ministry that was a blessing to others and a means of grace to the minister. The church was successful in building a large core of motivated and well trained lay people, who were responsible for and executed most of the church's pastoral ministry, and who contributed heavily to its evangelistic success. Through the application of innovative ideas and the willingness to experiment, it became an interesting source of insights to fund the design and development of growing churches.

It must be kept in mind that as of this writing even the most senior leaders of the church have barely entered middle-age, but the church is re-tooling parts of its ministry to focus on yet another generation of young people. Much more remains to be seen as the future unfolds for this unusual church.

NOTES

[1] Ray C. Stedman. *Body Life: The Church Comes Alive*. Gendale CA: Regal Books Division, G/L Publications, 1972, pp. iv. Stedman was pastor of Peninsula Bible Church, Palo Alto, California. His church, started by lay people, became famous for its lay training, house church experiments, and trademark "Body Life" meetings.

[2] Howard A. Snyder. *The Problem of Wineskins: Church Structure in a Technological Age*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1975, pp. 23-4.
[3] *The Fish* reflected the "underground" print genre popular during these times of civil unrest. Other papers having an influence on *The Fish* were *Radix* (formerly *The Post American*), published by the Berkeley Christian Coalition and Jim Wallis's *Sojourner*. In its heyday, *The Fish* had a distribution of 5,000 and a following in the United States, Canada, and Australia.
[4] Francis A. Schaeffer. *The Church at the End of the Twentieth Century*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1970.
[5] Colossians 1:24.
[6] Formerly Africa Inland Mission.
[7] Individual and small group discipleship training was modeled on Robert Coleman's influential book, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1963), and *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), by LeRoy Eims. The practice of one-on-one discipleship was considered too prone to coercion and eventually even the long-term discipleship of a group by one person was found to have much less effect than a sequence of mentors.
[8] John White and Ken Blue. *Healing the Wounded*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985. The book documents fellowship events and is dedicated to a church member.
[9] The Fish House Fellowship name sounded like a seafood restaurant and became an embarrassment to adult members. The name Xenos, a reference to the Greek term for stranger and connoting an openness to others, was selected mostly because of its unique sound and lack of reference to a specific place. The new name was not entirely successful in alleviating embarrassment.
[10] Cf. Acts 2:46, the pattern of meeting in the temple and house to house; and Acts 19:9, 20:20, the pattern of the school of Tyrannus and house churches.
[11] Howard A. Snyder. *The Radical Wesley and Patterns for Church Renewal*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980.
[12] Ashland Theological Seminary (Church of the Brethren), Ashland, Ohio. Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Evangelical Free Church), Deerfield, Illinois.
[13] Failure in leadership was discouraging and difficult for young leaders to resolve. Few ever returned to leadership.
[14] For a number of reasons the daughter churches, though still in existence, have failed to thrive. Subsequent church plants were canceled due to the church's restructuring program of the 1990s.
[15] Dr. McGavran was consulted on two occasions.
[16] Cf Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1.
[17] Cf. Acts 6:3-5, for selection of deacons in the Jerusalem church and Acts 15:22 for the church's involvement in doctrinal discussion and selection of representatives to bear the church's resolution.
[18] Church meetings had always been seeker-sensitive. The change resulting from contact with Willow Creek was in presenting them more professionally.
[19] Dennis H. McCallum. *Christianity, the Faith That Makes Sense*, (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1992); *The Summons*, (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1993); *Walking in Victory* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1994).

BOOK REVIEWS

Naming the Mystery: How Our Words Shape Prayer and Belief

By James E. Griffiss. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cowley Publications, 1990. Pp. 204.

What an intellectual and spiritual pleasure it is to read a writer who addresses the issue of inclusive language theologically rather than ideologically. James Griffiss is quite clear that inclusivity is not a non-issue but is something with which the Church must struggle *now*. Yet he is equally clear that the full ramifications of this struggle will take a long time to become clear.

> My hope is not to solve the problems by offering solutions, for I think it will take much time for the church to see its way clearly in this new area. We must remember, after all, that the definition of the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity, both so central to Christian belief, took many centuries of debate and political maneuvering before a theological consensus about language could be reached (p. 12).

Lest those who wish "reform without tarrying for any" become dismayed at the length of time Griffiss contemplates, note that he is at least comparing the importance of inclusive language to the language of the doctrines of Incarnation and Trinity—the central doctrines of the faith!

But why review a book of this sort in a journal dealing with evangelism? Griffiss makes the connection simply but clearly: "The real issue before us is not whether we call God 'he' or 'she' or some combination of the two, but *how the name of God can still summon us to belief.*" Inclusivity directs our attention to a deeper issue: *"What is it to believe in a God who can be called by a name?"* (p. 22). With that Griffiss is into a gentle apologetic, beginning with his chapter on "The Names of God."

This slender book is so engagingly written, and with such lucidity, that one might well use it for an extended adult education series. Griffiss presents Yahweh (He Who Is) and Abba (Father) as the most important

Old and New Testament names for God. The first becomes, throughout the book, the basic conceptual or analogical naming of God; Thomas Aquinas provides the model for what Griffiss deals with here. The second, Father, bridges the two realms of the conceptual and the imagistic (on which more later). The beauty of the exposition is that Griffiss acknowledges from the outset that even though they are basic, "both names, given to us in the Bible, have been the subject of much distortion." This admission initiates an expertly guided tour through Church history and the history of philosophy.

Griffiss' theological method is classic. He uses the traditional quadrilateral (scripture, tradition, reason, and experience) without naming it as such. Scripture is the base. But scripture needs interpretation. Griffiss contends that the church became acutely aware of this "need for interpretation" through the developments of the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment. He sums up the resultant shift in consciousness in Chapter IV, "Experiencing God," which is worth the price of the book. Rarely can one find such a clear and simple explanation of the rise of historical consciousness (and the rise of personal subjectivity). Griffiss' use of Kant and Hegel here is masterful; only one who knows these giants well could present them so clearly and accurately.

The tradition of interpretation is itself historical. And Griffiss leads us to see that interpretation is both our discovery and our creation of meaning. He gently helps us understand how our historical, social, and individual circumstances affect our creation of meaning, yet he does not lapse into relativism and subjectivism—for we discover as well as create meaning. The critical theological task is to be aware of our "conditionedness" and our partial vision. Then we can appreciate the church as what Josiah Royce calls "the community of interpretation." It functions as the corrective for partial or parochial views, when its members truly listen to one another.

"Names" for God rise out of human experiences of being dealt with by God. These experience have as their contexts liturgy, personal prayer, social circumstance, and the issues with which people are dealing in their cultures. Scripture is formative of the community of interpretation, and is the main focus of interpretation, but it too is the distillation of human experiences of being dealt with by God (and dealing with God).

Different experiences may elicit different names. Griffiss is particularly sensitive to the needs of Christians in non-Western cultures; his concern with inclusivity is not limited to gender. What is so winsome about Griffiss' approach is that he enables us to discern the continuity of our present situations with those faced by the saints who traveled before us. They struggled with the issues of their time, as we are called to struggle with the issues of ours.

We discover and create meaning today as we seek to articulate and communicate the saving mysteries of the faith—Incarnation and Trinity—to the people of our age. The two great names from scripture, "I Am and Father—are sacramental names, because they call us into silence before the mystery." This is the *end* of theology: the apprehension of

mystery and being apprehended by mystery. But we are still on our way; and to bring people to this point we need to be as urgent about "naming" God in ways appropriate to commending the faith today as were our forebears. Inclusive language is one issue *we* have to face to do this faithfully.

But how, specifically? Griffiss gives us guidance but not answers, criteria but not proposals. He seems to feel quite comfortable using inclusive language in the *images* we use to point to God. Images are metaphorical and strongly rooted in experience. Both Father and Mother are so rooted and can be apt images of God.

> To call our Father can also call forth the image of God as our Mother, the one who nurtures and cares for us. The two names do not exclude one another.

Rather, they express the dialectical nature of all of our language about God (p. 108). In the realm of *images* Griffiss has no trouble using feminine imagery *now*. At no place does he make it quite clear if he has *difficulty* with using feminine language in referring to God (he warned us he had no solutions!). But I take it he is sympathetic with Gregory of Nazianzus and Thomas Aquinas that "Father" is not a metaphor (or image) for God "because it refers primarily to the relationships of the Trinity, not to a nature or an essence." This does not mean that using "Father" is without problems, for "however much theologians might insist, people who call God 'Father' think of human fathers, and thus project onto God both the quality of maleness and their experience with their own fathers" (p. 134).

It is in the *conceptual* realm (the analogical) that Griffiss believes the church needs to discuss whether or how inclusive language might be used appropriately. He is sympathetic to Patricia Wilson-Kastner who argues from a feminist perspective that the doctrine of the Trinity is important because of its emphasis on relationships. But when it comes to the controversies surrounding trinitarian language he concludes:

> Those controversies can only be resolved with much patience and attentive listening by those on both sides of the issue. In what I have to say here I shall try to be as sensitive as possible to the problem, while not abandoning the names Father and Son which have come to us in the tradition (p. 70).

Throughout the book Griffiss models what I believe is desperately needed today: *much patience and attentive listening by those on both sides of the issue*. "Attentive listening" means that we engage the issue of inclusivity by engaging each other as did our forebears in the faith during the centuries when the doctrines of Incarnation and Trinity were being worked out.

As evangelists we are of course theologians! And those patristic theologians were of course evangelists! The language in which we commend

the faith is not a matter of indifference. If we are true to our calling at the end of this century and the beginning of the next, the issues with which Griffiss grapples are *our* issues. He gives us a good model to emulate and some sound criteria to follow.

May we have as generous an orthodoxy as he does.

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Sister Aimee, The Life of Aimee Semple McPherson

By Daniel Mark Epstein. New York: Brace Jovanovich, 1993. Pp. x, 475.

"I bring consolation to the great middle class," Aimee Semple McPherson mused about her religious appeal, "leaving those below to the Salvation Army, and those above to themselves." While this remark became famous, it does not quite do justice to Sister Aimee, according to this biography. While she did devote her considerable talents to the middle class, she got her start with the Salvation Army and did not lose touch with those below. At the end of her career she was also a comfort and challenge to some of the rich and famous of this world. She was even celebrated in the broadway play, *As Thousands Cheered*, by Irving Berlin and Moss Hart. Daniel Mark Epstein, a poet, essayist, and playwright, who never informs the reader how he became interested in his subject, writes with considerable sympathy for Aimee's story, from her rise to fame until her death. As an religious historian, I see Aimee as one of America's most important women preachers and evangelists, a Pentecostal, a healer, and a religious dramatist.

Aimee Kennedy was born in 1890 in Ontario, Canada, a farmer's precocious daughter. Her mother, Minnie (Ma) Kennedy, full of the Lord as well as energy, consecrated her daughter to the holy orders of the Salvation Army and to the salvation of the world. Aimee learned much in school and as an Army lass. She engaged in some youthful rebellion against what she considered human cant and hypocrisy. A beautiful young woman with a farm girl's strength, she was converted by evangelist Robert Semple, received the baptism of the Spirit and spoke in tongues. She married him, travelled with him as a missionary to China, where he promptly died, leaving her alone with an infant daughter. Returning to Canada, she married Rolf McPherson, by whom she had a son. McPherson later divorced her. She took up the evangelistic work of her first husband, first along the eastern seaboard as far south as Florida and then westward to Los Angeles. There she was ordained a Baptist minister and built her Foursquare Gospel Angelus Temple, dedicated in 1923. Assisted by her mother, Minnie, she attracted enormous crowds because of her charisma. In California she greatly expanded her ministry, and her life grew more complicated. As she developed her religious drama, some of Hollywood's rich and famous, such as Charlie Chaplin, admired and envied her stage presence. Her national and international reputation also grew during famous (or infamous) brief disappearance, details of which, according to the author, still remain a mystery.

Sister Aimee is a good read. The author, although neglecting a systematic analysis of her gifts and methods, gives us some impressions of what influenced her and how she worked. She considered herself an evangelist for God, the "Great I Am" instead of the "Great I Was." Though her pentecostalism allowed her to claim all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, including glossalalia and healing, she seems to have grown cautious about these dimensions of her ministry. Epstein refers to these dimensions of her work as "astonishing" if not " miraculous." In lectures she gave at the college she formed, she acknowledged the influence on her of John Wesley, Charles Grandison Finney, William Booth, Dwight L. Moody, and especially Albert Benjamin Simpson. The latter's emphasis on Christ as Savior, sanctifier, healer and coming King and on the "Fourfold Gospel" was a source of Aimee's "Foursquare Gospel." She had a social conscience; her sympathies embraced blacks. During the 1920s, hooded Klansmen took over one of her meetings in Denver. She told them quite firmly and effectively to go to Jesus instead of to hell in order to rid themselves of racism. During the 1930s she ran a Commissary for many who were down and out in the Depression. The city of Los Angeles could not dispense with her charitable work, despite some of Aimee's mismanagement.

All the while, Aimee was responsible for an enormous number of preparations, presentations, and performances each week. She planned and wrote incessantly. We can tell something of her style by the illustrations of her preaching, all too few, found in this biography. She was always preaching Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever. She read the Scriptures about Jesus with power, giving the impression of Jesus' presence, according to listeners.

She was as eloquent as she was creative. When people denounced her for what they called her religious spectacles, she asked to be shown a different way, and added, "Please, please, don't ask me to preach to empty seats."

To fill seats and satisfy her many followers Sister Aimee worked long hours. In the end she suffered from ministerial burnout. For years, Aimee's mother Minnie handled the day-to-day affairs of her daughter's life and of Angelus Temple. Then she and her mother had some disagreement and separated. Aimee found Temple enterprises more and more difficult to manage. Aimee's own behavior, according to Epstein, manifested some hubris and self-destructive behavior. More conservative

followers began to question her lifestyle, beginning with the bobbing of her hair and the change to more stylish dress. This may have been chic, according to them, but not Christian. She married again and divorced. She became very isolated, except for her son, and lonely—"a songbird in a gilded cage." She was also sick. Fighting insomnia with pills, she finally took an overdose which killed her. A fleet of 600 automobiles escorted the hearse to Forest Lawn Memorial Park. Although the funeral was closed to the public, some 2000 friends, church officials and ministers followed to her grave in 1944. The International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, the monument to her evangelism, may be found in 74 countries with a membership of 1,700,000. Sister Aimee's story is one worth reading and remembering. Those interested in another angle may wish to consult also the newly published volume by Edith L. Blumhofer, *Aimee Semple McPherson, Everybody's Sister* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), for a more detailed and indexed treatment of the illustrious woman evangelist.

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Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism: Living in a Three-Storied Universe

By Walter Brueggemann. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993. Pp. 139. PB.

Given his extensive publication record, particularly on the subject of the Old Testament, few writers are as academically well-qualified as Walter Brueggemann to write a book with the phrase "Biblical Perspectives" in its title. But it is the book's subtitle ("Living in a Three-Storied Universe") that best summarizes the theological character of the work. While alluding to the pre-Enlightenment notion of a three-tiered universe, in which "middle earth" is sandwiched between heaven and hell, Brueggemann's "three-storied universe" refers instead to evangelism as a biblically-based "drama in three scenes" or stories. Consciously replacing both the pre-modern (that is, theologically "conservative") and the modernist (or "liberal") arguments over the historical and theological categories for interpreting and applying scripture, Brueggemann thus understands evangelism within the context of a post-modern hermeneutic. On such a view, evangelism consists more of an invitation to enter a narrative world than of arguments about epistemology and demythologization. And this, in a nutshell, is simultaneously the book's greatest strength and most significant weakness.

First, as to the strengths, Brueggemann proposes that in the divine economy, three biblical stories are meant to shape our lives (as they shaped the experience of Israel) and thus give impetus to our evangelistic endeavors. They are the accounts of the promise to Abraham and his descendants in Genesis, the deliverance from bondage and slavery in Exodus, and the entry into the land as God's gift to the dispossessed in the book of Joshua. Evangelism, for Brueggemann, consists of proclaiming these stories for particular constituencies in such a way that people in our own day are invited to give up alternative reckonings of reality, and order their lives instead according to God's covenantal purposes. Through the hearing of these compelling narratives non-church-goers or "outsiders," for example, are invited to become "transformed insiders," members of the community of God's people. As a second constituency, theologically amnesiac "insiders," nominal members of the faith community, can similarly be invited to reaffirm their place within God's covenant: "forgetters" are thereby made "remembers." And finally, just as Israel's parents are repeatedly charged to explain the faith to their children, so evangelism consists—to cite the title of chapter 4—of helping "beloved children become belief-ful adults."

Brueggemann's study is imaginative, thoughtful, and challenging, particularly in his response to the failure of American Protestantism to take seriously its obligation to covenantal faithfulness (e.g., our "accommodation to dominant cultural values" [pp. 89-90]). It will come as no surprise that the bulk of this material was first offered as a series of addresses, for one can see that Brueggemann is a powerful and compelling communicator.

But where his work may cause discomfort is, first, in his willingness to relativize the historical roots of the biblical narrative, and, second, in the role that he assigns to human agency in relating the biblical story. The evangelistic drama, for Brueggemann, is played out in three scenes: the original struggle between spiritual powers, the retelling of that struggle by a narrator who proclaims victory, and a lived appropriation on the part of the listeners in a later day. The story, he says, is told many times and in many different ways. In fact,

> there is no single normative telling . . . in these many retellings, the surprising outcome of victory has always to be won and re-won and won again, each time not just as an echo or replication, but *as a newly scheduled contest*. Each time that struggle could go either way (p. 25; emphasis added).

Yet the Christian church has always insisted that the cross and resurrection constitute the single normative "telling" of God's victory, and that the contest is over and closed, in so far as Christ has accomplished that victory "ἐφάπαξ, once and for all" (Rom 6:9-10).

And while we must reckon seriously with Brueggemann's assertion that the story of God's victory must continually be re-told because we ourselves were not present at the original events, he overstates the matter when he asserts:

> Note well, the victory of God by itself does not constitute the drama of the evangel. The telling and retelling is a distinct act, not to be confused with the victory itself. It is the telling as a distinct act which effects, enacts, and makes available the victory (pp. 27-28).

On such an accounting, victory is made to depend too much upon its telling, whereas surely the opposite is more true: that even in the experience of the listener, the telling always remains dependent on, and a consequence of the victory itself.

Notwithstanding certain theological objections, however, the significance of Brueggemann's contribution lies in his ability both to explain and to model the evangelistic task in post-modern form. Whether or not one agrees with all aspects of his theology, he articulates the imperatives of the gospel creatively and thoughtfully for a culture in which all truth is relativized, and dependent, precisely, on the power of its proclamation. And in this regard, his work deserves to be heeded as a call to creative evangelism in contemporary society.

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A History of Christianity in Asia

By Samuel Hugh Moffett, San Francisco: Harper, 1992. Pp. xxvi + 560.

A missionary born in Korea of missionary parents, Samuel Hugh Moffett is the Henry Winters Luce Professor of Ecumenics and Mission Emeritus at Princeton Theological Seminary, where he has produced the first volume of his massive historical survey of Christianity in Asia. This book, covering the first 1500 years of the church's existence in Asia, and the volume on which he is working are destined to become the definitive history of Christianity in the vast region of the world called Asia.

Dr. Moffett's prodigious project was begun twenty-five years ago and represents an incredible amount of research. Such an undertaking must

of necessity draw upon many secondary sources, and in researching, gathering, and organizing an immense array of materials into a cohesive, intelligible, readable account the author has rendered an invaluable service to students of Asian Christianity and to the church at large. The book is admirably well documented, with a bibliography numbering 40 pages, plus 1349 footnotes, five helpful maps, and acknowledgments of printed excerpts from an impressive range of materials.

Despite the profusion of unfamiliar names and places, readers will find Dr. Moffett's book to be much more readable than Kenneth Scott Latourette's classic tomes. The author interweaves historical data with interesting anecdotes that bring the characters to life, and his frequent recepitulations enable the reader to avoid having to thumb through previously read pages to re-identify names and places.

The importance of this book as a resource for church historians and those interested in the history of religions cannot be underestimated. "Christians," the author reminds us, "root their truth in history" (p. 50), and he endeavors diligently to sort out myth from fact and to extract truth from legend. He traces, for example, the beginnings of the church in Edessa, the vigorous center of early Asian Christianity, honored by Syrian tradition as the first Christian kingdom. From Edessa comes the first historically documented record of a church building. It is interesting to observe how many contemporary cults and heretical groups, from Christian Science to snake worshipers, could trace their origins to Edessa, "a city awash with heresies" (p. 61).

It is impossible in a brief review to do justice to the scope and detail of Professor Moffett's work, as he traces across the centuries the slow expansion and eventual decline of Christianity in Asia, through the rise and fall of empires, amid all the wars and persecutions, the political and theological upheavals, the incessant internal controversies, the confrontation of other religions (especially Islam), through all the good times and the bad. Over and over again one is led to wonder. What if . . .? There were so many missed opportunities, so many historical moments when a different decision or circumstance could have radically altered the course of Christian history.

In that regard, Dr. Moffett's book has important implications for teachers and practitioners of missiology and evangelism. In his discussion of the reasons for the decline of Nestorian Christianity in China he raises the issue of "whether the gospel is critically diluted or better communicated to Chinese minds by the missionary attempt to accommodate Christian truth to Chinese language and imagery. . . The line between distortion and adaptation or contextualization is difficult to define, and a baptized use of alien terminology and customs has long and honorable precedents in the history of the expansion of Christianity . . ." (pp. 311-312).

Another reason "sometimes given for the disappearance of the church in tenth-century China was that it never became Chinese; it remained

a church of foreigners" (p. 312). Dr. Moffett, however, argues that the most decisive factor was the fall of the imperial house on which the church had relied too long for patronage and protection. "When a church writes 'Obey the Emperor' into its version of the Ten Commandments it is writing a recipe for its own destruction" (p. 313).

Why did Muhammad not become a Christian? Dr. Moffett's reasons are instructive. The fact that there was no Arabic translation of the Bible was reflective of the cultural insensitivity of Christians toward the Arabs. That along with Christian disunity, the church's political connections with Arabia's imperialistic neighbors, and above all, Muhammad's burning conviction that Allah had chosen him to be the last and greatest prophet and channel for conveying Allah's ultimate truth to humankind were reason enough to dissuade the Arab from embracing the Christian faith.

Religious persecution, corruption within the church, the failure of Christians to evangelize and of the monasteries to produce missionaries all contributed to the decline though not the demise of the church under Islamic rule in the last 150 years of the first millennium. With the rise of the shamanist Turks, who were won to Islam by the missionary zeal, piety, and learning of the Muslims whose territories they were invading, the armies of the West suffered some of their most devastating defeats. The loss of the Middle East to the Muslims led to the ill-conceived Crusades, in which the armies of Western Europe tried intermittently for a hundred years to regain the Holy Land. "In the long memory of race and religion those failed invasions, launched in the name of One who said, "Love your enemies,' permanently tarnished the popular image of Christian expansion with stains of brutality and coercion that not even the gentler virtues of the Christian world mission have ever quite been able to erase" (p. 386).

In an interesting description of a debate between William of Rubruck, a Roman Catholic envoy to Mongolia, and a learned Buddhist, Professor Moffett comments, "The Christian mission is not a debate with the world's religions. It is not even a dialogue, though that too must enter into it. Its aim is not to defeat an enemy or simply to explore the world of ideas as in dialogue. Its primary purpose is to share whatever truth the human mind and heart can know and to witness to that truth in Christ" (p. 412). Rubruck had more respect for the Buddhist priests than he had for the Nestorian missionaries, whose corrupt morals were at least partly responsible for the disappearance of Nestorian Christianity from central Asia after the fourteenth century.

Professor Moffett's fascinating account of the ascension and rule of the Mongols, especially the great Kublai Khan, sheds further light on what he calls "the eclipse of Christianity in Asia" (pp. 471 ff.). In his final chapter the author concludes his survey by recapping what he considers to be the seven most significant reasons for the church's decline: "geographical isolation, chronic numerical weakness, persecution, the encounter with formidable Asian religions, ethnic introversion, dependence upon the state, and the church's own internal divisions" (p. 503). No single factor is definitive, nor are all of them together sufficient to explain Christianity's near demise in Asia. Nor did they preclude the amazing revival of Christianity in Asia in the centuries to come, on which this able historian is now hard at work.

I asked Dr. Moffett what lessons he has drawn to date from his long-term project. His reply is especially relevant for those of us in the field of evangelism: Christianity will be weakened if it depends too long on political power, if it relates too little or adapts too much to a national cultural heritage, if it loses its enthusiasm for evangelism, and if it produces no committed, educated leadership for the nation and the church. It loses its credibility when it either fails to validate its spiritual message with social compassion, or so concentrates on social programs that it neglects the personal disciplines and responsibilities of Christian life. "Christianity is no longer Christian," declares Dr. Moffett, "if it abandons its theological center: one God, the Father, known only through his Son Jesus Christ, as revealed by the Holy Spirit through the Bible."

Having read the first volume of Samuel Hugh Moffett's *History of Christianity in Asia*, this reviewer is eagerly looking forward to the next.

Richard Stoll Armstrong

Evangelism: A Concise History

By John Mark Terry. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1994. Pp. 210. PB.

Since 1970 the field of evangelism has been recognized as a distinct and legitimate area for academic study in seminaries and Bible colleges. Prior to that date most books on evangelism were concerned with pragmatic and practical aspects of personal witnessing and church evangelism. The Christian world has been blessed with a plethora of academic writings in evangelism since that time.

One of the most recent contributions to the field is John Mark Terry's *Evangelism: A Concise History*. Terry is well qualified to write an evangelism textbook. He serves as the associate dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism, and Church Growth. In addition, he is one of the few professors in the nation who is qualified to teach in the three diverse fields of missions, evangelism, and church growth.

Terry's most recent book is a significant addition to the field of evangelism. Though a few books have been written on the history of evangelism, his work makes two important contributions. First, the book's brevity (210 pages) allows the work to be used as a supplemental text,

particularly for use in evangelism and church history courses. Second, the author's passion to evangelize the lost, to see men and women accept Christ as their Savior, makes the book inspirational as well as informational. *Evangelism: A Concise History* is not a dry, theoretical, and lifeless historical commentary. It is a book that makes history come alive, as one reads about men and women who, across two millennia, have sought passionately to reach the lost for Christ.

Though the book sweeps the course of two thousand years, Terry's insight was particularly helpful in two historical epochs. First, he cogently discusses evangelism during the Reformation. He shatters the myth that Reformers such as John Calvin were non-evangelistic. Calvin's strong belief in election in no way cooled his evangelistic fervor. Calvin used Geneva as the base for widespread evangelistic efforts to France, sending eighty-eight evangelists in a seven-year period. The Reformer also commissioned missionaries to take the gospel to other points of the globe.

Another insight which emerges from Terry's book is the historical importance of spiritual awakenings and revival to the evangelization of the world. No less than four of the book's fifteen chapters are devoted to historical revivals and awakenings in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Implicit within these pages are Terry's own heartfelt prayers that God might send another such awakening to our land, as we enter the twenty-first century.

Terry deviates from his neat chronological order in the final three chapters of his book. He discusses what he perceives to be three critical issues in the contemporary history of evangelism: youth evangelism, personal evangelism, and media evangelism. While one could argue for a different mix of the most critical issues, those covered by the author are fascinating accounts of key developments within each area. Terry's analysis of twentieth-century televangelism is particularly insightful in light of recent controversies and moral failures of the televangelists.

As a fellow evangelism professor in theological education, I hope for the good of the kingdom that *Evangelism: A Concise History* will be read by many students of evangelism in seminaries and Bible colleges. But this book deserves an audience beyond academia. Church members across our land need to comprehend the evangelistic developments throughout history. An understanding of evangelistic history will not only help us to learn from past mistakes, but also help us to be more obedient to the Great Commission in the future. This book meets such criteria for professors, pastors, and laypersons alike.

Thom S. Rainer

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Dissonant Voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth

By Harold A. Netland. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991. Pp. 323. PB.

The focus of this book is the Christian claim of truth. The book studies the conflicting claims of other religions vis à vis the Christian claim that salvation is available only through Jesus Christ (p. IX).

Harold Netland discusses with analytical sharpness and sound biblical, theological, and philosophical aptitude the several topics taken up as a defense of Christian truth and uniqueness. He treats the following issues in eight chapters: The Challenge of Religious Pluralism, The Scandal of Pluralism: Conflicting Truth Claims, Religion and Truth, Evaluating Religious Traditions, All Roads Lead to . . ., No Other Name: The Question of Jesus, Evangelism, Dialogue and Tolerance.

The author intends for the book "to serve as a kind of a defense of Christian exclusivism—as a *prolegomenon* to an evangelical theology of religions," and, "to clarify some basic epistemological issues in the current debate over religious pluralism, responding to some criticisms of exclusivism, pointing out weaknesses in alternative views" (p. XII).

Netland begins his study with an analysis of "The Challenge of Religious Pluralism." The author brings forth the problem of the contemporary questioning of Jesus' claim that "no one comes to the Father except through me." Three important terms, "exclusivism," "inclusivism," and "pluralism" are examined and defined.

Netland defends "exclusivism," that is, the attitude that wherever Christian claims conflict with those of other religions, the non-Christian claims must be rejected as erroneous. He also defends the Bible as God's revelation and Jesus Christ as the unique incarnation of God and the only Savior of humankind. There is no salvation in other religious structures. This point of view is exemplified and defended throughout the book.

He criticizes "inclusivism," which, even though it espouses the truth-claim of Christianity that God is revealed through Jesus Christ, also allows that salvation is made available through other religions.

Pluralism departs from the above, rejecting the claim that God was revealed in any unique way in Jesus Christ. This philosophy accepts the idea that God actively reveals himself "in all religious traditions. Jesus is just one of the great religious leaders who was used by God to provide salvation to humanity. Christianity for this view, is one of the legitimate human responses to the same divine reality" (p. 10).

Though the entire book is based on solid scholarship and theological discernment, in this reviewer's opinion the most impressive part is chapter seven, "No Other Name: The Question of Jesus." In this chapter he cites Harvey Cox, who "chides fellow ecumenists who play down the figure of Jesus Christ in interfaith discussions" (p. 234). Pluralism challenges Christianity today and many theologians are searching for alter-

nate Christologies to the traditional normative Christology of the uniqueness of Christ. Netland analyzes the traditional Chalcedonian Christology and points out the need for a fresh Christian response to the contemporary understanding of Jesus Christ. He points out the distressing attacks of both Protestant and Roman Catholic theologians on the traditional Christology. He discusses thoroughly the views of Protestant John Hicks and Roman Catholic Paul Krutter.

For Netland, claiming the uniqueness and truth of the Christian faith must not and does not logically lead to intolerance. Christians must not enter into dialogue with the assumption of searching for truth about God and the human predicament. These basic truths are not negotiable from the Christian viewpoint. For this author, the "truth" is not an epistemological, structural, abstract universal. "Truth" is an existential, personal relationship with the divine Logos as manifested in the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

The book is well written and documented in a scholarly, analytical method. It clarifies the issues and analyzes the place of evangelism, dialogue, tolerance and Christian exclusiveness in Christian mission and witness. As a missionary and a professor of religious studies in Japan, Harold Netland is very much qualified to write such a book. It would be provocative reading for those who disagree with his basic principle of Christian exclusivism.

George C. Papademetriou

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Starting a Seeker-Sensitive Service

By Ed Dobson. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993. Pp. 157.

Willow Creek Community Church has inspired a new evangelistic genre, the "seeker-sensitive" service. In this small book Ed Dobson, senior pastor of Calvary Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, describes his (and his church's) venture in providing such a service as one outreach of a traditional church. He presents his own motivation for this ministry in his first chapter: because "we are trapped in an evangelical subculture" and "we are missionaries in a foreign land." These themes set the tone of the book, but I would hasten to add that even those not "trapped in an evangelical subculture" have much to gain from reading this book.

We are all to some extent "missionaries in a foreign land" and need a sensitization such as this book provides, if we are to evangelize effectively. Dobson makes his point succinctly: "A seeker-sensitive service is an attempt to place the gospel in a culturally relevant context. The language of contemporary music, drama that engages, talks that are relevant, and answers that are honest make up the language of secular America." It is this language which Dobson seeks to speak. The last sentence quoted gives the contents of a seeker-sensitive service at Calvary Church: music, drama, talks, and answers (to previously submitted questions).

Dobson spends much of the book detailing the specifics of how they have developed a seeker-sensitive service. These details are useful in indicating the range of concerns people need to address if they are going to engage in such a ministry. However, there are even more important matters he addresses at the outset.

The ultimate issue anyone thinking of such a ministry must answer is, "Do I have a consuming passion for the evangelism of the unchurched?"

> If you don't like people blowing smoke in your face or drinking in front of you. If you don't like being the only Christian surrounded by pagans. If you can't stand being around cursing, if, if, if—then stay in the evangelical subculture where you will be safe.

One might equally well say, then "stay in the mainstream subculture where you will be safe." My point is this: any pastor and church who attempt evangelism like this engage in a risky enterprise. They will not remain the same!

My suspicion is that what I would term "incarnational evangelism" is always risky, for it requires us to cross boundaries, enter another culture or subculture, learn its language and its ways, and learn how to express the gospel in such a way it can be understood in terms of that culture, while retaining its transforming power. Such a venture tends to rub off the idiosyncratic rough edges of our starting places and gets us in touch with the heart of the faith. This may be why books such as Dobson's have a "catholic" feel to them; they speak across dividing lines of various sorts to all kinds of Christians.

Let me list a number of things I think we can all learn from this venture. First, this is not merely a pastor's venture (though the pastor must be committed); it is an ecclesial venture. Not only must the church leaders and the congregation as a whole be behind it, there has to be a committed cadre of people who will staff it as well. Second, unless you are committed to excellence, don't do it. Excellence of both form and content are essential to carry off such a ministry. Third, a ministry like this entails constant evaluation. This means eliciting feedback from the people who come. Fourth, such a ministry needs long-range planning of a detailed sort; you can't decide this week what to do next week. Fifth, if the ministry is effective it will necessitate starting other ministries—for follow-up, for discipling, and for engaging people so they can "walk their talk." Finally, don't expect that a "seeker-sensitive" service will be a

front door through which people will walk into your regular service. Some will come; others will continue to come only to the seekers' service, and others may go elsewhere. This ministry has to stand on its own and not be justified as a "growth mechanism," even though it may lead to growth.

I have just a few caveats. First, people from other theological and subcultural backgrounds will need to do some translating to use Dobson's insights; but the translating is well worthwhile. Second, the "audience" addressed in this approach is clearly the "baby-boomers." The specific content would need to be adapted were other audiences to be attracted. (This itself, however, indicates what eventuates, if one is truly incarnational in evangelism: there is no generic or "one-size-fits-all" approach.)

While the book is not a recipe book, it is a self-help book. There is ample specific advice given to get one started in developing a "seeker sensitive service" in one's own context and for the audience one has in mind. It is written in an anecdotal yet economical style. It is free of jargon and would be useful to use with lay leaders.

Read it! More importantly, try it.

M. B. Handspicker

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Go! Do the Same: Developing Parish Outreach Programs

By Nancy Vendura, C.S.J. New York: Paulist Press, 1992. Pp. ix + 149.

Nancy Vendura, C.S.J., is Director for Parish Outreach at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Queens, New York. As a registered nurse with a master's degree in Community Health she has the training as well as the gifts needed to develop and direct a multifaceted program of compassion and outreach.

The program began in 1985 with a small group of volunteers reaching out to serve the sick in their homes. Within five years over 700 volunteers were involved in caring for a variety of needs of thousands of neighbors in this ethnically varied urban parish. Programs were developed to offer food, clothing, shelter, employment, child care, financial aid, counseling and referral, and prayer. The author tells the stories of how these programs came into being and how they progressed through several stages to maturity. Case studies, testimonies, and general evaluation feedback are included along with clear descriptions of each program.

But *Go! Do the Same* is not primarily a report of what has been done; rather it is a workbook designed to enable other congregations with a concern for the basic life-support needs of their "neighbors" to serve as representatives of Christ in the community and fulfill the commandment of Jesus to "love your neighbor as yourself."

The counsel from the beginning is to start with the simplest program that will address the needs of the people. Helpful guidance is given to persons who might serve as directors of such programs, advising them to work from their own strengths. A theology and philosophy of "Christian Volunteerism" is offered along with practical advice for securing and interviewing such volunteers. Clear, step-by-step instructions for everything from announcing the program in the Sunday liturgy to contacting and screening those in need make this manual extremely easy to follow and valuable for any person or committee responding to Christ's call to "go and do the same." The sample forms and checklists alone make the resource worth the price.

However, two or three problems emerge for non-Catholics and for those looking for an evangelism resource. First, the meaning of "Parish Outreach" is restricted to ministries of compassion. Those hoping to find models of Catholic evangelization would need to look elsewhere or radically redefine the meaning of the term. Some effort to provide a program to "attract and spiritually support marginal people" (p. 139) appears in the last chapter on establishing a "Prayer Corner"; but most of the manual seems to neglect this aspect of outreach entirely.

Second, the concept of "parish" plays an important role in defining which persons are served as well as which persons serve. Although it is suggested that ministries like food distribution may be extended to the entire local neighborhood, it is also suggested that outreach might include "parishioners only." Actually, much of the material describing how to identify persons in need and how to relate to them seems aimed only at this later audience. A larger concept of outreach with special concern for the "unchurched neighbor" would enhance the book's value.

A third problem, at least for some, might be the obvious Catholic bent to the materials and examples. The Flower Ministry Program (Chapter 4) opens with a prayer which includes the following: "Through the intercession of Mary, the queen of peace, grant us, O God, that peace which the world cannot give."

Nevertheless, the strength of the material is obvious. Many practical recommendations and cautions can be found on almost every page. Pastors and lay leaders concerned with reaching out to persons in need will benefit greatly from this manual. Even those hoping to find a more "apostolic" dimension to the concept of "outreach" than the author operates from will discover anew how important ministries of compassion are to establish an evangelistic presence. As the testimonies in this book remind us, there are those who already have adequate information about God's love, but who need to see it in action in the lives of those who claim to follow Jesus.

Go! Do the Same could certainly help involve many congregations

more confidently in efforts at manifesting the mercy of God and expressing the good news that "God so loved the world, that he gave . . ."

Perhaps the words of John the Elder from his First Letter would be worth repeating as a reminder of how this workbook/manual can serve us, as we seek to be faithful stewards of the love of God and the mysteries of the gospel.

> Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action (1 John 3:18).

Ronald K. Crandall

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Emerging Voices in Global Christian Theology

Edited by William A. Dyrness. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994. Pp. 255.

William Dyrness edited this book to complement his earlier text *Learning About Theology from the Third World*. He designed the book to allow the western reader to overhear and begin to take part in the theological conversations that a new generation of non-western theologians have initiated. The book has no integrating theological theme other than the presentation of the different conversations, because each cultural setting has its own concerns out of which the conversations have emerged. Dyrness argues that "The interrelated nature of the Christian community and the demands placed on the church at the end of this millenium make genuine exchange in the theological arena not only possible, but indispensable" (p. 10). From the perspective of the ministry of evangelism, this book provides an excellent resource for understanding how the gospel addresses the major life issues of diverse cultures in ways that westerners would not recognize apart from participation in the conversation.

Dyrness has selected several representative though not all inclusive essays written by theologians from Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America. One immediately recognizes the fallacy of thinking in terms of African theology or Asian theology. The essays reflect the fact that such huge areas of real estate will necessarily have diverse concerns based on heritage, political and social realities, and dominant religions of the area. Neither does Dyrness attempt to represent any of the theological concerns that the west feels should be of concern to the rest of the world. The essays reflect the issues of concern to those living in corners of each of the vast continents represented.

The contributors represent the main stream of Christian theological thought for the past two thousand years, which is to say that they do not for the most part work in the academy. They serve as pastors, denominational executives, mission directors, and teachers in a variety of ministry training institutions. Those who do teach in more traditional western style academic settings have come out of ministry settings. This involvement in ministry comes through in the essays in a way that informs their reflection upon issues facing the churches in their areas. To this contextual base for theological reflection the authors have also added to their preparation training at the doctoral level at universities in Europe, Britain, South Africa, and the United States.

Contributors to the volume include Miroslav Volf, a Croatian now teaching at Fuller; Tony Balcomb, a white South African minister; Cyril Okorocha, a Nigerian active in evangelical mission work in West Africa; Kwame Bediako, a Ghanaian Presbyterian minister who is active in missions research; Ken Gnanakan, an Indian who directs the Asian Center for Theological Studies; Evelyn Miranda-Feliciano, a Filipino who directs the Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture; David Lim, a Chinese Filipino who serves as training director for the Center for Community Transformation; Samuel Escobar, a Peruvian who now teaches at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary; and Antonio Carlos Barro, a Brazilian Presbyterian pastor.

This book would make an excellent text at the seminary level for courses dealing with cross-cultural evangelism or missions. It would also serve well in a course on the theology of evangelism or missions to illustrate how the issues of a given area raise the questions that give rise to the development of theologies. Volf demonstrates how forgiveness and acceptance form major theological issues in the Balkans where militant monoculturalism prevails. Kwame Bediako discusses how the motif of Christ as Lord and the themes of the superiority of Christ to others orders of spiritual hierarchy speak powerfully to the Ghanaian perspective. Ken Gnanakan discusses how the doctrine of creation provides a solution to the ecological crisis which the Hindu understanding of monism cannot provide. Cyril Okorocha describes the Nigerian understanding of salvation in terms of what Scripture calls abundant life to suggest the opportunity afforded the church for bringing the gospel to that culture. These represent just a few of the conversations that provide critical undergirding in learning how to carry on a conversation with people of a different culture in order to know how the gospel will speak to them differently from the way it speaks to someone in the west.

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The Evangelical Pastor: Pastoral Leadership for a Witnessing People

By Mark A. Olson. Augsburg Fortress, 1992. Pp. 96. PB.

An Evangelizing People: Lay Leadership for a Witnessing People

By Mark A. Olson and Brian Burchfield. Augsburg Fortress, 1992. Pp. 63. PB.

Olson's book is the basic volume in this set. The volume by Olson and Burchfield is a companion workbook.

As mainline denominations take note of the new landscape in which the church finds itself, they produce materials to redefine what the church should be in a post-Constantinian era. Olson and Burchfield are Evangelical Lutheran Church of America pastors whose materials are endorsed by their denomination's division for congregational ministries.

Olson does a good job in describing what the church can be today while remaining true to its Lutheran heritage. He describes the world in which we live post-Constantinian, pluralistic. He describes what he believes the church should look like by means of three caricatures of church forms today and one healthy parable congregation.

An excellent chapter on the biblical and theological roots of the church as an evangelical community follows. Only then, more than half-way through the book, does he begin to describe the evangelical pastor. He deals with the priestly, pastoral, and prophetic functions of the pastor, with qualities for effective leadership, and with the pastor as person. Much is made of the triadic notion of praise, righteousness, and compassion, though some of this seems forced.

All of this is based on the premise that there is in the church today a crisis of purpose and that the pastor's role is to call the church to renewed purpose as a faithful witnessing community.

Olson presents a sound biblical ecclesiology in which the church is a community living in faithfulness to its triadic calling. But I am troubled by the idea that evangelism today means "inviting people into the church, not bringing the church into the world." If that means not conforming the church to the world all is well. Precisely because we live in a post-Constantinian era, the church can no longer expect people to come to church. The church must be both an open system and courageously venture out into the world with its demonstration of praise, righteousness and compassion. It seems to me Olson needs to do more work with contextualization of the community and its message.

The accompanying workbook by Olson and Burchfield follows the outline of the first volume with emphasis now on the role of God's people. In the introduction, the church growth emphases on marketing, targeting, and meeting needs are dismissed as lack of faithfulness to God's call to community. Underlying this is, I believe, a one-sided theology which does not ask how the strategies of Jesus and Paul made use of these things without compromising the counter-cultural community the church is meant to be.

The only thing the authors expect from these volumes is that churches and their leaders enter into fruitful discussion about these things. No doubt the church does need to dig into its biblical and theological roots. But I wonder whether these materials have been field tested by leaders other than the authors. And with what results. There are literally thousands of evangelical churches who have a sound theology in place and whose ecclesiology contains wonderful insights but whose impact on an unbelieving world and unchurched people is minimal.

These two volumes are a valuable first step. But far more is needed to transform today's established churches into effective instruments of the kingdom.

Dirk J. Hart

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Professing the Faith: Christian Theology in a North American Context

By Douglas John Hall. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993. Pp. x + 566.

With the publication of this volume, Prof. Hall has completed two-thirds of his monumental trilogy on "Christian Theology in a North American Context." In the first volume, *Thinking the Faith*, Prof. Hall argues with erudition and passion for the development of a theology which is shaped by the distinctive context of North America, with a particular emphasis upon the implications of the end of Constantianism and the onset of post-modernity. The challenge is to think of the faith within a world which sees itself on "the brink of peril." Woven through his work is a thread of emphasis upon the mission of the "disciple community" as the urgent necessity to communicate the gospel (e.g., I, p. 332f), which must always be "the message of the cross" (I, p. 345 and often).

Significant for volume II (and presumably even more so for the forthcoming third volume, *Confessing the Faith*) is his conclusion: "It is the conviction of this study that while historical particularity is unavoid-

able, given the Christian view of revelation, religious exclusivism is not a necessary or even a logical consequence of this particularity, and in fact, it can be our entrée to a more inclusive faith" (I. p. 409).

The missiologist concludes the reading of volume one with much to affirm, while also wondering about his definition of the church's missional calling: "For the church does not exist for itself, but to be a witnessing community, whose witness is meant for the enhancement of all creaturely existence" (I, p. 446).

"Professing" one's faith is the disciplined explication of one's tradition, both as knowledge and commitment: "*I profess the faith as I remember its foundations and hope for its continuing illumination of the present and the emergent future*" (II, p. 16, his italics). For Hall, the remembered foundations are the Christian doctrine of God," the "creaturely being," and "Jesus the Christ, Savior"— the three major divisions of the book, which correspond to the "drama of creation, fall, and redemption." He approaches each theme in three sub-sections: (1) historical theology, which deals with the reception of the theological content by the tradition; (2) critical theology, dealing with "the flaws and problematic elements within the received tradition," and (3) constructive theology, which proposes ways to profess the faith "responsibly under the present sociohistorical conditions in our North American context."

The reader experiences Hall's work as a conversation, often a struggle, with hard issues, backed up by solid surveys of the relevant discussion. The theological tradition is both valued and sharply criticized. Modernity appears at time to govern the theological process (". . . Jesus is the answer of God to the human quest for God," p. 462). Elsewhere the presumptions of modernity are critiqued (". . . revelation is the norm where Christian theology is concerned," p. 145).

Where Hall emphasizes that "the end to which God's labor is directed is indeed the redemption of creation" (p. 176), one recognizes the legitimate reaction to all other-worldly forms of the gospel which negate that "God loved the world" but wonders about Hall's sense of the future and the mystery of God's coming reign. In his presentation of Christology, in particular the representational role of Christ's death, he provides valuable insights for the development of an incarnational theology of witness. "Representation as a bridge between Christology and Ecclesiology" points in a missional direction which is promising.

The basic thrust is missional while at the same time highly critical of much that the western church has done under the rubric of mission and evangelism. For the missiologist who is as concerned about mission to North America as to any other region of the world, and for the evangelism professor who wants to grapple with the theological issues underlying evangelistic practice, Hall's work is a major resource. Although it is not a missological text in the usual sense, I intend to assign readings from the series in my course on "The North American Context for Evangelistic Ministry."

Whether one agrees with all of his interpretations or not, his presentation is always instructive, broadening, enlightening. The clear divisions and well organized material make Hall's book an excellent resource for both teaching the content and engaging the diversity of major contemporary theological approaches. The book (actually, the series) will work in the seminary classroom and probably stimulate the faculty member to more than one article debating a particularly intriguing point! With its well done indices, a detailed table of contents, and continuing conversation with the literature in the footnotes, one can also use the volume as a reference work on a broad spectrum of theological themes.

Darrell L. Guder

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On the New Frontiers of Genetics and Religion

By J. Robert Nelson. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1994. Pp. xii + 212. PB.

As a former "pre-med. major"—long ago in another life—I confess that I was attracted to the title. Few of us can claim to keep up with all the reading in our own disciplines, never mind other fields which tickle our fancy from time to time. But I wondered if a book like this might be fun to browse and a sort of "quick fix" for my occasional longings to return to the fascinating frontiers of medical research. I wasn't disappointed.

J. Robert Nelson is the senior research fellow of The Institute of Religion, Texas Medical Center, and adjunct professor of medicine and medical ethics at Baylor College of Medicine. In addition to his expertise in these fields, he brings to his writing an interest in ecumenical relations and systematic theology. The result is a well-researched, thorough, balanced, and totally engaging work on probably *the* most important issue facing humankind in the coming millennium—genetic engineering.

The author begins with a brief history of genetics from Mendel's experiments with pea plants in the mid 19th century, to the discovery of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) in 1946 and the development of the "double helix" DNA molecular model in 1953. Nelson writes "1953 is to genetic science what 1492 is to geography." Some of the "DNA" vocabulary has now almost become common place, as we hear about blood samples in murder cases and read occasional news articles. Nevertheless, most of us remain largely ignorant of the absolute revolution underway known as the "Human Genome Project." Billions of dollars and multiple hun-

dreds of researchers are being employed to "break the genetic code" by "sequencing" and "mapping" the one hundred thousand human genes by the year 2005. Every indication is that they are ahead of schedule.

The question is asked, "Where do, or could, the work of theologians and geneticists meet?" Nelson suggests two intersections: (1) the ethics of genetic-altering biological processes, and (2) the nature and meaning of human life. These are not optimal conundrums and enigmas for the few who like such things. We all will very soon be involved. The issues are racing toward us and the whole of humanity at Star Trek warp speed. The scientific community has already been frightened enough by its own "success" at producing strange mixed species and transgenic animals that it has established its own temporary moratorium on such testing. Two significant "Genetics, Religion and Ethics" conferences have already been held in Houston (1990) and Berkeley (1992).

The heart of the book is a description of the issues raised at these conferences and the theological alternatives being offered. Chapter Two presents six specific challenges: (1) the meaning and value of human diversity, (2) genetic engineering techniques for the prevention and treatment of diseases and the modification of physical and mental traits, (3) the growing need for counseling and education, (4) legal and moral issues surrounding the privacy of data secured through genetic screening, (5) pregnancy testing and termination, as well as the use of fetal tissue, and (6) public policy and legislation needed to guide the whole effort.

Chapter Three discusses the Human Genome Project as it now exists. A revealing survey of six hundred seventy-seven doctors in twenty-five centers of genetic medicine across twelve countries clarifies the difficulties we are already facing. Special attention is given to the concerns of women. Chapters Four through Six explore theological perspectives, including personal presentations by representatives of Judaism, Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Protestantism, Islam, Hinduism, and more formal statements by several councils and denominations.

The final chapter attempts to clarify positions taken on twenty-one points of contention by three groups: (1) the "scientific-materialist," (2) the "questioning believer," and (3) the "confirmed believer." A "Recommended Reading" section and index round out the book. One missing item, which would have been helpful for those of us struggling to catch up, is a glossary.

As we work in the coming days to clarify the gospel for others, we will not be "good and faithful servants" if we neglect this call to engage in the issues of genetic engineering. J. Robert Nelson is a valued colleague and we will do well to put this volume and others like it in the hands of our students and parishioners, so that together we might prayerfully find the way through a potentially wonder-full and yet dangerous land which we have already entered—whether we know it or not.

Ronald K. Crandall

A New Heart and a New Spirit: A Plan for Renewing Your Church

By David S. Young. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1994. Pp. 107. PB.

David Young wrote this book as a handbook that a pastor might use to lead a church through the process of renewal. Renewal involves the interplay of spiritual dynamics and the transformation of faith into action. The latter involves organization and administration. Young lays out a plan involving seventeen steps that provides an administrative handle on how to move a church through the process. These seventeen steps are grouped primarily under the categories of organizing, planning, and implementing. For each step, Young provides a background and rationale for the step, a description of how to go about the step, and expected outcomes by which one can evaluate how effectively the process is moving.

Young's interest in this vital concern of churches dates back to his Doctor of Ministry project in 1976 when he led his own church through a similar process. This book has the character of first-hand experience which Young supplements with the stories of three other congregations that followed his plan: a white American Baptist Church in a blue-collar neighborhood of Philadelphia, an African American Baptist Church in Chester, Pennsylvania, and a white American Baptist Church in the middle class community of Upland, Pennsylvania. These churches provide illustrations of how the process has worked.

The steps in the process address the issues one would expect. Identifying strengths, discovering identity, leadership style, the spiritual dynamic of growing in faith, seeking a vision, matching needs and strengths, setting goals, establishing a plan for renewal, setting up a ministry, enlistment, training, and the actual start of the new ministry. To these, however, Young adds several key steps that often go neglected which relate to supervision and encouragement. These steps are particularly crucial in a voluntary association like a church. Supervision of laity involves listening, identification of growth areas, asking permission, discussion of resources, help in developing an action plan, modeling what is expected, and helping people grow spiritually.

This book would serve well in a course on church growth. So much of the church growth material available pertains to new churches or describes churches that have already gone through the transformation process. This book addresses the situation of as many as eighty per cent of the churches in the United States today which are either plateaued or in membership decline. The book is written in a simple, readable form for use in the local church. The book may be criticized for not going into more detail in areas where many pastors grope for help. Also, the church base out of which the material was developed is rather small and restricted to a concentrated geographical location. To these criticisms one might respond that the book has done a good job of raising

basic issues that must be addressed, but that the way in which they will be addressed by specific congregations will vary greatly because of the unique calling of each congregation.

Harry L. Poe

New Face of the Church in Latin America

Edited by Guillermo Cook. Maryknoll, N. J.: Orbis Books, 1994. Pp. xiv + 289. PB.

This is No. 18 in the American Society of Missiology Series and brings together in one volume an amazing breadth and depth of insight and understanding of the church in Latin America. Missiologist Guillermo Cook, the editor and a key figure in the Latin American theological community as well as a member of the Latin American Mission, contributes the introduction and a chapter in four of the five parts of the book. His work amply ties the many diverse and highly enlightening chapters into a cohesive unit.

Part One—*1492-1992 Change and Continuity* gives the reader a fresh look at history through the eyes of Latin American authors Justo L. González, Lydia Hernández, and J. Samuel Escobar.

Part Two—*The Dynamics of Change* takes the reader through a survey of early Catholic evangelization, the early Protestant settlements, traditional evangelism, Pentecostal evangelism, cross-cultural missions, and the phenomena of Protestant countercultural communities patterned somewhat after the better-known Catholic base ecclesial communities. The reader is brought up to date on the growth and impact of Pentecostal churches. C. René Padilla insightfully presents the "new actors on the political scene" and demonstrates how ". . . thousands and tens of thousands of Latin Americans, including many Roman Catholics, see in Evangelicals the promise of a new day for freedom and democracy." But rather than leave the reader with a sense of triumphalism one is brought face to face with the challenge of being adequately prepared for the task of going into the political arena.

Part Three—*Popular Religion: Tradition and Change* presents the reader with an insider's view of the introduction of the gospel to the Andean region in what was the center of the vast Inca Empire. Samuel Escobar gives definition to the conspiracy theory espoused by some Catholic sectors in view of the growth of popular Protestantism and then adeptly points to the truth that "missions are always an importation. The Christian faith was strictly indigenous only to Palestine."

Part Four—*Areas of Study* takes the reader into the social and political matrix of much of Latin America by looking at case studies in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Brazil. The impact of ethnic groups on each other (including foreign missionaries) is given fresh awareness, as is also the case in the study of suffering and discrimination caused by power brokers in and outside of these countries. Particularly useful is the insight gained from the way well-meaning evangelicals have been used by the powers that be. In this section the less glorious days for base ecclesial communities in northeastern Brazil are examined and lessons to be learned by them from the Pentecostals are highlighted. A final chapter in this section analyzes the relationship of parachurch agencies (in Brazil) to the church and the political arena.

Part Five—*The Future of the Latin American Church* in its first chapter gives the reader a glimpse of the thinking of some liberationists who attempt to rethink and recreate liberation theology. Here serious and though provoking questions for first world Christians are raised. This section concludes with a plethora of diverse opinions regarding the future of the church but in general places the future in the hands of the "conservative" grassroots Pentecostals. The editor in his final chapter raises his concern for the ". . . marginalization of the Bible, not only in Catholicism but also, increasingly, in Protestantism."

This work is significant for the serious student of the church in Latin America, inasmuch as many of its contributors, the majority being Protestant, are experienced leaders in Latin American writing from within their own context and reality. They bring us face to face with the changing church in Latin America.

Jerry Reed

Jerry Reed, D. Miss., after 22 years of church planting in Ecuador and Mexico is Associate Professor of Evangelism and Church Growth, North Park Theological Seminary, Chicago, IL.

Collaborating in Ministry: Letters to Laity and Pastors of Smaller Churches

By Terrence Hayes and Herb Mather. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1993. Pp. xiii + 97. PB.

Terrence Hayes is a church growth and leadership specialist with the Evangelism staff of the General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church. Herb Mather is the Team leader of the Stewardship staff for the Board of Discipleship. Both have served in the context of the "smaller churches" they address, and both have a deep love for the pastors and lay leadership of these churches.

Collaborating in Ministry is not a book filled with lots of new ideas, but it is an unusual book both because of its format and because of its very intentional effort to address lay readers and leaders along with pastors.

The format of the book is, as the subtitle indicates, a collection of letters written in a modern "Pauline Epistles" style to smaller churches. Even as some of Paul's letters were written to "pastors" (Timothy) and some to the church as a whole and its leaders (Philippians), so this collection contains separate letters to "Pastor" and "Laity" on seven key issues faced by smaller churches: (1) identity, (2) yearnings, (3) direction, (4) structure, (5) planning, (6) budgets and giving, and (7) ideas for witness, nurture and outreach.

For those of us used to reading books from cover to cover, this collection of letters could pose a problem. Since each of the seven issues is addressed twice—once in a letter to the pastor and once in a letter to the laity—it's like hearing the same sermon twice on the same Sunday delivered in two different churches on a circuit. The critical ingredients are the same, but the delivery is different based on the context and the audience. At first this feels redundant, but eventually the unique wisdom of such a design begins to emerge. In one sense this is not a textbook. It is a workbook with a series of questions and action suggestions at the end of each letter, and an invitation extended early on to "write to us."

The seven topics are arranged in a natural and logical sequence. The material includes both biblical and contemporary wisdom, but the authors are quick to indicate their goal is to assist in discovery, not impart wisdom from on high. Although the letters can easily be used as separate items, the natural tendency is to read "our" letter but also to peek at the "other" letter. How could anyone resist? The result is an inside look at seven common concerns for the leadership team in smaller churches as seen from the other's perspective. This is what makes the resource worthy as a special contribution to the small church literature.

Nothing in the book restricts its usefulness to United Methodists, although it is clearly a denominational resource. The expressed underlying assumptions are: "We assume that you would like a few more members. We assume that your church could use a little more money. We trust that you are not looking for gimmicks to capture more members to manipulate funds from their wallets." The goal is to help smaller churches be faithful to their true identity and mission as God's people and the body of Christ. A concluding appendix on "How to Use This Book" along with endnotes and a short list of additional recommended reading round out nicely the intended purpose of the book.

For pastors, lay leaders, students and others interested in resources for the smaller congregation, *Collaborating in Ministry* is worth a "peek."

Ronald K. Crandall

In Name Only: Tackling the Problem of Nominal Christianity

By Eddie Gibbs. Wheaton: BridgePoint, 1994. Pp. 347. PB.

Eddie Gibbs attributes the numerical decline of churches and denominations in the Western world to the failure of the traditional Christian institutions to deal with the dramatically changing social scene that forms the context for the churches and denominations. Christendom no longer exists, but most churches operate as though it does. Because this era represents a transition period from a homogeneous society to a heterogeneous society, many people still identify themselves nominally as Christian, but that identification has little meaning. Gibbs writes to challenge churches and denominations to stop the flow of nominality, to reclaim the nominal, and to claim those nominal Christians who have never actually been Christian except "in name only."

In the introductory chapter, Gibbs poses the problem of nominality by describing how nominality emerges over several generations in a culturally stable situation but becomes alarmingly apparent during a period of major social change. Gibbs devotes his second chapter to an examination of biblical passages which give insight to the issue of nominality. In the third chapter, Gibbs describes causes of nominality and makes the case that problems within church structures play as large a role or greater than forces within the broader society to create a nominal Christian. The fourth chapter explores how churches might experience on-going renewal in such a way that might lead to the restoration of nominal Christians. Gibbs then devotes one chapter each to the three major contextual factors which he considers most significant in developing a strategy for dealing with nominality: urbanization, secularization, and pluralism. The last chapter suggests the shape church structure should take in order to win the nominal back to the church.

The book was produced for the academic imprint of Victor books. It would work well as a text in an evangelism class to deal with causes of nominality and the issues of urbanization, secularization, and pluralism as both challenges to and opportunities for evangelism. The strength of the book comes in the four chapters which deal with these issues. Pastors and denominational leaders would benefit from the book as well, for it paints a vivid picture of the issues with which their structures may need to be designed to deal. Most church structures and programs had an original objective which they were intended to address. They became established because they successfully addressed the objectives. Over time, however, the structure becomes identified with the objective even after it no longer successfully addresses the objective. Leaders become immobilized in their creativity to address the objective anew in the changing society, because it would mean giving up the old successful structure which is now identified as the objective.

In his effort to address the North American, British, and European

scenes, Gibbs may have lost some precision for the sake of a broad picture. The book never gives a finely focused picture of who a nominal Christian is because "Any assessment of nominality will also be influenced by one's theology of the church and understanding of saving grace" (p. 15). This absence of a clear definition of nominal Christians in terms of salvation broadens the readership of the book, but it makes concrete ministry prescriptions difficult. Oddly enough, Gibbs suggests a pluralistic approach to understanding nominality such that it will mean one thing for a Baptist and something else for a Lutheran. Regardless of the beginning definition, however, Gibbs argues that Carl George's model of the metachurch is the most appropriate structure for dealing with the problem of nominal Christianity in Western society today.

Harry L. Poe

Vision America: A Strategy for Reaching a Nation

By Aubrey Malphurs. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994. PB.

Dr. Malphurs is president of Vision Ministries and chairman of the Department of Field Education at Dallas Theological Seminary. He is known to evangelicals through his books *Developing a Vision for Ministry in the 21st Century*, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century*, and *Pouring New Wine into Old Wineskins*. This book fits into the same category of challenging churches to be relevant in the contemporary context.

The book consists of two major parts. The first part, "Waking up the Church" presents in two chapters a thorough look at the rise and consequences of secularism on the country. Chapter three presents a hopeful look at the spiritual awakening that is stirring in America. He uses current research to document trends and seems to show a clear and accurate picture of the contemporary church and culture. Understanding our culture should result in increased motivation for churches to wake up and get involved in the community.

The second part, "Reaching Out to the Nation" discusses "how to accomplish outreach in these dizzying times of megachange and decline." His definition of a leader is worth quoting in a review: "I would define a Christian leader as a godly person (character) who knows where he or she is going (vision) and has followers (influence)." The remainder of the second part defines vision and presents a strategy for the church based on the vision and strategy of Jesus. He places evangelism in its proper strategic priority for the church. He also has an interesting, though brief, section presenting a dozen church and denominational organizational models for church parenting.

Chapter eight is of particular importance to academic evangelists. Malphurs dedicates 22 pages to a discussion of "Renewing Theological Education." His thoughts are timely, practical, and disconcerting. He indicates the problem of academically trained theologians who are failures in evangelism and church growth. The remaining pages discuss the purpose, faculty, students, curriculum, and finances of seminaries. There are questions and proposed solutions that require widespread consideration. The book does not go far enough in providing application and recommending contextual solutions. It does force us to begin addressing these questions and offering solutions. Malphurs writes about two choices before the seminaries, "The first choice is passive. If seminaries decide not to change or to change at a snail's pace, then the decision regarding their future will be made for them. The second choice is proactive. It allows the school to decide if it has a future and to determine and shape that future."

The book is interesting reading and well-documented. The information is presented well. It is not tremendously distinctive from the growing number of books on the twenty-first century church. However, it should be one of the options for classroom use.

C. Thomas Wright

C. Thomas Wright is Director, Materials Development, Evangelism Section, Home Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention. He is book review editor of the *JAETE*.

Turnaround Strategies for the Small Church

By Ron Crandall. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995. "Effective Church Series" Edited by Herb Miller.

"Turnaround strategies for the small church is about revitalizing smaller churches. . . . To revitalize means to restore to a former vitality or to bring to new life." Thus does Ron Crandall describe this vital new book. Every small church in the country has been waiting for this book!

By examining 100 specific small congregations which have turned around, Crandall projects hope to the thousands of churches whose attendance is less than 100 per Sunday. He describes pathways to turnaround (listing twelve emerging turnaround strategies) and projects pastors as turnaround leaders. He found the average pastor-age of the 100 congregations to be 47 and the persistent description to be patience.

He also found that all of the turnaround pastors lean heavily on the Holy Spirit's guidance. They also had to learn to sidestep the obstacles, of which there were many.

The chapter entitled "Turning Toward Others" affirms that "small-church approaches to evangelism need to be person-centered." One of the tragedies in today's church is the fact that no one is very involved in evangelism. While evangelism must be done differently in small churches, it can be and must be done. This book offers some ways of doing evangelism in a small church.

The chapter entitled "Turnaround Leaders Develop Disciples" shows richness, as it gives a rationale for making disciples in small churches. Turnaround begins with rescue, but does not end there. And it is the pastor who must be the major leader. "A positive pastor in a negative church can turn it around in three years. A negative pastor in a positive church can destroy it in three months." These turnaround pastors have dreams and see visions of the possibilities in their church.

Crandall even devotes a chapter to turning around the church in transition, i.e., communities undergoing ethnic and cultural change.

To ignore the 350,000-plus congregations that average fewer than 100 in worship would be a mistake. The real question is, How can more and more of these congregations be enlisted in a "turnaround movement"?

I strongly recommend this book for reading by laity and clergy alike, especially for those who fall in the category of the small church.

J. David Hester

J. David Hester is President of Memphis Theological Seminary in Memphis, Tennessee, and retiring president of the AETE.

Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers

By Lewis Drummond. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1992. Pp. 895. PB.

Lewis Drummond's biography of Charles Haddon Spurgeon represents the culmination of over forty years study of the great preacher. While this study is well researched, it is not written as a critical biography. Drummond writes with clear intentionality: he wants Spurgeon to influence the church today.

Avoiding a scholastic tone in his writing, Drummond writes in a warm, colloquial style to make this nineteenth century figure more accessible. Spurgeon appears as a person with feelings, not merely as an unapproachable leader. Drummond writes with enthusiasm for his subject, as one who wants others to admire and be influenced by Spurgeon as much as he.

Drummond uses *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a thematic device for organizing the book. The Puritans and early Nonconformists had a powerful impact on Spurgeon's theological understanding. *The Pilgrim's Progress* represents for Drummond the life stages of Spurgeon's development as a Christian and a minister. In this regard, Drummond relates the story of Spurgeon as a pilgrimage, naming the chapters of the biography for episodes in *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Surgeon's Calvinistic theology forms a major theme for Drummond, as he explores the episodes of Spurgeon's ministry.

Spurgeon had a remarkable ministry, adding over 14,000 members to his church during his tenure in London. He also published 2,241 sermons during his lifetime. Spurgeon held only two pastorates during his ministry. He went to the prestigious New Park Street Chapel in 1854 when he was only nineteen years old. Despite its long history, New Park Street was a dying church on the verge of burial.

Despite the subtitle, *Prince of Preachers*, the book gives a broader picture of Spurgeon as evangelist than simply as a master of the pulpit ministry. Spurgeon's ministry reflected a broad strategy for evangelistic ministry that included personal work, church planting, social ministry, and theological education. Drummond assesses Spurgeon's innovations in light of the sociological/theological milieu of Victorian England. Without in any way minimizing the extraordinary achievements of the man, Drummond argues that perhaps the most significant factor in the success of Spurgeon's ministry can be only understood in the context of the spiritual dynamics of the ministry. A noted scholar of spiritual awakenings, Drummond argues that the early ministry of Spurgeon at New Park Street unfolded in the context of a spiritual awakening within the congregation. This awakening was not limited to Spurgeon's ministry, but included a significant section of south London, though Spurgeon's church took advantage of the situation perhaps better than other churches in the area.

Drummond pays tribute to three of his former Ph.D. students for research they did, which he utilized in writing the book. Timothy McCoy did major work on the conversion experience of Spurgeon and his theology. Larry Michael did major work on Spurgeon's involvement in the Down Grade and Baptismal Regeneration controversies. Vasile Talpos did major work on Victorian backgrounds and Spurgeon's involvement in theological education.

Drummond has succeeded in writing a readable account of one of the most significant leaders in pastoral evangelism of the nineteenth century. He has made Spurgeon accessible for another generation to draw encouragement, inspiration, and guidance for ministry.

Harry L. Poe

Rural Evangelism

By Kevin E. Ruffcorn. Minneapolis: Augsburg-Fortress, 1994. Pp. 128. PB.

Kevin Ruffcorn is a Lutheran pastor with many years' experience in rural churches. In addition, he has led workshops on rural evangelism for the Academy for Evangelists.

Ruffcorn's book reveals his rural experience on every page. He has been there and done that. He is well aware of the problems rural pastors face. He does not ignore these issues; rather, he struggles with them and offers solutions that have worked in rural churches.

Ruffcorn begins his book by defining evangelism. He sees evangelism primarily in terms of proclamation. He believes the pastor is the key factor in church evangelism. He also notes that rural pastors usually have a short tenure, which makes effective evangelism difficult.

Another factor that works against rural evangelism is the church members' belief that all the people in their community are already active in church. The truth, however, is that forty percent of rural residents are unchurched.

Perhaps the most helpful part of Ruffcorn's book is his chapter on helping rural churches to change. He believes most churches must change in order to grow. Sadly, most congregations resist the changes they need to make in order to grow or even survive. Ruffcorn helps the reader understand the psychology of this situation and offers several helpful suggestions. This chapter alone is worth the price of the book.

Rural Evangelism would be of great help to any pastor or seminary student involved in or anticipating rural service. The book would also make an excellent textbook for courses on rural ministry. The author includes suggestions for further reading and a worksheet that will assist churches in gauging their effectiveness in evangelism. This book is informed, readable, and inexpensive. In short, it is highly recommended.

J. Mark Terry

J. Mark Terry is associate dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism, and Church Growth at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

ACADEMY FOR EVANGELISM IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Twenty-second Annual Meeting
October 6-8, 1994

Theme: Religious Marginality in America

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary hosted the twenty second annual meeting of The Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education in Louisville, Kentucky October 6-8, 1994. David Hester, president of the Academy, convened the opening session in Dillard Chapel of the Honeycutt Campus Center on Thursday evening at 7:30. Ron Crandall led in worship, followed by the keynote address from Thom Rainer, dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism, and Church Growth at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. A time of refreshments and dialogue with Rainer followed his presentation.

David Hester convened the Friday morning session at 9:00 in Crismon Hall of the James P. Boyce Centennial Library. In the opening worship, Arnold Lovell delivered a message which challenged the members to renew the sense of receiving Christ as a child and to practice child-like faith. Penny Long Marler, assistant professor of religion at Samford University, gave the first of her two presentations, "Marginal Church Members," during the rest of the morning session. Her study with Kirk Hadaway, which was funded by Lilly Endowment, examined the seventy-eight million Americans on the margins of the church who indicate some religious identification but who have no significant relationship to a local church. In presenting her findings Dr. Marler refuted some of the accepted statistics of popular polls and distinguished the "underchurched" from the "unchurched."

The Friday afternoon session convened at 1:30 and began with a presentation by Thomas Wright on "What's New in Books?" In the second part of her presentation beginning at 2:30 p.m. Dr. Marler focused on "Unchurched People." She read three actual dialogs with unchurched people from her study, followed by a video of a conversation with a fourth. After a refreshment break, the members discussed with Dr. Marler the implications of her study for evangelism.

The Friday evening banquet took place in Mullins Lounge beginning at 7:00. In the president's address, David Hester took as his theme "Redeeming the Time." In his message Dr. Hester proposed that now is the

time of productivity and contribution for everyone, regardless of their present age. He encouraged everyone to be enthusiastic, encouraged, informed, and involved.

The Saturday morning session convened at 9:00 o'clock in Crismon Hall. Chic Shaver opened the session with a message based on the text 2 Tim. 2:1-4. He stressed the importance of pleasing Jesus Christ, our "commanding officer." George Hunter then led a workshop on teaching evangelism, based on a book he is writing which has a working title of "The Apostolic Congregation." He was concerned with perennial themes of what it means to be the church, which themes can serve as a paradigm for constantly and appropriately ordering the church to be effective in "the harvest." These themes include answers to several questions; such as, what kind of church can reach and disciple secular harvests, and what kind of church can reach and disciple secular harvests, and what kind of church frees and empowers laity to invite people into the church? He identified five churches that present models of the Apostolic Congregation:

New Hope Community Church—Portland (Nazarene)
Frazier Memorial—Montgomery (United Methodist)
Saddleback Valley—Orange County (Southern Baptist)
Community Church of Joy—Phoenix (Lutheran)
Willow Creek—Chicago (Independent)

Hunter gave the following profile of these Apostolic Congregations:

1. Root people in scripture
2. Prayer
3. Importance of loving lost people
4. Obedience
5. Mission: to make saving faith possible for unreached people
6. Motivationally sufficient vision for what people can become in Christ
7. Adapt to target population's culture
8. Invest massive energy in involving everyone in small groups
9. Involve "all" of their members in lay ministry
10. Emphasize ministry to engage people

Hunter further enumerated five considerations for preparing people to witness in terms of the kind of person who feels free to witness:

1. People with a clear vision of what people can become
2. People of a culturally relevant church
3. People in a small group who talk about the gospel and God
4. People involved in a lay ministry in which they are gifted
5. People whose church has a redemptive ministry that creates bridges

Following Dr. Hunter's presentation, the Academy entered into its annual business meeting.

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING
Saturday, October 8, 1995
MINUTES

President David Hester called to order the annual business meeting of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education at 11:00 a.m. in Crismon Hall of the James P. Boyce Library at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

1. The minutes of the 1994 annual business meeting were approved by common consent as printed in volume nine of *The Journal of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education.*
2. Financial report—David D'Amico moved that the financial report be approved. Seconded by Dick Armstrong. Passed.
3. Membership report—The members were encouraged to contact several past members who have not paid dues in recent years. In 1992 the Academy had 71 dues-paying members. This figure declined to 51 in 1993 and 33 in 1994.
4. Journal report—Dick Armstrong indicated that the Journals had been mailed to the annual meeting, but that they had not arrived. He then announced the titles of the articles found in volume nine. The Journal will begin a subscription drive in 1995 to expand the number of libraries and individuals who subscribe. The editor also requested that members submit articles for consideration to be published in the Journal.
5. Membership drive—The president challenged the members to take the initiative to enlist new members. The secretary of the Academy will write to all of the ATS seminaries to enlist members, but a successful membership drive will require the concerted action by all members.
6. Report from the Executive Committee:
   a. Recommendation that the AETE hold its twenty-third annual meeting at Arrowhead Springs Conference Center in California at the invitation of Bill Bright and the International School of Theology October 5-7, 1995. Motion to approve by Jerry Reed. Second by Chic Shaver. Passed.
   b. Reminder that the 1996 meeting will take place at Asbury Seminary.
   c. Recommendation that the 1997 meeting be held at Beeson Divinity School of Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama, at the invitation of Lewis Drummond. Motion to approve by Sam Wilson. Second by Thomas Wright. Passed.

d. Recommendation that the following people be accepted into the membership of AETE:
   Mark Terry
   Charles Register
   Greg Lawson
   Approved by common consent.

7. Other Business
   a. George Hunter suggested that the members brainstorm about programs for future meetings.
   b. Chic Shaver requested early mailings on specifics of meetings.
   c. George Hunsberger requested a separate membership renewal notice that is not lost in a letter about the next meeting.
   d. George Hunter raised the issue of simplifying the record keeping and financial supervision under one person to address issues of confused mailing lists.
   e. In a brainstorming session the members suggested names of people they would like to hear at a program in the future.

Following the discussion, President Hester adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Harry L. Poe
Secretary

INFORMATION FOR SUBSCRIBERS AND AUTHORS

The Journal of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education (ISSN 0894-9034) is published annually in October and distributed free of charge to all paid-up members and associate members of the Academy, and to supporting institutions. Copies may be purchased at a cost of $10.00 per single issue, or $30.00 per subscription for four issues. Subscriptions, renewals, orders, and change-of-address notifications should be sent to Dr. David S. Young, Managing Editor, *AETE Journal*, 107 Valley Dr., West Chester, PA 19382. Remittances should be made payable to "The Journal of the AETE."

The Journal of the AETE was established to provide a medium for the responsible sharing of ideas among those engaged in the teaching of evangelism, primarily at the seminary level, as well as those whose ministries involve them in serious research and writing in the field. In addition to scholarly articles and book reviews, the *Journal* includes the Minutes of the annual meetings of the Academy and occasional items of interest to AETE members.

The Editorial Advisory Committee of the *Journal* is seeking well-written, high-quality articles relating to any aspect of evangelism, and issues relevant to the theology and practice of evangelism, including biblical, doctrinal, pedagogical, and methodological concerns, and matters relevant to evangelism and the cognate disciplines. Responses to articles in previous issues of the *Journal* will also be considered. Manuscripts should be submitted in duplicate to Richard S. Armstrong, Editor, Princeton Theological Seminary, CN 821, Princeton, NJ 08542-0803. Book reviews should be sent to Dr. C. Thomas Wright, Book Review Editor, AETE *Journal*, 4200 North Point Pkwy., Alpharetta, GA 30202-4174.

Manuscripts should be double spaced (including endnotes, tables, and appendices), using only one side of a page (8½ × 11 inches). Articles should be carefully documented, with notes appearing at the end. For style, including the citation of sources, authors should be guided by the University of Chicago Press' *Manual of Style* or K. L. Turabian's *Manual for Writers*. For spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc., use an up-to-date style manual, such as *The Gregg Reference Manual*, published by McGraw-Hill. For example, pronouns for Jesus and terms like gospel (except when it refers to a book of the Bible), eternal life, kingdom of God, body of Christ, are not capitalized. A good rule is, "When in doubt, don't capitalize!" The use of gender inclusive language is expected.

Manuscripts need to be submitted by May 31 in order to appear in the following October issue. The desired length of articles is normally 3000 to 5000 words, with preference on the shorter side. Book reviews are usually in the 600 to 750 range. Authors and reviewers are requested to indicate their present place of employment, complete title, and full name. They may include a brief explanatory statement about their article, if such is needed. Contributors receive no compensation except for five complimentary copies of the issue in which their article appears.

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