The Asbury Journal

VOLUME 66:2
Fall 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Essays
4  A Transnational Faith: El Salvador and Immigrant Christianity
   Robert A. Danielson

18  Conversion, Justification, and the Experience of Grace in the
    Post-Aldersgate Wesley: Towards an Understanding of who is “a
    child of God”
    Marlon D. De Blasio

36  United We Sing: Union Hymnals, Holiness Hymnody, and the
    Formation of Korean Revivalism (1905-2007)
    William T. Purinton

57  Living Water in Indian Cups: A Call for Cultural Relevance in
    Contemporary Indian Missions
    Prabhu Singh

67  From Saul to Paul: The Apostle’s Name Change and Narrative
    Identity in Acts 13:9
    David Wenkel

77  Leading a Polytheistic Faith to the Monotheistic God: A Study
    in Identifying Barriers to the Gospel in a Chinese Buddhist
    Community and Ways to Overcome those Barriers
    Agnes Woo

Features
92  Spanish Language Christian Academic Publishing
    Robert A. Danielson

101 Four Views on Church and Politics: A Review Essay
    Brian Edgar

108 Reaching Secular People: A Review of the Books of George C.
    Hunter, III
    Gary McIntosh

120 Book Reviews
    Anthony J. Headley
    Nathan Crawford

The Asbury Journal publishes scholarly essays and book reviews written from a Wesleyan perspective. The Journal's authors and audience reflect the global reality of the Christian church, the holistic nature of Wesleyan thought, and the importance of both theory and practice in addressing the current issues of the day. Authors include Wesleyan scholars, scholars of Wesleyanism/Methodism, and scholars writing on issues of theological and theological education importance.

ISSN 1090-5642
Published in April and October
Articles and reviews may be copied for personal or classroom use. Permission to otherwise reprint essays and reviews must be granted permission by the editor and the author.

Postmaster: Send address changes to:
The Asbury Journal
Asbury Theological Seminary
204 North Lexington Avenue
Wilmore, Kentucky 40390

2011 SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Individual:
$20 (one year); $35 (two years); $50 (three years)

Institution:
$40 (one year); $75 (two years); $110 (three years)

Student:
$10 (one year); $18 (two years); $26 (three years)
Abstract

Immigration is radically shaping the makeup of the United States; however immigration today is radically different than in previous generations. Modern immigration is characterized by transnationalism, where more immigrants are maintaining connections with their homelands. These connections have both positive and negative impacts on both the United States and the immigrant’s countries of origin. El Salvador is one example of this trend. Financial remittances and gangs are representative of the way transnational migration affects a country of origin, like El Salvador, as well as the United States. The Church needs to adapt to this global trend and recognize its impact for mission and church growth in our time. Two indigenous churches in El Salvador demonstrate how the global church has spread beyond national borders through the impact of transnational migrants.

Key Words: El Salvador, transnationalism, immigration, migration, indigenous churches, remittances, gangs

Robert A. Danielson is an affiliate professor and faculty associate at Asbury Theological Seminary with a Ph.D. in Intercultural Studies and a background in the anthropology and cultures of China and Central America.
Salvadoran Immigrants: The Invisible Immigrant Community

When asked to name the top five countries of origin of the foreign-born population in the United States, most people could probably guess Mexico (with 11.739 million) as number one. China (with 1.930 million), the Philippines (with 1.701 million), and India (with 1.502 million) might be more difficult, but would not come as a great surprise. However, few people would guess that number five (at 1.104 million) is El Salvador, the smallest country in Central America and one of the smallest in the entire Western Hemisphere after the Caribbean Island nations. Even fewer could possibly guess the growing potential impact of this small nation on the Church in the United States. But this impact goes both ways. As Salvadoran immigrants impact the United States, their connection with El Salvador also dramatically impacts that nation as well.

There was a time, when immigration implied a permanent shift in cultural allegiance from the home country to the United States. Written contact was sparse and seldom continued past the first generation, and a return trip home was almost out of the question. With advances in communication, transportation, and technology this reality is no longer true (cf. Benitez 2006). Immigrants can read their hometown news on the internet in their native language, email friends and family daily if necessary, send financial support home through convenient wire-transfers, send digital photos and even return home on a yearly basis, or more often if necessary. Children of immigrants are frequently sent back to their parents’ home country to spend time with relatives and so family bonds are maintained and strengthened. For Spanish-speaking immigrants, large urban ethnic communities, and the rapid growth of Spanish language media outlets such as Telemundo, Univisión, and Telemundo reduce the need to learn English and culturally adapt to a new and often hostile anti-immigrant environment. Ethnic restaurants, community organizations, ethnic stores, and churches provide for the necessities of life and important networking for the immigrant community. Spanish language newspapers, magazines, and books are increasingly available and financially affordable. The days of cultural absorption are over and a new day has dawned for immigrant communities, the new reality of the transnational immigrant community.

Immigrants from El Salvador have often remained unrecognized in the United States because of the overwhelming presence of immigrants from Mexico. Often Salvadorans are lumped into the same category with other Spanish-speaking immigrants and their unique contributions and cultural characteristics often go unnoticed. Like other Spanish-speaking immigrants, Salvadorans arrived from the 1970's onward coming for reasons of political unrest and economic need. These immigrants have spread from urban
centers into more rural areas of the country, but have largely remained invisible to the larger society.

Transnationalism: The New Reality

Schiller, et. al. (1992:ix) notes,

Immigrants are understood to be transmigrants when they develop and maintain multiple relations—familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political—that span borders. We came to understand that the multiplicity of migrants’ involvements in both the home and host societies is a central element of transnationalism. Transmigrants take actions, make decisions, and feel concerns within a field of social relations that links together their country of origin and their country or countries of settlement.

Transmigrants are a subgroup of immigrants. It includes immigrants who maintain contact with their home, usually by returning periodically. However, in their study of the Salvadoran community in the U.S., Miyares et al. (2003:75) argue “this transnational field can be entered vicariously through gifts, telecommunications, and particularly remittances, even when legal constraints prevent actual migrant circulation.” This indicates that people can be transnational without necessarily physically travelling between the home and host countries.

The growing economic and political influence of the transnational community is increasingly being recognized by the home country. DeLugan (2008) argues quite persuasively that El Salvador has been increasingly working to include transmigrants in the U.S. in the national psyche. She points out that the government of El Salvador is working hard to include hermanos lejanos (distant siblings) in the next census. The major newspapers of the country frequently report on the news in Departamento 15 (the fifteenth department—El Salvador geographically consists of fourteen departments, so the fifteenth is a reference to Salvadorans living abroad). The Salvadoran government has also invested in museums which meet the needs of returning Salvadorans to connect with their past. There are local cultural centers in El Salvador called Casas de Cultura, but in 1997 the government opened a Casa de Cultura in downtown Los Angeles, to help Salvadorans in L.A. maintain their cultural identity. Orozco (2007:25) remarks that the government of El Salvador also created, “a General Directorate within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to address the Salvadoran community living abroad (DGACE). The directorate, created in January 2000, has been the main official link between the government and the Salvadoran diaspora.” But in daily life transnationalism has both a positive and a negative face, which the following two examples will illustrate.
Positive Transnationalism: The Example of Remittances

Immigrants in the United States are a major bridge for economic development in other parts of the world. While people are El Salvador's principle export before coffee, sugar and rice, money sent home by Salvadorans in the form of remittances is the largest import totaling about $2.5 billion annually or 17.1% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The entire amount sent to El Salvador by the U.S. government through U.S. Aid in 2007 only totaled $24.9 million in comparison. While 57% of immigrants from El Salvador send money home, 22% of households in El Salvador receive remittances and use three quarters of the money for household expenses.

There are primarily two types of remittances, money sent from individuals to family members and money sent from social groups to their home communities. In an International Monetary Fund working paper on remittances and the Salvadoran economy, Cáceres and Saca (2006:23) write, “Certainly, remittances play an important role in Salvadoran economy. They support a high level of private consumption, financing imports of consumption goods and risky loan provision of the banking system. Moreover, the social benefits of remittances are important in terms of reducing poverty rates and increasing education rates.” The writers even note one study which found a family which received only $100 a month in remittances had a 56% less chance of a child leaving school than a family which received nothing in rural areas of the country. On the negative side the report notes that remittances can lead to higher interest rates and inflation.

This money primarily goes right into the local economy providing for basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, medicine, and education. This money meets the basic needs of people more than money from development or mission organizations. In this case, money goes directly to the people who need it and they decide how best to use the resources. Money flows directly into the local economy, stimulating jobs and businesses which would otherwise not exist. Family remittances often go towards the support of the local church as well, and community remittances flow from daughter congregations in the U.S. to aid growing mother churches and their programs.

Community based remittances have also had a major impact. Miyares (2003:80) studied the relationships between one such group of transmigrants in New Jersey from the same village in El Salvador, and she notes of the Salvadoran village, “This was the only village in the area with a high school. Remittance-based projects had included a medical clinic, although they had yet to recruit a doctor. The next project was to be a playground for the village’s children.” All of this was possible through transmigrants organizing based on their hometown communities and pooling resources, having fund raisers, and working together to make life better for their families back in
El Salvador. Burton and Gammage (2009) explore the complex dynamic of community remittances among Salvadoran transnationals in the Washington D.C. area, and they note that many of these organizations have religious connections as well.

While on the whole, remittances seem to be a positive result of transnationalism, there is a dark side as well in terms of national economies. Carling (2008) questions the sustainability of a national economy, such as El Salvador's which is based to a large part on remittances. Suddenly U.S. immigration policy becomes an issue for the global economy of many smaller nations and not just a strictly internal issue of border control. How the Church addresses the immigration issue can very likely impact the survival and well-being of families all over the globe who are connected to the United States through immigrant relatives and remittances.

**Negative Transnationalism: The Problem of Gangs**

Transnationalism is not always a positive factor for the home country. As welcome as the economic impact of remittances is for El Salvador, transnationalism has also brought the problem of gang warfare, which has become the single most important issue in El Salvador today.

In the 1970's the political situation in El Salvador began to unravel. Most of the power in the country was held by a handful of elite families and the government was run by military leaders. In 1977, the Roman Catholic Church appointed a relatively unknown priest, Oscar Romero as Archbishop. It was expected that this quiet scholar would maintain a careful moderate position and not challenge the status quo. But with the murder of his friend, Father Rutilio Grande, Archbishop Romero increasingly took a position in favor of the poorer classes. This would ultimately lead to his assassination in March of 1980 and a civil war which devastated El Salvador from 1981 to 1992. Caught between Marxist rebels and government controlled death squads over 70,000 people were killed and thousands fled the country, many finding refuge as undocumented immigrants in the United States, especially around Los Angeles.

The traumatized children of these refugees were caught in a system which did not recognize them as political refugees (the U.S. government refused to recognize the presence of death squads until long after the war and insisted the country was safe for the general population). Without support as legal refugees, these families found themselves both as undocumented immigrants and living in the violent poorer sections of Los Angeles. In order to survive, the children soon formed gangs to protect themselves. One of the most powerful and violent of these groups was the *Marasalvatruchas* (Salvadoran Army Ants), commonly known as MS13. As the gangs grew and the children aged they began to be noticed by the police.
When arrested, these gang members were found to be undocumented and were thus deported back to El Salvador. In El Salvador, they had no criminal record, so they were released. They also did not have any family, employment, or place to stay and so they reverted to what they knew - the gang structure. As Zilberg (2004:761) notes, "El Salvador is now host to a new social formation built on this puzzling relationship between space and identity. Deported Salvadoran immigrant gang youth-banished from the United States after spending the better part of their young lives in this country-are returned "home" to a place, where, in their memory, they have never been." They belong neither to the U.S. nor to El Salvador, and so they represent the new transnationalism.

Today, the prisons in El Salvador are filled with gang members bearing tattoos obtained in the streets of Los Angeles. Statistics now point out that violence in El Salvador is at a higher rate than during the height of the civil war (cf. De Cesare 2009). The U.S. continues to deport gang members with little concern for the impact on Central American stability and safety. The Marasalvatruchas have now spread throughout Central America and Mexico, into most of the states in the United States and even into Europe. It has been labeled by some as the first international gang (cf. Campo-Flores et al. 2005). They are involved in all types of smuggling operations: drugs, weapons, and human immigrants.

While the gang becomes stronger in Central America as U.S. deportations increase, the gangs also grow locally as many children in El Salvador are growing up without the influence of parents who are working in the U.S. to send money home. Miyares et. al. (2003:79) note the psychological scarring which is occurring, "Most Salvadorans in the U.S. left family members in their country of birth. We interviewed people in El Salvador who do not understand why their adult children in the U.S. send gifts and remittances but have not visited in a decade. We also spoke to children being raised by grandparents and who only know their parents through gifts, remittances, and telephone calls." Unfortunately, many of these children seeking for a sense of family and belonging are often easy recruits for the gangs. This, along with other stresses from transnational migration has had a negative impact on the traditional Salvadoran family structure (cf. Abreigo 2009a, 2009b).

The Marasalvatruchas are an example of negative transnationalism. They have taken the violence and crime they learned in the United States and taken it back to El Salvador, where it has combined with the military experience of a people who survived a brutal civil war. This combination has made them incredibly dangerous and very well organized-a militant gang with international connections who are easily able to cross cultural and political borders.
Transnationalism and the Church: *Elim* and the *Tabernaculo*

In the same year Archbishop Romero was appointed to lead the Roman Catholic Church, two indigenous Protestant churches sprang up in the midst of the political turmoil. Both churches began about a month apart with between seven and eleven members. Today, both of these churches are mega churches with incredible political and social influence in the country. Both are also excellent examples of how the Church in El Salvador is adapting to the transnational reality.

*Misión Cristiana Elim* is a Pentecostal Church founded in 1977 with seven members. While it struggled in its early years, it reached a crucial crossroads in 1985 when they encountered the cell church growth ideas of David Yonggi Cho of the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Korea (Comiskey 2006:35-36). The following year, under founding pastor, Sergio Sólorzano, the twenty-five churches of the organization decided to close and the pastors become zone pastors of one united cell system. By 1988, attendance at their cell meeting numbered 20,000.

In 1995 there was a crisis in their leadership. With both financial and sexual indiscretions by Pastor Sólorzano, the church leadership attempted to discipline the pastor, but in 1997 he left the church to found a new one. In a crucial move, the church leaders chose the zone pastor from Santa Ana, Mario Vega to lead *Elim*. The combination of the cell church model and the leadership of Pastor Vega have had powerful results. *Elim* began to try to meet together once a year in an annual rally, as opposed to just the individual cell meetings. The result has been simply staggering. Comiskey (2006:41) notes, “On November 8, 1998, *Elim* filled two stadiums simultaneously; on November 14, 1999, they filled three stadiums; and in November 2000, the church filled five stadiums with some 120,000 people attending events. In November 2002, *Elim* Church gathered more than 150,000 people spread over eight football fields.” *Elim* does not keep membership records, but does track weekly attendance in cells, however depending on how you calculate it, some list *Elim* as the second largest church in the world after Yoido Full Gospel Church.

*Elim* exhibits the characteristics of a transnational church in part because of it use of a Korean model adapted to the Salvadoran context. But it also is related to the same immigration dynamics which led to the gang problem. Because of the spread of refugees, *Elim* has now planted daughter churches in the United States, Central America, and even Europe.

Also in 1977, about one month apart from the founding of *Elim*, Dr. Edgar López Bertrand (more popularly known as Hermano Toby) founded the *Tabernaculo Bíblico Bautista “Amigos de Israel”* with thirteen people. While this church proclaims to be Baptist, others list it as Neo-Charismatic. It is completely independent from any Baptist group in the United States. In
over 38 years, *Hermano* Toby claims to have founded 420 churches in El Salvador and 22 in other countries, all from his impressive ministry complex in a wealthy neighborhood of San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador, at an operating cost of $33,000.00 a day (Galenas 2008:17-21).

*Hermano* Toby was born in El Salvador, but he studied for the ministry at Temple University in Chattanooga, Tennessee. He spent quite a bit of time in the United States before returning to El Salvador, and his church clearly indicates a familiarity with U.S. patterns of mega churches. Jahnel (2008:52) notes that *Hermano* Toby received early financial support from Gordon Robertson, director of the *Christian Broadcasting Network*, and that the *Tabernaculo*’s prominent national television station, *Canal 25* was initially financed by Paul Crouch of *Trinity Broadcasting Network*.

Currently the main branch of the *Tabernaculo* boasts a membership of around 80,000 with 18 full time pastors. Pastor Jorge Aguirre (personal communication, Dec. 29, 2009), the pastor in charge of the *Tabernaculo*’s ministries outlined the twelve major ministries of the church. These include: a children’s shelter, drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, food programs for the elderly without family, a program which feeds 2,400 homeless every week, 42 doctors and dentists who serve free of charge in poor areas, 72 lawyers who give free legal advice, a program teaching 125 women how to sew, literacy programs, hospital visitation teams, an orphanage for children with Down’s Syndrome, and two different prison ministries. These prison ministry teams aim to help solve El Salvador’s gang problem.

Both churches have many similarities. Both are active in social outreach, but maintain the centrality of evangelism in their ministries. While politically Pastor Vega and *Elim* are more closely aligned to the liberal politicians and their focus on the needs of the poorer classes in society, and *Hermano* Toby and the *Tabernaculo* is more closely associated with the conservative party and the rising middle class, both are very concerned about the gang issue and how it is effecting Salvadoran society.

*Elim* has established prison ministries which include helping set up cells in prisons and raise up leaders who can be reintegrated by the church after they are released. When asked about social ministries in *Elim*, Mario Vega (personal communication, Jan. 11, 2010) replied that “social ministry is the mission of the church.” Pastor Vega indicated that their approach was frequently more informal since it was based on the cell structure of the church. Needs of members should be taken care of by other members of the same cell, but this involvement was considered a crucial part of what it means to be a part of a cell. *Elim* is also working to incorporate cells for children and youth to provide a family structure in the church which can undermine the draw of the gangs later in their lives. The *Tabernaculo* besides offering drug and alcohol rehabilitation and basic prison ministries, also
has a prison ministry which aims to reach people as soon as possible after they are arrested with a small personal care package to begin a relationship which will hopefully lead to redemption through this stressful time. The Church is making inroads on the gang problem in El Salvador. Brenneman (2009:18) discusses some of these successes as former gang members are finding redemption and salvation through similar outreach programs, and key to this success he notes that “In Central America, evangelicals are among the few willing to take the risks associated with offering gang members a second chance.” These types of ministries are transnational answers to transnational problems.

Much more research needs to be done on transnationalism and the Salvadoran church. How do people, ideas, and financial assistance move through the formal and informal network of churches and pastors in the United States and El Salvador? Does financial support primarily flow from daughter churches in the United States, or does it move in both directions? Do theological ideas move to daughter churches from El Salvador through internet, video and audio tapes, books, or through guest preachers? How do daughter churches help recent immigrants from El Salvador settle in the United States? Do they use their networks to help people find housing, jobs, and other opportunities? How can transnational ministries operate to help solve the gang problems for both the home and host country? These and many further questions need to be raised to help understand how transnationalism affects religious belief and faith.

The Challenges of Transnationalism and the Church

What does all of this mean for the Church today? Before the current influx of Spanish-speaking immigrants, scholarship on migration held that the religion of immigrants would decline as they were acculturated to life in the U.S. Mol (1971:68) wrote, “When the migrant has discovered that the old world interpretation of reality is less relevant and the new world interpretation has not been adopted yet, religious practices are likely to be much less observed.” So far, nothing could be further from the truth. Immigrant communities maintain vibrant communities of faith in their host country because it gives them meaning and a framework in which to interpret their experience. As we recognize this new reality, we can see that the growth and impact of the transnational immigrant community will have a significant influence on how we do ministry into the twenty-first century (cf. Kokot, et. al. 2004). Menjivar (1999:589) states that:

For those who find themselves part of increasingly more encompassing global population movements, religion provides a unique way both to make sense of their predicament and to bridge new realities with experiences in their homelands. For
migrants, religious participation offers not just a way to express and interpret their individual interests and to remain connected to their origin communities; it also provides a link to churches and religious organizations that maintain an active collective engagement by creating and shaping transnational spaces.

In concluding, I will mention four possible ways the transnational nature of immigrant communities like the Salvadoran community will impact the Church in North America.

First, we must change our approaches from a monolingual, monocultural method of ministry to an approach which seriously works to reach and include immigrants in our areas. Transnational people maintain ties with their home communities and their native language. While they may also learn English, often their hearts are in their homeland, with their families. The Church today needs to recognize this reality and allow transmigrants the opportunity to worship in the language of their heart. Just because they live in the United States does not mean they have abandoned their cultural roots and connections. As Spanish-speaking immigrants are currently moving from urban to rural areas, even rural churches will need to be trained to start and lead Spanish language ministries.

Second, we will need to reevaluate how we do theological education. In the Global South, there is a tremendous need for pastoral training and theological education. Even traditional Pentecostal groups, like Misión Cristiana Elim have been reaching out to small local seminaries seeking ways to improve the spreading of sound doctrine (Peña, personal communication, January 7, 2010). Hermaño Toby was trained in the U.S. and returned to El Salvador to lead a very successful ministry, but this is an expensive pattern to follow. We should find ways to train transmigrants for ministry since many of them ultimately desire to return home, and do not see their life in the United States as a permanent condition. But even more importantly, with their connections, trained transmigrants make the ideal teachers for education in the Global South. They already know the culture and the language. They already have a heart for the people. They already have a foot in both worlds and with a minimal investment in training in the U.S., they would be perfectly equipped to train local church leaders in the countries of their birth. The need for Spanish-language degree programs such as those offered at Fuller Theological Seminary is becoming more vital for the growth of the Church, both in the U.S. and in mission to the Church in the Latin America.6

Third, mission will need to become more of a two-way street. Immigrant communities in the United States are already participating in reverse missions. Misión Cristiana Elim has founded thirty-eight churches in the United States
and the *Tabernáculo Bíblico Bautista “Amigos de Israel”* has planted eight churches in the United States. It is vital that the Church in the United States learn how to partner with transnationals both to help churches in other countries financially and educationally, and to find ways to more effectively reach immigrants in our local communities. Transnationals form a vital bridge between cultures and communities. Transmigrants operate in the margins of two worlds, but that is precisely what makes them valuable cross-cultural communicators. Churches in the United States should not feel threatened by these new transnational churches. They bring a greater vision of the Kingdom of God and a new vitality which can enrich our churches.

Fourth, we will need to find ways to hear the voices of theologians from the Global South. As long as publishing is dominated by theologians and companies in the Global North, the influence and wisdom of successful pastors like Mario Vega and Edgar Lopez Bertrand will be lost. Rather than focusing on translating popular theologians from the United States into other languages, we need to work on finding successful ministers and ministries in other parts of the world and translate their ideas into English and make them more widely available in Spanish as well. These leaders know how to best reach the immigrants in our communities and we need to learn from them. Many of these leaders are already known among the transnational community and once again this community can provide an excellent source of translators to bridge the language and communication gaps which might otherwise exist. The Church needs to reconsider its role in publishing and distributing materials needed in the Global South as an integral part of its mission.

On a final note, while international communism has largely failed to meet global concerns, it does not mean that all Marxist critique of the Capitalist system is invalid. The Church needs to recognize that the current immigration issues in the United States are often a direct result of years of oppressive global capitalism rooted in United States businesses practices. In Latin America a quick review of the history of chocolate, coffee, sugar, bananas, and clothing manufacturing reveal a dark history of social and political control fueled by greed. A Christian ethic of “doing unto others as you would have them do unto you” is desperately needed especially as we enter the age of the transnational church, and such a theology would be greatly welcomed by our brothers and sisters in El Salvador. This is the type of theology which can emerge from successful ministry and partnership with transmigrants who can bridge the communication gap and help the Church flourish to truly represent the Kingdom of God to the entire world.
References Cited

Abrego, Leisy J.

Aguirre, Jorge

Benítez, José Luis

Brenneman, Robert

Burton, Barbara and Sarah Gammage

Cáceres, Luis René and Nolvia N. Saca

Campo-Flores, Arian, Daren Briscoe, Daniel Kladman, Michael Isikoff, Jennifer Ordonez, Joseph Contreras, and Alvaro Cruz

Carling, Jørgen

Comiskey, Joel
2004 *Passion and Persistence*. Houston, TX: Cell Group Resources.
DeCesare, Donna

DeLugan, Robin Maria

Galcas, Marvin

Jahnel, Christoph

Kokot, Waltraud, Khachig Töölyan and Carolin Alfonso, eds.

Menjívar, Cecilia

Miyares, Ines M., Richard Wright, Alison Mountz, Adrian J. Bailey and Jennifer Jonak

Mol, J. J.

Orozco, Manuel

Peña, Jaime Wilfredo, Director of Seminario Bautista Latinoamericana (SEBLA)
2010 Personal interview conducted 1/7/2010 in Santa Ana, El Salvador.
Schiller, Nina Glick, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton

Vega, Mario

Zilberg, Elana
2004 *Fools Banished from the Kingdom: Remapping Geographies of Gang Violence between the Americas (Los Angeles and San Salvador).* *American Quarterly* 56(3):759-779.

Endnotes


2 The total number of Salvadorans living in the United States is estimated at 2.5 million more than one third of the number living in El Salvador itself. From Marketplace at http://marketplace.publicradio.org/features/onehome/chinameca_remittances.shtml.


5 The intentional homicide rate in El Salvador was 56.4-57.5 people per 100,000 in 2004, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime at http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/IHS-rates-05012009.pdf. Out of 198 countries, El Salvador ranked as one of the most dangerous countries in the world, at a slightly higher homicide rate than Columbia.

http://www.fuller.edu/prospective-students/areas-of-interest/spanish-programs.aspx.
MARLON D. DE BLASIO

"Conversion, Justification, and the Experience of Grace in the Post-Aldersgate Wesley: Towards an Understanding of who is "a child of God."

Abstract

Aldersgate is highlighted from the angle of its significance on Wesley’s theological thinking and subsequent ministry, rather than from an emphasis on his point of conversion. The Post-Aldersgate Wesley developed a soteriological understanding that identified a “child of God” with distinct qualifications, namely justification by faith, the experience of grace, and the indwelling Spirit. A theology of conversion also emerges with definitive markers that constitute a new standing from non-Christian to Christian. Shifts in Wesley’s theological understanding of Christian faith are evaluated. Justification by faith remained a strict soteriological principle in the mind of the mature Wesley. As well, the experience of grace continued to be upheld as producing distinguishing marks in a “child of God.” Accordingly a Christian’s new filial relationship with God provides a newly found self-understanding. Altogether, the Post-Aldersgate Wesley developed an understanding of Christian faith that portrays how he certified a “child of God.”

Key Words: Conversion, justification, grace, Aldersgate, salvation, Wesley, regeneration, soteriology

Marlon D. De Blasio earned a Ph.D. from St. Michael’s College at the University of Toronto. He is a theological researcher and speaker, and lives in Toronto with his family.
At a leading conference commemorating John Wesley’s 300th birthday Kenneth Collins said: “Indeed, in Wesley studies today, the truth be told, there are many John Wesley’s. Take your pick: There is the Cobb Wesley, the Maddox Wesley, the Runyon Wesley, the Wood Wesley, and yes, there is even the Collins Wesley.” The need to clarify the soteriological sense of Wesley’s meaning when calling someone “a child of God” remains an ongoing task. One area of study which has surprisingly received no depth of focus, and will surely contribute to the discussion, is Wesley’s own view of “conversion.” Is there a theology of conversion to be developed within the Wesleyan corpus that can reveal his understanding of who indeed is “a child of God”? Can we aspire to establish a common understanding on this important aspect of Wesley’s theological thinking? Hopefully, this essay will contribute towards a theological reflection on who did the real Wesley understand to be “a child of God.”

A common understanding of Christian faith was what Wesley himself desired. He drafted the Model Deed in 1763 as a guide for Methodist preachers to refer to doctrinal standards in the event of theological dispute. In 1988, Thomas Oden wrote Doctrinal Standards in the Wesleyan Tradition, and twenty years later he again wrote Doctrinal Standards in the Wesleyan Tradition and said:

Though the language of ecumenical discourse has shifted in twenty years, the outstanding questions remain the same. . . .

Despite the continuing discussions and debates about Wesleyan doctrinal standards, no comparable treatment of the history of doctrinal standards in Methodism has appeared in the intervening years.

The quest for a historiography of Wesley’s doctrinal standards and their theological implications continue to beckon our attention. Indeed there are doctrinal standards that Wesley would have us acknowledge as his teaching, particularly in the area of soteriology.

The following study will focus on the Post-Aldersgate Wesley, and his understanding of conversion, justification and the experience of grace. In so doing, a Wesleyan theology of conversion will emerge and provide an understanding of how Wesley understood a person’s transition from non-Christian to Christian. What will also emerge is his desire for a child of God to realize his or her self-understanding of Christian faith and of its personal significance. Hence, the format will be as follows: first, a revisit to Aldersgate is necessary in order to show that whether or not Wesley was converted on May 24, 1738 is besides the point of his theological understanding of the event and of the event’s impact on his subsequent ministry; second, it will be noted that ironically Wesley hardly ever used the term conversion and yet he developed a theology of conversion that
understood a transformation of life that begins with justifying faith and grace; third, there is abundant evidence that the mature Wesley held steadfastly that a child of God was characterized by an experience of grace with distinguishing marks. In conclusion, meaningful Christian faith in the Wesleyan sense of conversion, justification and the experience of grace will be shown to provide a distinguished self-understanding to “a child of God.”

Theological Significance of Aldersgate

The debate on Wesley’s Aldersgate experience has polarized many. Perhaps the angle on Aldersgate should be studied from what the event did to his ministry and theological thinking, rather than to develop a historiography from the corpus in order to determine whether or not he became a Christian in 1738. The event provided Wesley with a basis from which experience could confirm a doctrine that was based on scripture. As John B. Cobb analyzes:

... experience was consistently the ultimate test of scripture. Especially after his Aldersgate experience, he had great confidence that experience would always confirm scripture. ... Until such confirmation occurred, scriptural truth remained abstract and even hypothetical. The assurance that comes from experience is the most important role of experience for Wesley.  

Aldersgate also provided Wesley with a newly found theological understanding that an assurance of faith and of personal trust in Christ, based on scripture, was indeed the common privilege of believers. Likewise one of the greatest students of Wesley, Albert C. Outler, concluded that, “There is ample evidence that fixes the year 1738 as the decisive period in Wesley’s change from a faith in faith to faith itself, from aspiration to assurance.” Wesley confessed and understood something previously unfamiliar to him when on the evening of Aldersgate he said: “I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation: And an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

This seminal experience would influence Wesley’s post-Aldersgate teaching of a distinct and personal reconciliation to God. Even among those who disagree with the standard interpretation of Aldersgate as Wesley’s point of conversion there remains an acknowledgement that the event produced a new theological outlook. For example, Theodore H. Runyon remarks:

I share some of the misgivings about the standard interpretation of Aldersgate that these critics have raised. However, I am not entirely happy with their alternative. They seem all too ready to abandon Aldersgate, or the place of experience, in their reconception of Wesley’s spiritual
biography and his theology... The recognition of an objective
divine reconciliation which provided the foundation for a
continual relationship between the reconciled and God was
what the mature Wesley determined to be the valid content
of Aldersgate. Likewise, his chief motive and enterprise from
that day forward was to make this gift of grace available to all.6

Immediately after Aldersgate his sermons began to emphasize that a person
could experience a state of justification by faith as well as a personal trust
in Christ, and this view of Christian faith would mature well into the 1780s.7
In 1790, the senior Wesley affirmed in his sermon *On the Wedding Garment*
“One about fifty years ago I had a clearer view than before of justification
by faith: and in this from that very hour I never varied, no not a hair’s
breadth.”8

In 1736 at Georgia, Wesley had conversed with August Spangenberg on
the Moravian understanding of the faith of a child of God. No doubt that
the Moravian witness to Christian faith had intrigued Wesley immensely. So
with keen interest he dialogued with Spangenberg on the nature of being a
child of God. Wesley recorded the questions asked by Spangenberg:

“My brother, I must first ask you one or two questions. Have
you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear
witness with your spirit, that you are a child of God?” I was
surprised, and knew not what to answer. He observed it, and
asked, “Do you know Jesus Christ?” I paused, and said, “I know
he is the Saviour of the world. ‘True,’ replied he; ‘but do you
know he has saved you?’ I answered, ‘I hope he has died to
save me.’ He only added, ‘Do you know yourself?’ I said, ‘I
do.’ But I fear they were vain words.”9

The personal implication of this Moravian “language was new to him.”10
However, Henry D. Rack points out that Spangenberg’s “own record of
the conversation concludes on a very different note: ‘I observe that grace
really dwells and reigns in him.’”11 But when Wesley had replied, “I do,” to
Spangenberg’s question, “Do you know yourself?” Spangenberg could not
judge Wesley’s self-affirmation. Neither could the Moravian pastor ultimately
know whether or not grace actually dwelt in him, and so the merit of Wesley’s
own negation should be accepted. Only Wesley himself could have known
and so his own confession, “But I fear they were vain words” is what should
be taken into consideration. What baffled Wesley when conversing with
Spangenberg was the theological and experiential import of the Moravian
understanding of a personal relationship with Christ. Moreover, the dialogue
intensified Wesley’s interest in his own personal assurance of justifying faith.

So on his way home from Georgia in January of 1738 he exclaimed
thus: “I went to America to convert the Indians; but O! Who shall convert
me?" What did he mean here by "convert?" At this point, he was convinced that one could turn to Christ in a very personal way, with an inward assurance and an outward witness of that experience. Justifying faith was beginning to take on an understanding for Wesley that it surely implied a personal experience. John H. Tyson also observes that just prior to Aldersgate, "Wesley came to believe that this faith implies a sense of forgiveness that one can feel tangibly, and that this faith brings with it . . . the witness of the Holy Spirit that one is now accepted as a son or daughter of God. . . . Wesley wrestled with this new conception of justifying faith."13

His preoccupation with a personal assurance of justifying faith seemed to haunt him all the way back to England. At home, he continued to seek out this foreign understanding and experience as was evident by his meeting with Peter Böhler. In February of 1738, Wesley wrote: "I asked Böhler, . . . 'But what can I preach?' He said, 'Preach faith till you have it; and then, because you have it, you will preach faith.' Accordingly, . . . I began preaching this new doctrine. . . ." By now, Wesley had seriously shifted his understanding of justifying faith from an outward affirmation to an inward assurance. As he said, "I began preaching this new doctrine." This conversation with Böhler continued to stimulate Wesley's desire to identify personally with an inward experience of justifying faith.

On May 24, 1738, the Aldersgate experience provided him with a deeply personal revelation that justifying faith entails a special inward experience of saving grace for the believer. Once again his famous testimony: "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation: And an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."15 Henceforth, his preaching and theology took on the understanding that a believer can know deep within that justifying faith has provided a new relationship with God. The shift from the Holy Club days at Oxford where Christian faith was affirmed by outward acts of piety, and from his time at Georgia where his understanding of Christian faith appeared in crisis, to this newly experienced understanding of salvation at Aldersgate was sharply clear.

Now one should acknowledge Richard P. Heitzenrater's keen observations when alluding to Aldersgate:

We must assume that what he believed about himself at any given time is true for him at that time. Later reflections upon his earlier conditions must be accepted for what they are, an indication of his self-awareness at a later time. That is to say, neither one is 'right' or 'wrong' absolutely, but simply must be understood in the historical context of his own developing self-consciousness. Thus in 1725, he thought he was a Christian; for a while after 1738, he thought he had not truly
been a Christian in 1725; by the 1770's, he was willing to admit that perhaps his middle views were wrong, and that he could understand himself as having been in some real sense a Christian in 1725.16

Accordingly, the Aldersgate experience “must be understood in the historical context of his own developing self-consciousness.” Indeed Aldersgate emerged from Wesley’s sensitivity to the framework of a Moravian understanding of soteriology. Nevertheless he was quite “self-conscious” at Aldersgate of experiencing something new and this was profoundly special to him “at that time.” So it is fair to say that the event produced a new soteriological understanding for him “at that time” that would arguably mature and define his ongoing ministry.

Immediately in June of 1738, the theological impact of Aldersgate began to take shape in Wesley’s preaching on *Salvation by Faith*, employing the soteriological language of trusting in Christ for an assurance of reconciliation, of receiving the inner witness of being a child of God, and the all sufficiency of justifying faith to save from sin.17 So after 1738, as Heitzenrater also affirms, “two ideas . . . continued to find a central place in Wesley’s theology even though he modified their explanation: salvation by faith alone and the witness of the Spirit.”18 Part of the inquiry, then, is whether or not these subsequent modifications redefined his theological understanding of who qualified as a child of God. Thus it becomes helpful to note how the mature Wesley viewed conversion to Christian faith and its consequential implication for a believer’s self-understanding.

**Wesley’s View of Conversion and Justifying Faith**

There is, however, a well founded acknowledgement that, “Wesley himself did not use the word ‘conversion’ that often.”19 In his theology, the word portrays “more connotations of conscious change than the synonym of ‘new birth,’ and this emphasis on conscious change had great importance in Wesley’s thought.”20 Conversion was not used by Wesley as an interchangeable term with justification, regeneration, or even the “new birth.” In fact, the term conversion was rarely used at all. As Wesley referred to the term conversion in a letter of 1750, “A term, indeed, which I very rarely use, because it rarely occurs in the New Testament.” 21 Yet he developed a theology of conversion that began with an initial repentance and an inward experience of grace, and then onward with a gradual transformation of life in Christ. A convert is one who therefore experiences justification by faith and is conscious of a change, and of progressing towards complete holiness. Further, it is “an encounter with God’s love that lays a new foundation relationally and dispositionally, enabling subsequent growth in the Christian life.”22
For Wesley, the occurrence of justifying faith was the definitive marker in the conversion from a “child of the world” to a “child of God.” Note what Wesley said in 1767 in *The Witness of the Spirit*:

Everyone therefore who denies the existence of such a testimony does, in effect, deny justification by faith. It follows that either he never experienced this, either he never was justified, or that he has forgotten. . . the experience he then had himself, the manner wherein God wrought in his own soul, when his former sins were blotted out. And the experience even of the children of the world here confirms that of the children of God. Many of them undoubtedly have, in a degree, the testimony of their own spirit, a consciousness of their own uprightness. But this brings them no consciousness that they are forgiven, no knowledge that they are the children of God.23

Evidently, the self-witness of one’s own morality outside justifying faith carries no assurance or knowledge of being a child of God. Even so, conversion is not based on an act of identifying with a particular creed, or on a decision to believe certain doctrines. Rather, it results from what God does for and in the believer. All works prior to justifying faith have no merit in Wesley’s theology of conversion. In a 1739 journal entry, Wesley described a moral person outside of justifying faith and grace:

He is not to think well of his own state till he experiences something within himself which he had not yet experienced, but ‘which he may beforehand assured he shall,’ if the promises of God are. That ‘something’ is a living faith: ‘a sure trust and confidence in God, that by the merits of Christ his sins are forgiven . . .’ And from this will spring many other things, which till then he experienced not; as, the love of God . . ., that peace of God . . ., and joy in the Holy Ghost. . . These are some of those inward ‘fruits of the Spirit,’ which must be felt wheresoever they are.”24

Sixty years later Wesley continued to call into account several people groups whose identification with various denominations came short of conversion:

Having had frequent opportunity of conversing with many of these . . . I am bold to affirm that they are in general totally ignorant both as to the theory and practice of Christianity; so that they are perishing by thousands ‘for lack of knowledge,’ for want of knowing the very first principles of Christianity. . . . Namely, the natural corruption of man, justification by faith, the new birth, inward and outward holiness.”25
A personal conversion beginning with justifying faith and an inward experience of grace is a theological principle that Wesley always maintained.

By this principle, then, a person becomes a child of God through a distinct point of conversion; that is, a distinct spiritual transition from being outside of a justified relationship with God to being in an actual position of justification that is characterized by a lively faith in Christ. Even in 1788 the mature Wesley explained:

Exhort him to press on, by all possible means, till he passes ‘from faith to faith,’ from the faith of a servant to the faith of a son. . . . He will then have ‘Christ revealed in his heart,’ enabling him to testify, ‘The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me;’ the proper voice of a child of God. He will then be . . . inwardly changed by the mighty power of God, from ‘an earthly, sensual, devilish mind,’ to the ‘mind which was in Christ Jesus.’

Nevertheless some understand that his descriptive phrase, “the faith of a servant,” had matured with Wesley and took on the understanding that it also described one converted by justifying faith. Randy L. Maddox understands Wesley as “finally coming to value the nascent faith of the ‘servant of God’ as justifying faith.” Maddox interprets the mature Wesley as ascribing a state of justification to a person’s penitent responses during God’s promptings of preventive grace. Accordingly justification by faith is marked by the “initial penitent responses to God’s awakening work in their lives.”

This interpretation is based on a person’s reaction to preventive grace whereby a “rudimentary” form of regeneration occurs; accordingly, such a person now has a degree of faith that essentially constitutes a regenerated status and is thereby “a servant of God.” “As such,” continues Maddox, “even the faith of a servant of God is possible only because of the presence of a degree of regenerating power of God’s grace. . . . In this very idea of ‘degrees’ of regenerating grace, of course, the mature Wesley was denying that regeneration per se occurs instantaneously.” The implications seem to suggest that the mature Wesley became inclusive as he valued the “faith of a servant of God” with the equivalent salvific status as that of “a child of God,” and accordingly a distinct point of instantaneous regeneration became a secondary matter. Heitzenrater also thinks that Wesley came to understand that both “a servant of God” and “a child of God” were converted, albeit the terms distinguish degrees of faith. He says of Wesley, “His later distinctions between two orders of Christians, between the faith of a servant and of a child of God, between the young convert and the mature Christian, between faith and assurance (and allowing for various degrees of both), are all the result of his finally differentiating between
justification and sanctification as theoretically and experientially
distinguishable steps on the spiritual pilgrimage." According to Heitzenrat, in 1788
Wesley did say in a sermon On Faith:

Indeed nearly fifty years ago, when the preachers commonly
called Methodists began to preach that grand scriptural
doctrine, salvation by faith, they were not sufficiently apprised
of the difference between a servant and a child of God. They
did not clearly understand that even one 'who feared God,
and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him.' In
consequence of this they were apt to make sad the hearts of
those whom God had not made sad. For they frequently asked
those who feared God, 'Do you know that your sins are
forgiven?' And upon their answering, 'No,' immediately
replied, 'Then you are a child of the devil.' No; that does not
follow. It might have been said (and it is all that can be said
with propriety) 'Hitherto you are only a servant; you are not a
child of God. You have already great reason to praise God
that he has called you to his honourable service. Fear not.
Continue crying unto him: 'and you shall see greater things
than these.'

The mature Wesley certainly came to appreciate the sincerity of those
earnestly seeking God, and he acknowledged their genuine belief in Christ
as Saviour; yet he qualified this mature perception by stating that, "Hitherto
you are only a servant; you are not a child of God." Nevertheless this could
still be interpreted to support Heitzenrat's interpretation that a servant
of God was justified though not sanctified as a child of God. The point,
however, was that a servant of God did not have "the Spirit of Adoption"
and so was not justified and not qualified to be a child of God. In a letter
of 1777 Wesley wrote: "You are not yet a son, . . . but you are a servant;
and you are waiting for the Spirit of Adoption." Again, in 1788 On Faith
Wesley continued:

And, indeed, unless the servants of God halt by the way, they
will receive the adoption of sons. They will receive the faith
of the children of God by his revealing his only-begotten Son
in their hearts. This then is . . . the difference between a
servant of God and a child of God. 'He that believeth,' as a
child of God, 'hath the witness himself.' This the servant
hath not. Yet let no man discourage him; rather, lovingly exhort
him to expect it every moment! . . . There is no reason why
you should be satisfied with the faith . . . of a servant: . . . Yet,
in the meantime, beware how you rest here: press on till you
receive the Spirit of adoption. Rest not till that Spirit clearly
witnesses with your spirit that you are a child of God."
Here Collins also contributes to this discussion by emphasizing, “That Wesley during the decade of the 1780’s (and much earlier) had a greater appreciation of the faith of those ‘who feared God and worked righteousness’ is clear, but, once again, this last point of acceptance must not be mistaken for justification or with being a real Christian.”

Justifying faith is the event where regeneration also occurs. The former was referred to by Wesley as a “relative” change and the latter as a “real” change. In Wesley’s *via salutis* what distinguishes a child of God is the inward “spirit of adoption” that is imparted at the point of justification and regeneration. Apart from this inward “spirit of adoption” no conversion has taken place, that is, no state of justification and no transition from a servant of God to a child of God. As Wesley elaborated further in 1788 in *Walking by Sight and Walking by Faith*:

> All that are true Christian believers. All that are not only servants but children of God. All that have ‘the Spirit of adoption, crying in their hearts, Abba, Father.’ All that have ‘the Spirit’ of God ‘witnessing with their spirits, that they are the sons of God.’ All these, and these alone, can say, ‘We walk by faith, and not by sight.’ And to all real Christians our Lord saith, ‘Because I live, ye live also:’ ‘ye live a life’ which the world, whether learned or unlearned, ‘know not of.’

**A Distinguishing Experience of Grace**

Nevertheless Wesley’s letter in 1747 to his brother Charles seemed to suggest that a shift had occurred in how he related one’s experience of assurance with one’s experience of justifying faith. He wrote, “I allow (1) that there is such an explicit assurance; (2) that it is the common privilege of real Christians; (3) that it is the proper Christian faith which purifieth the heart and overcometh the world. But I cannot allow that justifying faith is such an occurrence or necessarily connected therewith.” The interpretation here could be that Wesley’s thinking was shifting and beginning to allow a state of justification regardless of whether one had an experience of assurance. In one sense this is correct, but in another it is not. It is correct because for Wesley justifying faith was not conditioned upon one’s experience. Some were indeed justified by their faith but the experience of grace was not always immediate. Wesley was realizing that to “connect therewith” experience with justifying faith was to allow a condition for it, or worse, a different ground outside of *sola gratia* on which one is justified. In this sense, Wesley precluded “assurance” as necessarily connected with being in a state of saving grace. Justifying faith remained rooted solely in the unmerited grace of God. Furthermore, in his Post-Aldersgate ministry he continued to maintain that the experience of grace produced distinguishing marks in “a child of God.”
As well, the mature Wesley continued to affirm some sort of consciousness as a distinguishing mark of having been converted by the grace of God; but again, it is not a necessary condition of “being in the favour of God.” When it was insinuated that he required a consciousness of justifying faith as a condition to being pardoned by God he replied in a letter of 1781:

If you remember, I do not insist on the term ‘impression.’ I say again, I will thank any one that will find a better; be it ‘discovery,’ ‘manifestation,’ ‘deep sense,’ or whatever it may. That some consciousness of our being in favour with God, is joined with Christian faith, I cannot doubt; but it is not the essence of it. A consciousness of pardon cannot be the condition of it.37

Thus an experience of grace is characterized by an “impression” of the Spirit, or by a “discovery,” a “manifestation,” a “deep sense,” or whatever term portrays such an effect of a newly found awareness upon a believer. It is not the semantic analysis, however, that provides a foundation or a condition, but the actual foundation and condition of conversion is sola gratia, and the convert’s consequential consciousness of it. A child of God is aware that grace has provided an adoption from a non-member to a member of God’s family. Without the inward “spirit of adoption” justifying faith remains absent, and to be called a child of God would be an incomplete appellation. So then, a child of God is distinguished by the inward “spirit of adoption” and thereby the consequential privileges and fruits of such a spiritual relationship with God. The necessary and present work of God’s grace that is sealed by “receiving the Spirit of adoption” is what distinguished a child of God. In fact, without a “gracious stroke” from God no one could claim to be a convert to Christian faith, and no one could understand and serve Him without the “spiritual senses” that characterize an experience of saving grace. The senior Wesley elaborated on this “gracious stroke” in his sermon On Living Without God (1790) wherein he contrasts two possible spiritual existences, that of a convert with a non-convert:

But the moment the Spirit of the Almighty strikes the heart of him that was till then without God in the world, it breaks the hardness of his heart, and creates all things new. The Sun of righteousness appears, and shines upon his soul, showing him the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. He is in a new world. All things round him are become new. Such as it never before entered into his heart to conceive. . . . By the same gracious stroke, he that before had ears but heard not is now made capable of hearing. . . . He is no longer deaf to his invitations or commands, to his promises or threatening,
but gladly hears every word that proceeds out of his mouth; and governs thereby all his thoughts, words, and actions. At the same time he receives other spiritual senses, capable of discerning spiritual good and evil. He is enabled to taste, as well as to see, how gracious the Lord is. And of consequence..., unless they have new senses, ideas, passions, tempers, they are no Christians!38

God’s grace imparts new life in his adopted children, and within this new relationship a child of God becomes aware that his or her thinking about God, about one’s neighbour, morality, and social justice, have been radically changed. The transforming power of grace thus becomes a conscious reality for a child of God. There is an inward assurance that grace has accomplished the adoption, and that what has become a new outlook as a member of God’s family is imparted by the Spirit’s revelation. This indwelling of the Spirit of adoption is therefore antecedent to any significant understanding of the things of God. In Wesley’s theology only an encounter with the grace of God by faith can convert human nature and reveal an illumined understanding that was previously unknown. In a natural state, prior to grace, a person cannot understand the ways of God. “Such is the constitution of our nature,” wrote Wesley in 1786, “till nature is changed by almighty grace. . . Yea, it is freely given to all that sincerely ask it. This remedy is faith. . . This alone opens the eyes of the understanding to see God and the things of God.”39 One outside of this grace cannot taste, see or comprehend the beauties of the Kingdom, the power of the Atonement, and the reality of Eternity, which are reserved for the adopted children of God.

The Self-Understanding of a Child of God

Of necessity, then, a child of God will possess an intra-mental understanding of actual knowledge of God as “the eyes of the understanding” are opened to comprehend the things of God. Justifying faith and grace provide a child of God with an intra-personal realization that ideas and attitudes towards oneself, God, and others are no longer as they were on account of the newly revealed standing before God. Particularly, a child of God knows intellectually and spiritually that Jesus died for me, for my sins, and the consequential requirements of a holy life are revealed from the new filial relationship with God and the indwelling Spirit. Furthermore, an adopted child of God receives a newly revealed self-understanding of how to mature in the new life and how to be transformed to reflect “the whole image of God.” In 1789, Wesley continued to stress the importance of how the Spirit imparts valuable knowledge that is necessary for growth in Christ, as a Christian’s “whole body be full of light.”
The light of knowledge is doubtless one thing here intended, arising from ‘the union of the Holy One,’ which ‘abideth with him,’ and ‘teacheth him of all things,’ all the things which it is now necessary to know in order to please God. Hereby he will have a clear knowledge of the divine will in every circumstance of life. . . . And walking in this light he cannot but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will continually advance in all holiness, and in the whole image of God.40

The revealed information will affect the attitude and behaviour of those who have genuinely converted. In The New Creation, Theodore Runyon notes that in Wesley’s teaching anyone who truly possesses this revealed knowledge will be transformed by it: “Where there is no transformation of the knower, Wesley questions the authenticity of the religious knowledge. Thus he is suspicious of ‘orthodox belief’ if it knows information but is not affected by it.”41 The Post-Aldersgate Wesley continued to emphasize that a believer can know inwardly that justifying faith and grace are present, and this work of the Spirit will affect one’s relationships in the quest for complete holiness. Conversion in the Post-Aldersgate Wesley is thus a self-understanding that a transformation is occurring by grace, affecting both the inner person and outward actions. This conversion is certified in those who have been justified by faith and have thereby received “the spirit of adoption.” Such are the children of God.

Bibliography


______. “Real Christianity as Integrating Theme in Wesley’s Soteriology: The Critique of a Modern Myth.” Wesleyan Theological Journal 40/2 (Fall 2005).


_____. Responsible Grace: John Wesley’s Practical Theology (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994).


Endnotes


2 It is also noteworthy that, “Wesley abhorred theological novelty, insisting that anything novel had to be heretical.” Victor A. Shepherd, Mercy Immense and Free: Essays on Wesley and Wesleyan Theology (Toronto: Clements Academic, 2010), 235.


Note that the Post-Aldersgate message of Wesley should not be ascribed to an emotional appeal or to his newly found zeal to save souls, or to “anything in his talent or technique of preaching, but must refer to something objective, to a change of religious principles.” George Croft Cell, *The Rediscovery of John Wesley*, reprint, (New York: University Press of America, 1983), 170.

Albert C. Outler, ed. *The Bicentennial Works of John Wesley, Sermons*, Vols. 1-4, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), S127, 147. The citation here is to show how Wesley did allude to the early Post-Aldersgate period as a pivotal point in theological outlook. Sermonic citations to this edition will be referenced by WJWB and (Sermon number).


Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiasm: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (London: Epworth Press, 1989), 115. Other interpretations of Spangenberg’s observation believe that he “saw the sovereign power of God already at work in Wesley’s heart. He was assured that what had been thus begun, would not fail of its completion.” A. Skevington Wood, *The Burning Heart* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1978), 55. This interpretation, however, is not conclusive and so is based on conjecture. By Spangenberg’s statement, “grace really dwells and reigns in him,” one cannot derive Wood’s interpretation because Wesley’s confession, “But I fear they were vain words,” afterwards revealed a confused inquirer and to interpret Spangenberg as assuming that Wesley would come to saving faith was highly speculative.

WJWB, V18, “Jan. 24, 1738,” 211.


WJWB, V18, “Feb. 4-6, 1738,” 228.


Richard P. Heitzenrater, *The Elusive Mr. Wesley*, Vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984), 32. Some of the 1770s comments by Wesley are interpreted by those who disagree with an Aldersgate conversion as reflecting his own acknowledgement of having been a Christian in 1725: “Let me be again an Oxford Minister! I am often in doubt whether it would be best for me to resume all my Oxford rules, great and small. I did then walk closely with God, and redeem the time. But what have I been doing these thirty years? “WJWJ, V12, “December 15, 1772.” In the 1770s, however, Wesley was emphasizing ministerial zeal. Thus the allusion here to Oxford is to remind his brother of the indefatigable ministry they had while at Oxford. There is no real implication that Aldersgate did not change him. That same year he wrote to his brother: “Your business, as well as mine, is to save souls. When we took Priests’ orders, we undertook to make it our one business. I think every day lost, which is not (mainly at least) employed in this thing,” WJWJ, V12, “April 26, 1772.” Thus in the 1770s Wesley began to call for renewed ministerial zeal “to save souls,” with no real implication to his Aldersgate experience. Note as well that in 1775 he preached on Matthew 16:26 (“What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul”), S84.

WJWJ, S1.

Richard P. Heitzenrater, “Great Expectations: Aldersgate and the Evidences...


20 Ibid.


23 WJWB, S11, 292.


25 WJWB, S122, 89.

26 WJWB, S117, 35.


29 Ibid., 238.


31 WJWB, S106, 497.


33 WJWB, S106, 497-98.

34 Kenneth J. Collins, “Real Christianity as Integrating Theme in Wesley’s Soteriology: The Critique of a Modern Myth,” Wesleyan Theological Journal 40/2 (Fall 2005): 81. Cf. Laura Bartels Fellemen, “John Wesley and the ‘Servant of God,’” Wesleyan Theological Journal 41/2 (Fall 2006): 72-86. Fellemen understands that, “The Servant of God has experienced justification, but this degree of faith does not include the full promise of sanctification,” 79. Wesley’s sermon On Faith is key to her argument, but she does not deal with Wesley’s challenge to “press on till you receive the Spirit of Adoption.” In the sermon, Wesley makes a distinction “between a servant of God and a child of God” by reference to the latter as having received the “Spirit of Adoption,” and this is not taken into account by Fellemen.

35 WJWB, S119, 49.


37 Telford, V7, May 21, 1781.

38 WJWB, S130, 172-75. In his introductory comments to this sermon Outler understood Wesley as presenting “conversion” as a necessary prerequisite to an authentic relationship with God: “What is distinctive here is the heightened emphasis upon intuition as a radical shift from spiritual darkness to spiritual ‘sight’ and,
consequently, upon the importance of ‘conversion’ as a prerequisite to an authentic visio Dei.”

30 Ibid., S54, 368.
31 Ibid., S125, 123.
New and Noteworthy

As Christ Submits to the Church
A Biblical Understanding of Leadership and Mutual Submission

Alan G. Padgett
978-0-8010-2700-0 • 176 pp. • $19.99p

“This is an insightful, compelling, and much-needed work, not only on the specific issue of women in leadership but also on the distinctive nature of Christian leadership in general. Combining theological and exegetical skills, Padgett has given us a scholarly yet broadly accessible book that moves us beyond some of the impasses the discussion on this hot topic has been bogged down in. Regardless of one’s stance on the women-and-leadership issue, As Christ Submits to the Church is a must-read for all who care about Christlike leadership.” —Greg Boyd, coauthor, Across the Spectrum

We Were the Least of These
Reading the Bible with Survivors of Sexual Abuse

Elaine A. Heath
978-1-58743-271-2 • 208 pp. • $19.99p

“The journey toward healing can be a lonely one for survivors of sexual abuse who feel—and often are treated—like ‘the least of these’ children of God. Imagine the surprise ending: Jesus himself was the least of these! For Heath, this ending is just the beginning. This book fills a gap in the literature and I affirm its value as a professor, pastoral counselor, and minister.”

—Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner, Perkins School of Theology

Available at local bookstores or by calling 1-800-877-2665. Subscribe to Baker Academic’s electronic newsletter (E-Notes) at www.bakeracademic.com.
Subscribe to Border Crossings, the Brazos electronic newsletter, at www.brazospress.com.
Abstract

The history of Christianity long has recognized the transatlantic revival connections in both the First and Second Awakenings, with preaching being noted as the primary means of communicating the revival message. During the past century, transpacific revivalism has become a significant part of the world history of Christianity. In Korean Protestantism, revivalism has been rooted within the majority religious experience, with hymns and gospel songs as an important medium. While North American denominations have used separate hymnals and have tended to exclude revival hymns from their selections, Korean Protestants have used the same hymnal from the beginning and have retained those hymns that are more expressive of revivalism, especially those from the Holiness movement. Martial hymns that convey the spiritual warfare of Christians in Korea were criticized by Yun Chiho as being meaningless to Korean culture, which he portrayed as connected to the “pen” and not the “sword.” However, the martial hymns, such as “Up, and fight against the devil,” have been included in all subsequent editions of the Union Hymnal, and they remain an important source of revival piety. From the earliest efforts to select and translate hymns, through music education for Korean congregations, and on to the final process of editing and publishing a Union Hymnal, the Korea missionaries have placed a premium on congregational singing. In conclusion, although much of holiness hymnody in Korea was taken from the “margins” of the Salvation Army and the Oriental Missionary Society, a closer look at transpacific revivalism will reveal that it was led by missionaries from “mainline” denominations in North America, was enhanced further by visiting evangelists such as H. C. Morrison, G. W. Ridout, and R. A. Torrey, and was contextualized finally by Korean Protestants in the recent publication of the New Hymnal in 2007.

Key words: Korea, Union Hymnal, Revivalism, Holiness Hymnody, Evangelical, Oriental Missionary Society

William T. Purinton is assistant professor of the Humanities at Seoul Theological University (Bucheon, South Korea) and special assignment missionary with One Mission Society (OMS).
Introduction
With 5,000 years of history, Korea is an avid keeper of the calendar. That means national events are remembered and celebrations reach the heights, especially when it comes around the hundredth year. The year 2007 marked the centennial of the Great Revival in Pyongyang. Because the Pyongyang Revival was not merely a historical event to be remembered, but an expectation of a further outpouring of the Holy Spirit, a fifteen-song tape/CD titled “Again 1907” was released in October 2004, as a perpetual reminder that revival came in 1907 and that it can return in 2007. After the tape had been played by Christians for almost three years, the big event was celebrated on July 8, 2007. The site was the Sangham World Cup Stadium in Seoul. The day and evening were replete with preaching, prayers, and singing. In attendance were members of the Korea National Council of Churches and all major denominations in Korea, including Presbyterian, Methodist, Holiness, Baptist, Salvation Army, Anglican; a total of twenty-five Protestant denominations were represented.

With the large numbers and the persistent theme of revivalism in Korean Christianity, it becomes apparent that the Pyongyang revival carried and continues to convey a strong sense of national religious identity among Korean Protestants, which we will mark as revivalism. In fact, revivalism continues as the life-blood of Korean Protestantism. Revivalism pulses through the Protestant churches in Korea, reaching across denominational and confessional lines, to impact all traditions.

In Korea, the North American missionaries generally identified revivalism with prayer and preaching. But one can mention a third factor involved in the enduring interest in and occupation with revival: the singing of hymns and gospel songs. Sermons and hymns/gospel songs are part of the warp and woof of the North American Evangelical landscape, but both have been overlooked in surveys of religious history. Mark Noll and Ethan Sanders emphasize the need for further study of sermons and singing, as components of worship that change over time and are themselves change agents. The rich texture of evangelical hymnody is represented by “[l]ayers of Watts, Wesley, Sankey, and the Salvation Army mingled in different proportions throughout North America.” It was this newly-formed tradition of Evangelical hymnody that was transported in toto from North America to Korea in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In its translation from English to Korean, Evangelical hymnody became an active force in promoting revivalism and further was preserved through the Korea Union Hymnal to become the mainline hymnody in Korea to this day. Revival hymns that were birthed by the British and North American Holiness movements of the late-nineteenth century found a new home in the mainstream of Korean hymnody by 1949: the year that many of them
finally were included in the Union Hymnal. In the twentieth century, both Evangelical and Holiness hymnody have moved from the margins of North American revivalism and fundamentalism into the mainstream of South Korean Protestantism, resulting in a unique mixture of both evangelical and ecumenical movements in the twenty-first century.

The period of this study is from 1905 until 2007. The beginning year 1905 was when a union hymnal was discussed as part of the cooperation and proposed merger between the Presbyterian and Methodist missions in Korea. The ending date 2007 is when the most recent revision of the Union Hymnal was published.

For the purpose of this study, only the lyrics of hymns will be studied. Although music was always an issue that confronted the hymn writers and composers, especially whether or not to use the western tune in Korea, this study will treat exclusively the lyrics of the hymns, rather than try to study the affective use of certain tunes to bring about a heightened revival expectation. In 1915, William C. Kerr, a North American missionary in Korea, explained the importance of understanding the lyrics for “real worship.”

It takes only a glimpse of the swaying of the bodies and the intent expression of the faces, not only of the children but of the adults as well, to show that the music, however foreign it may have been at the beginning, is one of the powerful inspirational features in a large gathering. How much of this is psychological and how much spiritual may be a question; but a brief explanation of the meaning of the words before the hymn is sung helps to elevate the singing to the level of real worship.

Finally, as only the lyrics are being studied in this paper, it might help to review the precedent for studying the lyrics only and the rational for such a study as they were offered by Sandra Sizer in her landmark study, Gospel Hymns and Social Religion: The Rhetoric of Nineteenth-Century Revivalism.

**Singing in Our Own Language: Early Hymn Translations and the First Hymnals**

The last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth were times of immense change in Korea. When the first full-time resident missionaries arrived in 1885, the “hermit” nation had only recently opened up to diplomatic relations with the West. Also, the Korean peninsula was divided in its opinion over the intrusion of western learning. Even before the Boxer Rebellion in China (1900-1901), Korea experienced a movement calling for an exclusive reliance on eastern thought and a rejection of all things western that spread throughout Korea: the Donghak Rebellion.
When Horace G. Underwood (1859-1916) and Henry G. Appenzeller (1858-1902) set foot on Korean soil in April 1885 they were the first ministerial missionaries to become permanent residents in Korea. Underwood was sent by the Northern Presbyterians and Appenzeller was sent by the Northern Methodists. Along with the so-called “baggage” that all people carry of nationality, culture, and ideology, these two missionaries also carried church hymnody.

Underwood and Appenzeller arrived with a desire to communicate their message and to convey it in language that fit within the Korean context, to use language that reflected more the common people's tongue and exclusively print in the vernacular script.

These were both revolutionary moves that staged the position of the newly-planted Presbyterian and Methodist churches as being “of the people.” This decision to print the first hymnals and Bibles in the Korean script hangul, rather than the mixed script of hangul and Chinese characters, as was most common for literature of the period (late Joseon dynasty), meant that from the beginning Christian literature would belong to the common people and would never again remain the exclusive property of the literati.

Nine years after his arrival in Korea (1894), Horace G. Underwood published Ch'angyangga, [Hymns of Praise]. His hymnal was an independent venture that tested the patience of the Presbyterian missions in Korea. Originally, the plan was that Methodists and Presbyterians were to join together in preparing a union hymnal, with G. H. Jones representing the Methodists and Horace G. Underwood the Presbyterians. Because of Jones's absence from Korea, having traveled to the United States, Underwood began the work alone and it was funded by his brother John T. Underwood, the owner of the Underwood typewriter company. Many of the hymns were the work of other translators, but due to the difficulty of communication in Korea at the time, Underwood went ahead without consulting the translators, believing that the faulty translations were in dire need of editing and that the translators would not mind his pen. When he presented the completed work, ready for press, to the Presbyterian Mission, he was stunned to find that it was not received as a gift but was rather rejected. Part of the reason, of course, was his independent spirit and maverick methods, having failed to receive the approval of the mission. But there was also a majority opinion opposed to Underwood’s refusal to use the Korean word for God: Hananim. For the most part, Underwood had translated all the hymns by using either “Father” or “Jehovah” to express God, rather than the indigenous term for deity, which he considered to smack of syncretism. Meanwhile, while Underwood acted alone in producing a Presbyterian hymnal, the Methodists had compiled a hymnal for use in their churches by the year 1896. An official Presbyterian hymnal,
Changsongshi, was finally published in 1897. The first Union Hymnal, however, would have to wait until 1908.

The task of translating hymns involved three kinds of challenges. First, the contextualization of theology meant that some ideas “foreign” to Korean religious traditions would have to be communicated and understood by the Christians in Korea. Second, after translations were made literally from English to Korean, the more cumbersome task remained of making the new Korean lyrics fit within the meter. Third, there was an ongoing struggle over whether or not to use western tunes among the Korean congregations, since traditional Korean music was so much different from the newly-introduced western expressions of music.

One illustration of the challenge over contextualization is found in the ministry of Malcolm C. Fenwick (1863-1935), an independent missionary from Canada who is viewed popularly in Korea as the founder of Baptist churches. When Fenwick began to organize his ministry in a village, he came to the realization that after education came the task of translating hymns. Fenwick explained, “I wanted to sing in Corean and get the people singing. This could not be done until the hymns were translated. I somewhat dreaded this task, as my vocabulary was so limited.” He began with the easier hymns to translate, such as “Jesus Loves Me” and “I Am So Glad.”

Fenwick described a Korean Christian’s response to his translation of “Look and Live” by William A. Ogden (1840-1897). The trouble spot was with the words “life is offered unto you” in verse three. In Korean culture, only a servant would offer something to another person, thus the hymn lyrics conveyed the idea that God Almighty would be reduced to the status of our house servant.

Fenwick recorded the conversation in The Church of Christ in Korea:

I asked his opinion of it. He read it through verse by verse, saying, “Choso” (good), until, like the men of Sorai, he came to the word “offer.” Then he, as they, stopped short and said that would never do—it was awful, it was putting God in the humiliating position of a servant. There followed practically the same prolonged discussion as had taken place in Sorai, when, reminding this beloved Corean brother that he had forgotten Philippians 2:6-11, I asked him to look it up and read it. He did so, and after pondering for a while the wonderful truth of this passage, he said quietly, “Thank you, shepherd.” Then followed a few moments of delightful communion, as the yellow man and the white man met together in Christ and talked of the amazing grace and condescension of our God. While conversing thus, a young man, the teacher of my host, who was a missionary, came in, and as all writings not hidden away are common property in
Corea, he immediately began reading the hymn. Not a word of comment followed until he too reached the word “offer.” Then, just as the others had done, he became greatly excited and indignant. I sat still and let the Corean brother answer him. The Testament still being open at Philippians ii, the older brother held it out to him and said, “Have you seen this?” In silence the young man read and as silently walked away. As he opened the door, he turned, and two big tears rolled down his cheeks as he said, “Choom poasso” (“I have seen it for the first time”). This emphasized experience with the hymn caused me to realize fully that I had already started over the hill of “custom” which was long and steep and difficult to climb.15

Fenwick’s concern over the translation and use of hymns in the Korean church was extended beyond his initial efforts to the publication of his Bogeum Channii [Gospel Songs] in 1904, which contained 20 hymns, words only. His sixth edition of Bogeum Channii (1925) was expanded to contain a total of 243 hymns, again words only. Indeed, Malcolm Fenwick’s ministry had expanded beyond the village where he lived to a rising national movement called the Church of Christ in Korea.

The challenge of making the Korean translations fit with the western tunes usually was handled by excluding the Korean honorifics and by employing the shorter (banmal), more informal language. To many Korean ears this was unforgivable, but for the translators with a meter to match with twice as many syllables, it became the only possible option. The shortened lyrics meant that “it was impossible to use the proper honorifics to and of the Deity, and often the low or half-talk of the drinking song was addressed to Him.”16

In order to become more adept in their Korean literary skills “some of the hymn writers took up the study of Korean poetry as a help, making note of figures of speech, and the parallelisms, alliterations and refrains that take the place of rhymes in Korean poetry, rhymes being impossible in this language.”17

Using a western-composed hymn tune in Korea was not always the only option. There were times when original hymn tunes were composed and they worked well with the new Korean translations, some were written by missionaries and others by Korean Christians. Certain technicalities stretched the creative talents of the North American missionaries in Korea, for example:

In the second edition of the “Chan song si” (1898), the eight-foot hymns were all rewritten in iambic or, where that seemed impossible, were marked “to Korean music” or “Chant.” The chief trouble was that the Korean language is not adapted to iambic meter, few words having the accent on the second syllable, so that the writer had to place a one syllabled word
at the beginning of nearly every line and this became monotonous. It might have been better to have omitted all iambic hymns. 18

Music was viewed as a means of both moving the heart with spiritual fervor as well as appealing to the higher tastes. But with such a disparity between traditional Korean music and the newer western forms that were introduced by the North American missionaries, it become necessary to spend lots of time in music education. Indeed, music education became an important part of religious education, to help tune Korean ears to western sounds. In all the Bible classes, “an hour is set aside after the afternoon study for the teaching of music.” Kerr would also report that “with all the mistakes that are made, [occidental music] is one of the ties which bind together the Christian brotherhood in all the different parts of the world.”19 The same edition of The Korea Mission Field has these words in its editorial, indicating the high esteem, nearly prejudicial view, that North American missionaries had toward western music and its being taught and sung in Korea.

Even some missionaries may never have realized that our main business in this country is to teach Koreans to sing, for the true Christian is distinctively a singer. He first of all “makes melody in his heart to the Lord” and because “out of the heart are the issues of life,” in body, mind and spirit he steadily become reattuned to God in even as the members of our body are in accord, so that right here we have, or ought to have, a segment of the hallelujah chorus of creation. 20

Obviously the time invested had paid off; what seemed tedious at first and time consuming had become by 1938 a beautiful rendition in Korea of Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart’s “Gloria” from his Twelfth Mass. 21

The product at the end of the long translation process was a book full of hymns that would comfort “tens of thousands of souls.” From an early stage in Christian publication that continues to this day, the New Testament (and later Bible) and hymnal were bound together as one volume. The first hymnbooks were published before even the New Testament was first published in 1904, and the first Union Hymnal (1908) was published before the Old Testament had been completely translated in 1910 and published in 1911.22 In a sense the Korean hymnal was the Korean church’s first “Bible,” as it spoke powerfully of God’s redemption and expressed so powerfully the language of human emotions. Also, the Korean hymnal was a reading primer for many Korean women; they learned how to read by singing the hymns.

In summary, F. S. Miller provides an eloquent testimony of the importance of hymns in the early Korean church.

When one stands looking at a house he cannot possibly appreciate the amount of thought, labor and attention to detail
that have gone into the structure. So no one can estimate the hours of labor that went into the weighing and measuring of every syllable and note of the hymn that for many years have sustained the Korean Christians in their trials and eased their deathbeds.23

Singing with One Voice: Evangelical Cooperation and the Union Hymnal

The diverse and unique religious backgrounds of the first two full-time missionaries from the United States (Horace Underwood and Henry Appenzeller) acted as a seed for further and continual cooperation and later evangelical union between Methodists and Presbyterians.

Horace G. Underwood was born in England and migrated with his family to the United States in 1872. After their arrival in the US, the family joined the Dutch Reformed Church. Horace would later begin his undergraduate studies at New York University and continue in divinity studies at the New Brunswick Theological Seminary (Dutch Reformed). While he was a seminary student, his family was concerned over Horace’s involvement with the Salvation Army, for it appeared he was ready to transfer to their work.24 After he arrived in Korea in 1885, he was frequently called “the Methodist preacher of the Presbyterian mission.”25

Henry Appenzeller, the pioneer Methodist missionary, was raised in the Reformed Church, being of Swiss-German ethnic heritage, and only later became a Methodist while pursuing undergraduate studies at Franklin and Marshall College. Later he completed his seminary studies at Drew before his departure for Korea.26

Because both the Methodist and Presbyterian churches arrived in Korea the same time, there was a sense of cooperation rather than competition between the two largest Protestant denominations. It was nothing like the rivalries that had been nurtured by fierce competition for souls in other mission fields.

Cooperation reached far beyond the usual comity agreement; the four Presbyterian and two Methodist denominational missions joined together officially in 1905, to form the General Council of Evangelical Missions in Korea, with a stated aim for “cooperation in Christian work, and eventually the organization of one evangelical church in Korea.”27 Part of the work of transitioning from denominational missions to one evangelical church in Korea included the normal comity agreements, a standard Sunday school curriculum for all Korea, a union Christian newspaper, and a union hymnal. In the end, however, organic union did not come about because of the resistance to such a merger from both the denominational offices in North America and from the Korean church leaders themselves.
It is significant that faraway from North America and Europe, at the ends of the earth, one might say, there was a prophetic move toward unity. As George Thompson Brown aptly described it, “Five years before the great Edinburgh conference, which is usually considered to mark the threshold of the ecumenical movement, the missionary enterprise in Korea had achieved a workable, grass-roots ecumenicity based upon evangelical principles.” It should be noted that the word “evangelical” rather than “ecumenical” was used by Protestant missions in Korea to indicate their common identity and joint endeavors.

During the first twenty-five years of mission work in Korea, cooperation was the norm. Bible translation work was a joint effort of both Methodists and Presbyterians, along with some assistance from the Anglicans. In the process of translating the New Testament, it was decided by the Board of Official Translators that they would arrive at a standard translation of the Lord’s Prayer in Korean for use by all Protestants.

Later, when the initial Union Hymnal (1908) was published, a standard translation of the Apostles’ Creed would be placed in the hymnal, after the hymns. It is interesting to note that the standard form of the Apostles’ Creed omitted the phrase “he descended to hell,” which had previously been included in the Presbyterian hymnal, but had been deleted from the Methodist version of the creed. Initially, the pace of ecclesiastical cooperation between the Presbyterians and Methodists was so fast that it appeared the first edition of a union hymnal would be at press by 1905. In 1904, one year before the planned publication date, the annual Hymn Book Committee reported that a total of thirteen hymns made it to the committee, five were accepted and the others were sent back to the translators for further work. The plan was for an edition with music, unlike the previous hymnals in Korea that only had words. Everything seemed to be in place, including the typesetting, ready for printing in 1905, when it was delayed officially. Apparently, it was not a breakdown in inter-church relations as much as a lack of financial resources to complete the publication.

In the eighth session of the twelfth annual meeting of Presbyterian Missions in Korea, the following words concluded the report of the Hymn Book Committee. “The committee believes that the time has not yet come for a Union Hymn Book for the Protestant Churches in Korea but will endeavor to work toward this end as fast as advisable.” If, indeed, the delay was due to lack of funds, it would not be remedied until 1907, when the Presbyterian Council’s Hymn Book Committee authorized the transfer of the necessary monies to complete the printing, when the Union Hymnal was finally readied at the press. In anticipation of the printing of the Union Hymnal, the Presbyterians decided not to reprint their own hymnal, to allow all the extra copies to be sold out. According to the minutes of the
Presbytery meeting in 1907, the Union Hymnal would be printed and ready for marketing in Spring 1908.

There were 317 hymns in the first edition of the Union Hymnal (1908), but they were all without music. An edition with music was prepared and printed the next year (1909). This edition contained 267 hymns and was now accepted by Presbyterians and Methodists in Korea; it is the one that is referred to as the first Union Hymnal in this study.

Selections for the Union Hymnal had been made and translations prepared from mainly two North American hymnals: Charles S. Robinson, ed., *The New Landes Domini* (New York: Century, 1892) and I. D. Sankey, J. McGranahan, and G. C. Stebbins, eds., *Gospel Hymns Nos. 1 to 6 Complete* (New York: Biglow and Main, 1894). Out of a total of 276 hymns, 175 were taken from these two hymnals.

Within the 1908 Union Hymnal was a selection that would be considered broadly evangelical, with pride of place going to the eighteenth-century hymn writers: Charles Wesley (12 hymns), Isaac Watts (10), William Cowper (3), John Newton (2), and Augustus Toplady (1). There are nine of Fanny J. Crosby’s hymns in the 1908 Union Hymnal. That number would rise to twenty-three in the 1984 Korean-English edition of the Union Hymnal, making Fanny J. Crosby the most represented hymn writer. There is a noticeable switch from the majority of hymns being from the eighteenth century in the 1908 edition to the nineteenth century in the 1984 edition.

Another major change in hymn authorship is the high number in the 1908 Union Hymnal of hymns (21 total) written by North American missionaries in Korea, including A. A. Pieters, W. L. Swallen, H. G. Underwood, and J. S. Gale. Only seven of the twenty-one hymns written by missionaries survived subsequent editions to make it into the 1984 edition. Also, the count of hymns written by Korean Christians almost doubles from the 1908 edition (24 hymns) to the 1984 edition (47). And, last of all, when one counts the number of hymns written by Korean Christians in the latest edition of the Union Hymnal (2007), the number more than doubles again, from 47 to 123.

The first major revision of the Union Hymnal after the 1908 and 1909 publications was called for in September 1923 by the Hymnbook Committee of the Federal Council. James S. Gale (1863-1937) was the most critical of the current edition of the Union Hymnal. He forcefully expressed his opinion:

> These hymns of the Changsongka are hopeless. They are made by a brutal process of squeezing so many Korean words, charged with as much of the thought of the original as possible, into an iron-clad receptacle called a Western tune. The method is one unheard of in the whole realm of Hymnology. We shall get no good hymns this way.33
By December 1928, however, there was still no revised Union Hymnal at press. H. D. Appenzeller wrote an update in The Korea Mission Field, indicating that the publication of the revised union hymnal was delayed because the publishing company in Shanghai did not work out; the printing was moved to Korea where it was being done by the Seventh-day Adventist Mission press in Seoul. The Korean lyrics were handwritten in the staff, proof-read, and finally photographed and made into printing blocks for the press. With the long delay, it was suggested that the many available copies of the current edition be used and sold until the entire stock is exhausted. A “revised and enlarged” version of the Union Hymnal was published in 1936 by the Christian Literature Society of Korea, with a total of 314 hymns, but the new edition that had been planned back in 1923 did not become a reality until 1949. It had a greatly expanded number of hymns: 586 as compared with the 267 of the 1908 edition. Of that increase in hymns was the introduction of several from the Salvation Army and more than a dozen from the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition, especially emphasizing the cry for revival, belief in divine healing and the second coming of Christ. Next, we will consider the context of Korean revivalism and the introduction of Holiness hymnody.

Singing to Bring Revival: Holiness Hymnody and Revivalism in the Korean Church

In 1903, Korea experienced its first revival in Wonsan, among a group of Methodist missionaries, led by R. A. Hardie, a Canadian medical doctor and missionary who had come to Korea as an independent missionary sent by the Y.M.C.A. of Toronto. Later he affiliated with the Methodist mission. By August 1906, the hunger for revival led the missionaries in Pyeongyang to invite Hardie to lead a series of similar prayer meetings and Bible studies, as he had in Wonsan. In addition, the visit of Howard Agnew Johnston to Pyeongyang further intensified the call for revival, as he told “of the wonderful manifestations of the Spirit in India.” Knowing that revival had fallen in Wonsan and in India encouraged the missionaries and Christians in Pyeongyang to continue to pray until the fire fell from heaven, and fall it did on the evening of January 14 (Monday), 1907.

W. A. Noble offered an eyewitness account of the revival, complete with all its physical manifestations.

We are having the most wonderful manifestations of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the native church that I have ever seen or heard, perhaps there has been no greater demonstration of Divine power since the Apostles’ days. At every meeting the slain of the Lord are laid out all over the church and sometimes out in the yard. Men and women are
stricken down and become unconscious under the power of conviction.37

From that single twenty-four hour period in January 1907, revival spread throughout the nation, from the north to the south, from the city to the countryside, and from adults to youth. More than mere journalistic descriptions of the revival experiences, there arose a theological language replete with Pentecostal expressions. One term that now found a home among Presbyterians and Methodists, after it had become the common language of Keswick and the Holiness movement in Britain and North America, was the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

It was reported in *The Korea Mission Field* that “Mr. Kil, an earnest student of the Scriptures and the most gifted preacher in the native Presbyterian church, received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Pyeong Yang in the revival meetings conducted in that city, and came to Seoul to preach in the churches here. His preaching is in power and in demonstration of the Spirit.”38

Only two years after the 1907 Pyeongyang revival, another revival was being prayed for and planned by the missionaries and Korean pastors. During 1909-1910, the “Million Souls Movement” was the vision for a national evangelistic outreach and church awakening. In one single year, the goal was that one million souls would be saved and added to the churches in Korea. In order to help launch this national revival, Pastor Gil Seonju and one of the elders of his church assembled every morning at 4:00 am for morning prayer, the first morning five hundred believers joined them in prayer. When the campaign was officially adopted by the General Council, a group of North American evangelists arrived to begin some meetings, including J. Wilbur Chapman (1859-1918), the hymn writer Charles M. Alexander (1867-1920), and the author of the hymn that promoted the revival movement, Robert Harkness (1880-1962).39 Harkness's “A Million Souls for Jesus” was included in the 1909 edition of the Union Hymnal, at number 267, it was the final one in the book.40

Revivalism goes beyond “revival” and is defined as “the use of techniques of mass organization and leadership, and emotional stimulation centering on repentance and dramatic conversion, to transform the faith of apparently lukewarm Christians, and to increase the number of converts.”41 Hymns and gospel songs could also be added to the list of components of revivalism. Hymns are not the only carrier of revival fire, and perhaps, are not the most significant, but there is a message in the hymns that are sung that connects with hearts across an ocean and across a nation. The spread of revivalism in the eighteenth century was positioned over the Atlantic Ocean, with George Whitefield (1714-1770) journeying back and forth between the British colonies in North America and Great Britain, spreading revival wherever he went. The nineteenth century witnessed further transatlantic
traffic with Charles G. Finney (1792-1875) and Phoebe Palmer (1807-1874) leading the spread of holiness. The twentieth century, however, saw a partial diversion in the standard traffic pattern; some of the carriers of revival began to sail the Pacific in addition to the Atlantic. Thus, when Korea emerged from being the “hermit” nation in the 1880s to an open nation to both commerce and diplomacy to the West, many of the luminaries of North American and British revivalism added the “land of the morning calm” to their Asian itineraries.

Although the key evangelists of this period, Dwight Lyman Moody (1837-1899) and Billy Sunday (1862-1935), never personally traveled to Korea for a revival crusade, many other evangelical luminaries did manage the trans-Pacific journey.

R. A. Torrey and his wife were in Korea in 1921, visiting Busan, Wonsan, and Seoul. Later, Torrey’s son would serve as a Presbyterian missionary in China and his grandson, Reuben Archer Torrey III, would serve as an Episcopal missionary in Korea, where he established Jesus Abbey in Gangwon province.

Later, in 1923, William Edward Biederwolf (1867-1939), the Presbyterian evangelist, and formerly assistant to J. Wilbur Chapman and Homer Rodeheaver (1880-1955), arrived in Korea for evangelistic meetings.

Henry Clay Morrison (1857-1942), founder and president of Asbury Theological Seminary visited Korea in 1910. The crowds at Morrison’s meetings at the Y.M.C.A. in Seoul were so large that “they had to issue tickets of admission and the altars were filled, both by sinners seeking pardon and Christians seeking sanctifying grace.”

Another Asburian, Dr. G. W. Ridout, professor of evangelism at the seminary, arrived in Seoul on January 31, 1929, as part of his world-wide tour, and preached evangelistic meetings for more than one month throughout Seoul. This is only a partial list of visitors during the first three decades of the twentieth century, but more significant was the visitor who came and stayed: Holiness hymnody.

Holiness is a historical and theological category that can, at times, be very inclusive. It can be shaped broadly, as the term “evangelical” has been, to describe everyone and everything. Or, it can be used narrowly to exclude anyone who has not given a verbal testimony of a definite, instantaneous experience of entire sanctification. In the broad category, Fanny J. Crosby would be counted as a Holiness hymn writer, for she showed great interest in the Holiness movement, although never personally professed the experience of entire sanctification. We will limit our view of Holiness hymnody to two groups that arrived in Korea in 1907 and 1908: the Oriental Missionary Society and the Salvation Army, respectively. They were both late comers to Korea, when compared with the Presbyterians and Methodists,
but the dates of their arrival were auspicious in that 1907 was the year of the Great Revival in Pyeongyang and 1908 was the publication year of the initial Union Hymnal in Korea. These late-comers would contribute a distinctive Holiness hymnody to Korea that would act as a perpetual call for revival. From the Oriental Missionary Society would come two hymnals that expressed the need for spiritual warfare, employing martial language to sing through to victory over sin and Satan. The Salvation Army’s unique contribution to the Union Hymnal would come through a hymn related to its motto: blood and fire.

The Oriental Missionary Society (hereafter OMS) in Korea was an extension of its beginnings in Japan at the turn of the twentieth century. Charles Elmer (1868-1924) and Lettie Burd (1870-1960) Cowman, Ernest Albert Kilbourne (1865-1928), and Jugi Nakada (1870-1939) were the key persons in the formation of OMS.43 There were definite ties between the early OMS and God’s Bible School in Cincinnati, Ohio, and the theological influence of Martin Wells Knapp (1853-1901) and William Baxter Godbey (1833-1920) clearly could be seen.

Although a short collection of gospel songs was used by the first OMS missionaries in Korea, the first full-size Korean hymnal, Jeungshin Bogeunuga [New Gospel Songs] was not published until 1919.46 Later, a revised edition was issued under a new title Bubunng Soonaga [Holy Revival Hymns] in 1930. In their introduction to the 1930 edition, Charles Cowman and E. A. Kilbourne described the songs as being a useful collection of “soul-stirring songs and hymns.” But when one opens either one of the two editions, the first ninehymns are a bit more than “soul-stirring,” they are fighting words against both sin and the devil. Spiritual warfare hymns are located in the front of the hymnal as the initial category.47 The first hymn is “Fight the Good Faith,” the second is “The Banner of the Cross.” The third hymn is translated from the Japanese and in later editions of the Korean Union Hymnal it is put to the music of the “Battle Hymn of the Republic”; the first line of the hymn is “Up, and fight against the devil, you whose sins are wash’d away!”48

The militant tone of “Up, and fight against the devil” would not have been a surprise to anyone in the Holiness movement. Nurtured on camp meeting hymnody, such martial language in song was standard fare. Charles A. Johnson, in his study of North American camp meetings, identifies the various categories of songs. The mourner’s songs were used to urge people on to holiness. “[The campers] viewed themselves as soldiers enlisted under the banner of Christ, pledged to wage ‘unceasing warfare against sin.”49 Although martial language in hymns as expressions of fighting against sin and the devil was standard fare in Holiness camp meetings, not everyone in Korea was convinced that fighting hymns needed to be sung in church.
Yun Chiho (1865-1945), baptized as a Methodist and educated at Vanderbilt and Emory, was a leader in Korea’s Independence Movement. Yun grew to resent the foreign missionary’s attitude of aloofness and superiority, as he viewed them from his position as a member of Korea’s yangban class. He criticized the free usage of military language in hymns as being “almost meaningless words to the Koreans who have been compelled to worship the pen—a brush—rather than the sword.”\(^{50}\)

By 1961, the Korean church affirmed the singing of spiritual warfare hymns when it included “Up, and fight against the devil” in the 1961 printing of the 1949 edition of the Union Hymnal.\(^{31}\) It continues to vote in this hymn’s favor by including it in every subsequent publication of the Union Hymnal to include the most-recent edition (2007).

The Salvation Army published its first hymnal, Gusegynda [Salvation Army Songs] in 1912, containing ninety hymns. The 1928 edition of the same hymnal was expanded to include 251 hymns. The Salvation Army’s motto of “Blood and Fire” was distinctive in its use of two powerful spiritual symbols. From Britain to the United States, the Salvation Army also had a distinctive musical style.

In 1880, as the Salvation Army was starting in the USA, its music was described by the National Baptist:

The meeting began with singing. The lung-power and unction that these people throw into their singing is immense....[T]here is a clapping of hands, keeping time to music....[R]efrains...are repeated an indefinite number of times. No particular person starts the tunes; each of the officers, man or woman, takes a hand at it as the spirit moves; often before a new verse of the hymn can be commenced, a voice strikes in with the chorus once more.\(^{52}\)

All in all, the Salvation Army’s music in North America had the sounds of the “working-class saloon and music-hall culture.”\(^{53}\)

With that kind of musical sound, one would need some powerful lyrics to further touch and transform human hearts. Again, the “Blood and Fire” carried enough passion to reach the coldest heart. One example of Salvation Army’s hymnody should suffice. The symbol of “fire” was no more powerful than in the hymn written by Charles William Fry (1837-1882): “Come, thou burning Spirit, come” (1882). Charles Fry and his three sons were the beginning of Salvation Army brass bands.\(^{54}\) He is more well-known in North America for his “I have found a friend in Jesus/Lily of the Valley.” Both hymns were included in the Union Hymnal, but it is significant that “Come, thou burning Spirit, come” was such a vivid expression of the longing and cry for revival. The last line of the chorus is “Fire, fire; fill us with Thy holy
fire!” Fry’s “Come, thou burning Spirit, come” is number 184 in the 2007 edition of the Union Hymnal.

Holiness hymnody and its inclusion in the mainstream Union Hymnal in Korea can be further illustrated by selections from Russell Kelso Carter (1849-1920), Fanny J. Crosby (1820-1915), Manie Payne Ferguson (1850-1932), Charles H. Gabriel (1856-1932), Paul Rader (1879-1938), A. B. Simpson (1843-1919), and Edgar B. Stites (1836-1921), to name only a handful. The list continues when one considers the contributions of Japanese Holiness hymn writers: Mitani Tanekiti (1868-1945), Nakada Jugi (1870-1939), Nakada Ugo (1896-1974), and Sasao Tetusaburo (1868-1914). Also, a recent addition to the Union Hymnal (2007 edition) is “My rock, my shield” by Lee Myeongjik (1890-1973), a leader in the Korea Evangelical Holiness Church.

Conclusion

As we have perused the pages of the Union Hymnal, we have gone beyond the normal boundaries of what we term the Ecumenical movement to find that revivalism has created a bond among Christians of many Protestant confessions. The margins have become the mainstream, and to use a word from Donald W. Dayton, “the riffraf” of the Holiness movement have entered, and they have become family.

Using the same hymnal has meant that Baptist, Holiness, Methodist, Presbyterian, Salvation Army, Stone-Campbell, and “Independent” churches are singing from the same page, making more than a symbol of unity, but creating a true bond of the Spirit, bringing unity and carrying revival.

James S. Gale viewed hymns as both universal and particular, as being expressive of the church’s fullest and truest identity.

Wherever the gospel goes, hymns spring up, glad hymns, pathetic hymns, hymns that win the wayward and the wandering. Among those most in use in Korea are “Jesus loves me” (“Ye-su na-nul sa-rang bao”), “Nothing but the blood” (“P'i pak-kei up-nai”), “nearer, my God, to Thee” (“Ha-na-nim ka-tka-hi”), “Jerusalem, my happy home” (“Ye-ru-sal-lem nap ok toin chip”). These are finding their way into huts that you have to bow down to crawl into, into high-class homes, into palaces, and the children are growing up with their vibrations in the air. The place that hymns have in the forward march of the gospel is worth noting, a place large and permanent. Thus far the foreign missionary has had much to do with the composition of Korean hymns, but later we shall have our Watts and Wesley, who will give us compositions that will stand like “Rock of Ages.”
Endnotes

1 I would like to express my thanks to Calvin College’s Seminars in Christian Scholarship for their financial assistance (directed by Dr. Joel Carpenter) and to Dr. Edith Blumhofer, director of the “Christian Hymnody in Historical Perspective” seminar in June and July 2008, for her inspiring scholarship. Also, I owe a special thanks to Dr. Park Myung Soo, director of the Institute for the Study of Modern Christianity in Bucheon, South Korea, for his ongoing interest in this paper and for his institute’s generous financial support.


Sizer provides three reasons for studying lyrics only: 1. In many cases, lyrics appeared as religious poetry, independent of musical tune, 2. Tunes were given names according to the lyrics, and 3. Words were emphasized by vocal and instrumental musicians. Sandra Sizer, Gospel Hymns and Social Religion: The Rhetoric of Nineteenth-Century Revivalism (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978), 9.


Romanization has changed as well as some orthography from the time of the publication of many of our primary sources. The Republic of Korea’s official Romanization system for the transliteration of the Korean language will be used throughout this paper. Also, the Korean custom of listing the surname first, followed by the given name, will be followed. The government’s current Romanization system will be followed when I write the text, but for the older sources the Romanization will not be altered. For further reading on the Donghak movement, see Susan S. Shin, “The Tonghak Movement: From Enlightenment to Revolution,” Korean Studies Forum 5 (Winter-Spring 1978-1979): 1-79.

The dates for mission beginnings include: Methodist Episcopal Church (1885), Presbyterian Church (1885), Australian Presbyterian (1889), Church of England (1890), Presbyterian Church US (1892), American Baptist (1895), Methodist Episcopal Church South (1896), Canadian Presbyterians (1898), Seventh-Day Adventist (1905), Oriental Missionary Society (1907), and Salvation Army (1908).


Chan Mi Ka (1897 edition of the Methodist hymnal), ChanSyeongsi (1897 edition of the Presbyterian Mission, North hymnal), and Chan Yang Ka (edited by H. G. Underwood, 3d. ed., 1896) are listed in “Literary Department,” The Korean Repository April 1897): 154. Mention is also made of all three hymnals in the “Preface,” in Chan Song Ka: The Hymnal of the Federal Council of the Protestant Evangelical Missions in Korea, revised and enlarged (Seoul: Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1936), 1.
Malcolm C. Fenwick was an independent Canadian missionary that arrived in Korea in 1889. Unlike the other North American missionaries to Korea, Fenwick was neither college educated nor a graduate of any Bible college or seminary. Yet he managed to become one of the most innovative of missionaries, founding the Korean Itinerant Mission. Although there is no full-length biography on Malcolm Fenwick in English, his *The Church of Christ in Korea* (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1911) contains much autobiographical material. For a study on Fenwick in the Korean language, see Ahn Huiyeol, *Malcolm Penwik [Malcolm Fenwick]* (Daejeon: Chimryeshinhakdaehaggyo Chulpansa, 2006).


17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.


28 Ibid., 78.


31 1907 *Minutes of the Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the Council of Presbyterian Missions in Korea* and the First Annual Meeting of the Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Pyeongyang, Korea: n.p., 1907), 16.


37 *The Korea Mission Field* (March 1907): 43.


40 Sukja Jo, “Changsongge’ (1908) Yeongnyaryojib, 600.


46 Korea Evangelical Holiness Church Historical Research Center, *Hanguk Seonggyeolgyohwi 100nyeonsa* [One Hundred Year History of the Korea Evangelical Holiness Church], 117.

47 Both *Jenngshin Begaungga* [New Gospel Songs] (1919) and *Bubunng Seongga* [Holy Revival Hymns] (1930) have located Spiritual Warfare hymns in the front, as their first category. Hymn #1 is “Fight the Good Fight,” #2 is “The Banner of the Cross,” and #3 is “Fight Against the Devil.” Both hymnals have nine hymns in this category, compared with only two hymns listed in the “warfare” category in Paul Rader’s *Tabernacle Hymns*, No. 2.
(Chicago: Tabernacle Publishing Company, 1921). The two warfare hymns in *Tabernacle Hymns* are “At the Battle’s Front” and “Hold the Fort.”

In the latest edition of the Union Hymnal, “Up, and fight against the devil” is hymn number 348. It is listed in the category Buntu wa seungri [Fighting and victory]. Korea Hymnal Association, ed., *Changsongga* (Seoul: Agape, 2007), 348.


Quoted in Donald N. Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea: The Western Experience 1900-1950* (Norwalk, CT: EastBridge, 2003), 114.


Ibid., 79.


PrabhuSingh Vedhamanickam

Living Water in Indian Cups: A Call for Cultural Relevance in Contemporary Indian Missions

Abstract

There has been a concentrated effort in contemporary India to stereotype Christianity as a western agent involved in destroying Indic religions, desecrating Indian cultures and destabilizing the nation. While there have been some attempts to contextualize the gospel in Indian missions, in the theological and missiological realms, there is an urgent need to incarnate the gospel in culturally relevant ways due to three critical factors: The cultural diversity of the nation, the rise of Hindu nationalism and the paradigmatic shift from Indian cross cultural missions to local, indigenous movements. While the multinational companies in India are tailoring their strategies according to the Indian markets, Indian Christianity seems to uncritically import and uncontextually apply some of the mission strategies from the West, which perpetuates the stereotyping of Indian Christianity as a West-dependent faith. The four key principles that enable us to serve in a culturally relevant manner in contemporary India are: Sensitive listening, Humble learning, Contextual laboring and Authentic living.

Key Words: Indian missions, Contextualization, Culturally relevant missions, Christianity in India, Western mission strategies, Gospel and Culture

PrabhuSingh Vedhamanickam is a trained missiological anthropologist with a Ph.D. in Inter-Cultural Studies from Asbury Seminary, Kentucky, USA, and he lives and serves in India. (He also serves as the Chair for International Alumni in Asbury Alumni Council).
In his highly acclaimed book *Reimagining Evangelism*, Rick Richardson presents an interesting story of Daniel, a youth pastor of a large church in America. Daniel’s deep desire to reach his own generation for Christ finally led him to take up a job in a Starbucks coffee shop, hoping to make friends and share the good news with his fellow workers. As he shared the gospel with his co-workers, there were two big surprises for Daniel: the first one was that all the twenty one people who worked with him believed in God and were open to spirituality. The second one was that even though they were open to spiritual things, they were not interested in Christianity or the church. All of them had some prior bad experience with Christians and the church that made them resistant to Daniel’s invitation to participate in the gospel.

Richardson comments,

> For different people, the particular issue varied. But almost everyone at Starbucks had experienced some breach in trust with God or with Christians. So Daniel wasn’t starting at ground zero, but rather at minus three or four. He would have to pierce through their stereotypes and rebuild broken trust before they would even listen to what he had to say.¹

Christians living in a post-colonial context like India are already on the back foot because of some of the excesses of the colonial rulers who are generally perceived as “Christians” and hailing from “Christian nations.” This situation is also exacerbated by the strategic stereotyping and malicious vilifying of Christians and their faith by the Hindu nationalists.² Christians are often portrayed as subversive western agents involved in destroying Indic religions, desecrating Indian culture and destabilizing the nation. Added to that, the culturally insensitive approach of some mission agencies, both Indian and western – due to a combination of ignorance and arrogance – also give fodder to the anti Christian rhetoric, resulting in an almost “perfect minus ten” situation for Indian Christians to meaningfully share the gospel in contemporary India.

**Need for Cultural Relevance in Contemporary Indian Missions**

In the city of Madurai in Tamil Nadu, popularly known as the temple city, a Christian evangelistic outreach was organized few years back. As an advertisement blitz, some Christians wrote on the street walls this slogan, “Jesus is the answer.” However, the next day, some perceptive Hindus wrote underneath that slogan these words, “What is the question?”³ Christian communication that fails to take into account seriously the doubts and questions of the receptors as well as the socio-cultural contexts in which they are embedded, will be irrelevant. Decontextualized presentation of the gospel results in reductionism and miniaturization of human beings as people are viewed and treated as disembodied souls or disembodied minds.
While there have been attempts to contextualize the faith in the Indian context, both in the theological and missiological realms, the need for cultural relevance and sensitivity in missions has gained greater ascendancy in contemporary India. This is primarily due to three important reasons, which I shall briefly highlight.

1. India is an ancient civilization known for its rich heritage of cultural diversity and religious plurality. As Indian scholar Shashi Tharoor puts it, “The singular thing about India is that you can only speak of it in the plural.” The Anthropological Survey of India’s People of India project has enumerated 4693 communities in India. It claims that Indian diversity is marked by linguistic heterogeneity, ecological diversity, biological variation and cultural pluralism.

While some argue that the hegemony of globalization is inevitably shaping the world into a homogenized western mould, in India, globalization and economic liberalization have also led to the fragmentation and tribalization of the Indian population, with each community attempting to assert its identity. This is evidenced by the formation of innumerable caste organizations, regional political parties and religious movements in the last two decades.

Indian Christians must celebrate the diversity of Indian cultures as this not only reflect the Kingdom reality (Revelation 7:9) and Indian ethos, it is also a bulwark against the homogenizing attempt of Hindu nationalists to create a mono-cultural, mono-religious Hindu rashtra. Christian witnesses are called to incarnate the gospel in the nation so that the 4693 communities may understand, appropriate and celebrate Christ in a manner that is compatible with their own cultural contexts.

2. The issue of rootedness of Christianity in the native soil that reflects the local culture has become all the more pertinent in the light of attacks against Christians and the noisy propaganda of the opponents of Christianity that Christians are involved in cultural cannibalism. Indian Catholic scholar Felix Wilfred writes, “The recent incidents of attack on the churches, Christians, religious personnel – condemnable and painful as they are – are also an occasion for the Christian community for a critical self-examination about its rootedness in the soil.”

In my PhD dissertation on Hindu nationalism and its engagement with Christianity in Gujarat, I found out ten factors for antagonism towards Christianity, and cultural insensitivity of Christians is one of them. Even though it does not absolve the perpetrators of the atrocities committed against the Christian community, nor can we accept uncritically the Hindutva-inspired conception of Indian culture, Indian missions need to engage cultural issues more seriously.
3. The call for cultural relevance is also heightened due to the paradigmatic shift happening in the Indian mission scenario. The Protestant Christian mission in India can be broadly classified as three waves or eras: The Foreign cross cultural era during the colonial period (1706-1946), the Indian cross cultural era in post-independent India (1947-1990) and the Indigenous era in post-liberalization India (1991-).

After the independence of India in 1947, the 1950s and 60s were a period of withdrawal as many of the foreign missionaries phased out of India. Many Indian cross cultural mission movements were started from the late 1960s onwards in south India and other places with the specific focus of taking the gospel to the unreached *adivasi* in North and Central India.

From the 1990s onwards, there is an ongoing shift in emphasis from Indian cross cultural mission movements to local, indigenous movements and personnel, due to factors like the rise of Hindutva and also the widespread growth of local churches in different parts of the country. Nearly 50 years of Indian cross cultural efforts have borne fruits, evidenced by a vast array of diverse churches thriving in various parts of the country. It has also significantly contributed to the welfare and holistic development of the *adivasi* communities.

In many places, however, Indian cross cultural witnesses have failed to incarnate the gospel in such a way that the Christian faith has not been rooted within the particular cultural context, as a result of which it looks alien and foreign in some of those places. There are many instances, where “Tirunelveli Christianity” has been uncritically transported and transplanted by well-meaning “madarasi missionaries,” seemingly oblivious to what the context demands. One of the vital reasons for the high attrition rate among new *adivasi* believers, in some cases 30 to 50 percent as claimed by some cross cultural witnesses in my anthropology seminars, is due to the alienation felt by these new followers who have experienced a form of Christianity that lacks cultural relevance.

**Contextualization in the Corporate World – Learning from Burgers and Pizzas**

The call for cultural fit reverberates loudly in the corporate world, in the post-liberalization India. In her highly influential book, *We Are Like That Only*, Rama Bijapurkar explores the contemporary consumer scenario in India. She writes that some of the multi national companies (MNC) that made early entry into India to do business, after the economic liberalization in 1991, did not achieve their desired success. The reason was their faulty assumption that the strategies that popularized their products in developed nations will do the same in the emerging markets of India as well. Giving fascinating examples from the corporate world, like why Kellogs breakfast
cereal could not take off in India, she convincingly argues that many MNCs failed to understand Indian markets as well as the cultural conditioning of the Indian consumers.

Rama writes, “The Indian experience so far makes it pretty obvious that only those companies that leverage their competencies for creating businesses tailor-made for India are likely to win in India and benefit from its inevitable growth, rather than those that mechanically transplant their best practice strategies from other markets.”¹⁴ She recommends the MNCs to have a specific “Made for India” approach that takes into account the complexity and diversity of the Indian society: “The question is not ‘What sort of market for this [global] strategy?’, but ‘What sort of strategy for this [local] market?’”¹⁵

Some of the MNCs are listening. While the McDonalds in India offers McAloo burgers (a variant of McChicken for the vegetarians) and Pizza Hut churns out Chicken Tikka Pizza, Christians still lag behind in contextualizing the gospel.

**Western-initiated Mega Mission Movements and Mega Mistakes**

In the Indian mission context, there seems to be an affinity for mission strategies that emanate from overseas. Uncritical acceptance and uncontextualized application of some of these mission strategies and mega movements – that seem to originate from the classrooms of California or boardrooms of Boston – may have serious ramifications for the future of Christian missions in India. Some mission programs are often conceived and executed in a militaristic manner by “mapping” the local area, fixing “targets” and conducting “campaigns.” The militarization of Christian rhetoric is particularly offensive for people living in countries that have experienced colonial subjugation.

Organizing large public meetings with a foreigner flown in to preach the gospel alienates the Christian community and perpetuates the stereotyping of Indian Christianity as a West-dependent faith. Some of the mission practitioners’ sloganeering like “India for Christ in 10 years,” bombastic claims and statistical hypes are also causes of concern. Obsession with statistics leads to the objectification of people as members of a community are reduced to mere numbers.

Some of the evangelical mega mission movements like Joshua Project have come under the severe scrutiny of Indians. Sudarshan, the former sarsanghalak (chief) of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS – the key organization of the Hindu nationalist movement) claimed that Joshua project is a threat to Indian national security due to the collection of strategic statistics regarding the demography of India, which is then stored in the data base of western agencies. Also, the name “Joshua” as a metaphor,
which implies the idea of spying and collecting vital statistics regarding the
land that leads to its eventual conquest as in the biblical narrative, is
disconcerting to those nations with a colonial past.

The 10/40 Window movement created an illusory window that
demarcated nations like India and others in Asia, Middle East and North
Africa as the “resistant belt” and under the dominion of darkness, while
conveniently leaving out the western countries. Is Chennai more corrupt
than Chicago? Is there more sin in Lucknow than in Las Vegas? Even though
this movement attempted to mobilize and channel mission efforts towards
a particular region, the whole notion of boxing and labeling people and
places smacks of ethnocentrism.

While there is room for western Christians’ contribution to Indian
Christianity in many areas, some of these highly publicized, West-initiated
mega movements tend to create suspicion and antagonism in the minds of
many Indians. Unfortunately, many Indian Christians do not look into these
issues critically or they choose to keep quiet due to their over dependency
on the West for their resources. While there is a legitimate and biblical
warrant for inter-dependent partnership between the global and the local
church, the deification of dollar can lead to the pathetic prostration of
Indian Christian missions at the feet of the West.

How Then Shall We Live and Serve?

The bible clearly exhorts God’s people to understand and appropriate
the times they live in. The matrix of Christian mission in India is no longer
the same as during the previous eras (Foreign cross cultural and Indian
cross cultural eras), and we must be sensitive to the shifting moods and the
seismic changes that are happening in the Indian social, economic, religious
and political realms. How then shall we live and serve in “such a time as
this” (Esther 4:14)? I shall briefly highlight four principles that help us to
serve Christ in a culturally relevant manner.

Sensitive Listening

Raj Mohan Gandhi, the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, in his work Revenge
and Reconciliation traces the aspect of revenge as a driving force in the south
Asian history, from Kurukshetra to Kargil. Even though reconcilers came
periodically, like Buddha and Ashoka, they were not able to stem the violence.
In his final chapter, “The New Century: Strategies for Reconciliation,” he
presents various ideas and strategies for people to coexist peacefully. One
of them is the need to listen to the other – “listening, with the heart as well
as the ear, to what is said and also to what is unsaid.”

Rajmohan claims, however, that south Asians are more prone to talk
than to listen.
Is listening natural to the South Asian? A Japanese friend once said to me: For fifteen years I have been attending international conferences and seminars. Africans, Europeans, Asians, Americans, all take part. Do you know the biggest difficulties that the person in the chair faces? One is to persuade the shy Japanese delegate to say something. Another is to persuade the Indian delegate to end his speech.17

Indians are quick to speak and speak at some length. Amartya Sen, Indian thinker and Nobel laureate, begins his best-seller The Argumentative Indian with these words, “Prolixity is not alien to us in India. We are able to talk at some length...we do like to speak.”18 Sen points to Krishna Menon’s record setting 9 hours, non-stop speech in the UN assembly nearly half a century ago, as well as the Sanskrit epic Mahabharata, which is about 7 times as long as Iliad and Odyssey put together, as some of the evidences of the loquacity of Indians.19

Christians have a propensity to talk more and listen less. However, without listening to the sighs, groans, doubts and questions of a hurting broken world, we would perennially be answering questions which people are not asking and scratching where it does not itch.

John Stott writes, “Everybody finds listening difficult. But are Christians for some reason (perhaps because we believe ourselves called to speak what God has spoken) worse listeners than others?”20 He calls Christians to develop the ability of “double listening,” which is the “faculty of listening to two voices at the same time, the voice of God through Scripture and the voices of men and women around us.”21

Humble Learning

Listening is closely tied with learning. We must be willing to listen, observe and learn from the songs and stories, poems and proverbs, myths and rituals, religious symbols and worldview of the culture of the people to whom we are presenting the gospel. In Athens, Paul commended the spiritual thirst of his audience (however misguided it may be) to win their attention, then used the “altar of the unknown God” as a launching pad for the gospel and proceeded to quote their own poets to help them understand the gospel better. He could do this because he was a good observer and learner, as he “walked around and looked carefully at their objects of worship” (Acts 17:23).

King Solomon, known for his wisdom was also an avid learner (Proverbs 24:30-34), as he writes, “I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw” (24:32). Stanley Jones, in his talk commemorating his 75th birthday, spoke on what his life of 75 years taught him. He pointed out that some where in the Alps, a mountain climber died and the epitaph on his tomb read, “He died climbing.” Then Jones said, “I would like my epitaph to say, ‘He died learning.’”
At the conclusion of a recent anthropological workshop I conducted for cross cultural witnesses of one of the largest mission agencies in India, one south Indian missionary who has been serving for nearly 15 years among a particular people group in North India, made a startling statement. He said, I wish this training had come 15 years ago. The adivasi people whom I serve are the original Christians as many of their stories and myths are similar to those in the Bible. But we did not take time to listen and learn; instead we brushed them all aside as demonic and brought Christianity as something totally new. Even though many have come to the Lord, many more thousands would have embraced Christ if we had built on what they already had. Instead we ended up presenting an alien faith and also drove a wedge in the community.

Tragic but true, and there are many such stories in Indian missions.

**Contextual Labouring**

Sadhu Sunder Singh gave a succinct description of what contextualization in the Indian context is. He said, “It is giving the water of life in Indian cup.” As mentioned earlier, there are at least 4693 cups within India that need the water of life. Christian missions do not occur in a vacuum as the receptors of the gospel are deeply embedded in their respective cultural contexts. Hence, Christian communicators are called to understand and engage cultures carefully.

While the Christian gospel is supracultural (it is not a cultural construct as it is the revelation of God) and also transcultural (applicable and translatable to all cultures), it can be understood, accepted and expressed primarily through one’s own cultural categories. The Scripture teaches us that God has created humans as creative beings with the capacity to produce culture. Humans create culture, which in turn shapes them. As humans are both good (created in the image of God) and bad (fallen), all cultures have both good and bad elements. No single culture is fundamentally good or fundamentally bad. Therefore, in its dynamic interaction with a particular culture, the gospel affirms what is good (contextual approach), judges what is bad (counter-cultural approach) and transforms the whole culture, which results in both cultural continuity and discontinuity.

Too often Christians tend to swing to both extremes – viewing all of culture as bad thereby developing an antagonistic approach and demonization of the local culture and religion, or uncritically embracing all of culture as good which results in syncretism and split level Christianity.

A balanced approach requires a careful study of both the Word and the World. Unfortunately, while there is a proliferation of bible schools, mobile training institutes and specialized seminars and conferences in India, Indian
Christians and cross-cultural witnesses are still poorly equipped to deal with the cultural issues, as there is a distinct lack of teaching on culture and related issues.

**Authentic Living**

The church that incarnates the gospel must exhibit the mind of Christ and embody the love of Christ. A Christ centered, other oriented, authentic Christian living is imperative to make an impact on the world around us.

Stanley Jones narrates a visit of Kagawa, the saintly Japanese Christian, to America. Kagawa was a godly man but not a gifted public speaker. After an address by Kagawa, two American pastors were talking. One was obviously not impressed. He looked at his friend and said, “He didn’t say much. Did he?” The other replied, “Well, if you are hanging on the cross, you don’t have to say much.”

**Endnotes**


2. Hindu nationalism is an ideology that seeks to create a Hindu rashtra (nation) in India by redefining Indianness on the basis of religion. Hindutva (Hinduness) is also a term often used to refer to this ideology and the movements that subscribe to this view.


Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya’s interpretation of Trinity as Saccidananda Brahma, Appasamy’s portrayal of Christianity as Bakti Marga, Chenchiah’s appropriation of Aurobindo’s philosophy for Christian theology, as well as various attempts by different scholars to present Christ as Ishvara, Avatara, Saguna Brahman, Sabda Brahman, Vedic Prajapati etc, are some of the efforts in the theological realm (See, Robin Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, Delhi: ISPCK, 1969). Also, the Ashram Movement, Sadhu ideal, Yesu Darbar, Yesu Bhaktas, Truth Seekers and other movements are efforts to incarnate the gospel in the Indian settings. However, most of them are geared towards Hinduism, and particularly high caste Hindus (with some exceptions like Truth Seekers).


8. Like any periodization, this classification of the three waves or eras is not a watertight compartmentalization, but just a conceptual tool to analyze and understand protestant missions in India that stretches over three centuries. The three key markers are: 1706 – The arrival of the first protestant missionary to India, Bartholomew Ziegenbalg; 1947 – India attains independence; 1991 – India
liberalizes its economy that paves the way for rapid globalization and westernization. This year also witnessed the demolition of Babri Masjid and the rise of communal clashes and polarization of the nation along religious lines.

10 The term 'indigenous' is used here to mean "local."

11 Adivasi is a term often used to denote the various indigenous tribal communities in different parts of India. It means original, primal inhabitants ("ADI" – First, "VASI" – inhabitant).

12 Tirunelveli is a region in southern Tamil Nadu that has historically been one of the prime loci of western missionary activities for many centuries. Also, it is the region that has mobilized and sent thousands of cross-cultural witnesses to North and Central India, particularly among the adivasi communities, during the second wave of protestant missions.

13 The term "Madarasi" is derived from Madras (capital of the southern state of Tamil Nadu), now called Chennai. It is usually used to refer people hailing from south India, sometimes with a pejorative connotation.

14 Rama Bijapurkar, _We are Like That Only: Understanding the Logic of Consumer India_ (New Delhi: Penguin/Portfolio, 2009), p. 10,11.

15 Ibid, p. 270.


19 Ibid, p. 3.


21 Ibid, p. 29.
Abstract

It has long been accepted as a safe conclusion that the difference between the names Saul and Paul in the Book of Acts merely reflects cultural accommodation in a Hellenistic milieu. This study challenges this conclusion by examining the literary pattern and narrative usage of names. This study concludes that the name change reflects the true identity of Paul amidst conflict with Bar-Jesus/Elymas. The name ‘Paul’ is significant because of its etymology and the information provided by the narrative.

Key words: Paul, Saul, etymology, narrative criticism

David Wenkel is a doctoral student at the University of Aberdeen.
1. Introduction

The meaning of the use of Paul (Παῦλος) and Saul (Σαῦλος) to refer to the Apostle Paul in the Book of Acts has long been settled as insignificant. In spite of the fact that many popular Christian education materials ascribe meaning to this name change, most scholarship has resolved that there was in fact no significance to this phenomenon beyond cultural accommodation. As Saul focused his ministry on the Gentiles, he used the name Paul because it fit best with his Greek audiences. According to this view there is no essential name change in Acts 13:9. Others view this change as a 'minor detail.' This study seeks to challenge this status quo. This study will demonstrate the significance of the name change from Saul to Paul in light of narrative structure and literary patterns and etymology. The name change is designed to reveal identity amidst conflict with the false Jewish magician Bar-Jesus/Elymas.

2. From Saul to Paul: A Brief Survey of Research

The presence of the names Saul and Paul in Acts was the topic of interest and speculation since the early centuries of Christianity. A brief survey of approaches to this matter reflects a narrow methodological focus on historical concerns that lacks a sensitivity to literary and narrative patterns within the narrative of Acts.

William J. Larkin provides a three-fold schema for scholarly proposals about the name change: (1) personal: Paul proves he is Spirit filled and real leader of the apostles, (2) environmental: Paul is not operating in a Gentile environment, (3) ministry: the conversion of Sergius Paulus marks a new and direct approach to the Gentiles. The most popular is the environmental view, which Larkin himself takes. Its popularity is so strong that it represents a scholarly consensus. This consensus likely began with William Ramsay’s study of Paul in 1925. Ramsay explained the presence of Saul and Paul as an understandable cultural phenomenon that reflected the Hellenistic milieu. Roman citizens had a nomen and praenomen. The name Saul is a ‘Hebrew’ name and ‘Paul’ is understood to be a Greek name or title. I. H. Marshall explains:

As a Roman citizen Paul would have borne three names, the third of which (his cognomen) would have been the Latin ‘Paullus’; what his first two names were, we do not know. A Roman citizen could have a fourth name (his signum or supernomen) given at birth and used as a familiar name; in Paul’s case this could have been his Jewish name ‘Saul’, which he would use in a Jewish environment.

As such there is no significance behind the name change other than the fact that Paul was using a name that suited his role as apostle to the Gentiles.
There were also pragmatic reasons for using Παύλος as more people spoke Greek than the small population of Aramaic-speaking Jews. This view has been more or less accepted by most commentators on the Book of Acts. The problem with Larkin's schema is that positions 1) personal and 3) ministry are based in large part on literary and narratival considerations. They may reasonably be lumped together. For this reason I think it is better to use a two-fold schema of 1) historical and 2) literary categories. These two categories more accurately reflect the emphasis of the interpretative framework used to understand the name change in Acts 13:9.

Those who focus on literary considerations tend to focus on macro-level issues in the narrative of Acts. In other words, the change from Saul to Paul is significant within the larger narrative because of Paul's growing prominence, especially with respect to Barnabas and his leadership amongst the other apostles. This conclusion is plausible and in the opinion of this writer, correct. After this point in Acts, Paul does receive more focus and attention than either Barnabas or companions such as Silas. Those who view the name change as having literary significance from a macro-level perspective are still reluctant to see it having significance from a micro-level perspective (within the pericope). The legitimacy or even plausibility of the literary importance of the name change from Saul to Paul on a macro-level only strengthens the case for the literary importance of the name change on a micro-level.

There are two important critiques that can be raised against the status quo that denies that there is any significance to the presence of Saul and Paul. First, while historical considerations must not be denied, they must not overshadow or exclude narrative and literary considerations. The second critique is less methodological. Appeals to other Pauline literature such as 1 Corinthians 9:20-21 must not drown out the voice of the primary text of Acts. This study seeks a more integral approach that is sensitive to the literary dynamics of Acts 13:4-12.

3. From Saul to Paul: The Broader Pattern

The argument presented here is that the name change from Saul to Paul likely carries more significance than cultural accommodation. The narrative and literary characteristics of Acts 13 point the reader to more than this. Before examining Acts 13 specifically, it will be helpful to situate the discussion in light of the broader pattern of name changes in Acts.

The difficulty with the Lukan corpus is that sometimes names carry meaning and sometimes they do not. There are instances where more than one name is given for a character and there is no evidence that either name carries meaning. For example the narrator states that Peter went to the home of Mary, ‘the mother of John whose other name was Mark’ (Acts
Likewise, the narrator explains that John’s ‘other name was Mark’ as the missionary journey to Jerusalem ends (Acts 12:25). The additional name of Mark seems to be for the purposes of identification or historical confirmation rather than rhetoric or literary function.

Before one concludes that names carry no meaning, the episode of Paul and Barnabas at Lystra must be considered. When Paul and Barnabas demonstrate the power of the Lord by healing the crippled man, the crowds view them as gods (Acts 14:11). Significantly they are given names that reflect their supposed identities. Barnabas is called Zeus but the narrator does not tell us why. Paul is called Hermes and the narrator explains: ‘because he was the chief speaker’ (Acts 13:12). Even though the Gentile crowds are mistaken, the names or titles carry meaning because they reflect identity.

Another important name change occurs in the episode detailing Paul’s ministry in Corinth. In this pericope, the ‘ruler of the synagogue’ (ἀρχισυνάγωγος) who is named Crispus (Acts 18:8) undergoes a name change to Sosthenes (Acts 18:17) after believing in the Lord. Richard G. Fellows argues that Paul established this name change because ‘Sosthenes’ means ‘saving strength.’ After presenting exegetical reasons for viewing Crispus and Sosthenes as the same person, Fellows argues that this name change is consistent with the Jewish pattern of ‘marking significant moments’ in life with a new name. Fellows cites the name change from Joseph to Barnabas in Acts 4:36 (which means υίος παρακλήσεως) as further evidence of a broader pattern. Extra biblical literature from Philo also reflects the use of new names to reflect ‘betterment of character.’

Paul’s name change cannot be easily dismissed as mere cultural accommodation because there are other instances of name changes in the Lukan corpus and contemporary literature (i.e. Philo) that are significant. The broader pattern of Barnabas and Sosthenes bear witness to the concept that names reveal identity in Acts.

4. From Saul to Paul: Identity Amidst Conflict

While it may not be possible to resolve without dispute, there are good reasons for attributing meaning to the name change from Saul to Paul in the pericope of Acts 13:4-12. A reading that is sensitive to literary and rhetorical concerns will demonstrate that the presence of the change from Saul to Paul cannot be dismissed as merely cultural accommodation.

First, the context in which the names Saul and Paul are related is one of conflict. At this point the fledgling community of the ‘Way’ was at a critical juncture and survival was crucial. Other Jewish sectarian communities had claimed to follow a Messiah but had easily been dissolved. Luke frames the conflict with reference to the Isaianic New Exodus in which a ‘path’ (Acts 13:10) is made for the nations to worship YHWH. The Jewish false prophet
Bar-Jesus attempts to stop the spread of the ‘word of God’ (Acts 13:5, 7). The stakes are high in this face-off between the duo of Barnabas/Saul and Bar-Jesus.

Some commentators seem to have followed a red-herring by giving undue attention to the proconsul Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:7). But the critical name to consider is not Sergius Paulus but Bar-Jesus (ΒαριησοU). Bar-Jesus is described in Acts 13:6-7 as 1) ‘a certain magician,’ 2) ‘a Jewish false prophet,’ and 3) someone ‘with the proconsul.’ This enemy of the ‘word of God’ in an opponent who is coming from within Israel. The contest is significant because of the stakes for who can claim the right to be the true People of God. The presence of Bar-Jesus with proconsul in conjunction with his later description as a ‘magician’ attributes power to this opponent of the faith. Willimon and Tannehill are correct to place this episode as being on par with the contest between Elijah and prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. This face-off is between the power of the false People of God (as Bar-Jesus) and the power of the true People of God.

The hermeneutical key to understanding Bar-Jesus stands out in the narrative because of its parenthetical nature and explicit appeal to the reader. The presence of the Greek proconsul required that Greek names be used. But there is more going on here than mere translation or transliteration. Here, names are likely masks that conceal and reveal one’s true identity. The reader must understand that Bar-Jesus is to be identified by his correct name (Acts 13:8): ‘Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name).’ The name ‘Ελύμας is possibly a derivative of an Arabic word for ‘skillful,’ ‘wise,’ or ‘expert.’ If Elymas is Jewish it is more likely that his name has Semitic origins and may mean ‘mage.’ Stelan argues that Elymas is etymologically related to Bar-Jesus vis-à-vis the Hebrew name Shem. Whatever the case, in this conflict the name reflects who Bar-Jesus really is. Even if the Greek reader does not associate the name Bar-Jesus with the Aramaic name ‘son of Jesus’ or ‘son of Joshua’ the narrator has already explicitly identified him as a ‘Jewish magician.’ The Jewish identity of Bar-Jesus compounds the situation and places the conflict within Israel even as the ramifications of this conflict go beyond this. In sum we might say that the literary framework and the narrator himself attributes meaning to names because the nature of the conflict turns on identity.

Immediately after the narrator explains that the true identity of this powerful imposter is that of a false magician, the narrator turns to the most prominent of the Spirit-filled duo. The narrator explains (Acts 13:9): ‘But Saul, who was also called Paul.’ In light of the narrative structure and explicit statement from the narrator about the meaning of ‘Bar-Jesus’ name, it is highly unlikely that this name change has no significance. The proximity of this name change to the name change of Bar-Jesus to Elymas is simply too
strong deny that there is a relationship. Within the narrative world, Saul's true identity is revealed in the name 'Paul' even as Bar-Jesus' true identity is revealed in the name 'Elymas.'

There are other characteristics of the narrative in Acts 13 that make it difficult to view Elymas' name change as significant and Paul's name change as insignificant. Tannehill provides the most literary sensitive reading of this episode. Although he does not use the term 'reversal,' Tannehill argues that Elymas functions as a mirror of what Saul used to be before his conversion/call on the Road to Damascus. Tannehill elaborates this argument with the following points: (1) Elymas receives the same judgment of temporary blindness that Saul received, (2) both become helpless and require others to lead them by the hand (χειραγωγέω; Acts 9:8; 13:11), (3) Elymas encounters 'the hand of the Lord' (Acts 13:11) whereas Saul encounters the 'Lord' (Acts 9:5, 10).26 Furthermore, Tannehill points to Elymas' opposition to the 'straight path' of the Lord (Acts 13:10) which also parallels Saul's opposition to the 'Way' (Acts 9:2). Whereas Paul preaches the Isaiahic gospel of 'recovery of sight to the blind' (Lk 4:18 // Isa 29:18), he also curses Elymas with blindness.27 Tannehill doesn't relate these connections to the problem of Saul's name change to Paul in Acts 13 but they serve the argument that the narrative framework creates a relationship between Paul and Elymas.

5. From Saul to Paul: Minding the Gap

The difference between Bar-Jesus/Elymas and Saul/Paul is that while the former receives an explanatory statement from the narrator, the later does not. Because there is no explicit statement from the narrator identifying the meaning of 'Paul,' many have concluded that there is no significance at all. Having developed the narrative structure of the pericope, we have concluded that this is highly unsatisfactory. Here, Kathy Maxwell's thesis about the intentionality behind narrative gaps is helpful. Maxwell argues that Luke uses 'omissions in order to encourage audience participation.'28 While the narrator explains the meaning of Elymas' name, he leaves a gap when it comes to the meaning of Paul's name so that the audience involves itself in attributing certain qualities to Paul's identity. The narrative continues by explaining that Paul was 'filled with the Holy Spirit' (Acts 13:9). His very gaze enables him to see who Elymas really is.29 Paul wins this power contest by relying on the Holy Spirit to identify the imposter Elymas as a 'son of the devil' (Acts 13:10). Paul's words prevent Elymas from interfering with the New Exodus 'path' by making him blind (Acts 13:11).

Luke wants the reader to understand the significance of Elymas' name based on some sort of etymology. The narrator injects a comment to explain this significance. But when it comes to Paul, there is no explanation!
Amidst the conflict the gap serves to further the interest of the narrator: one wonders what the significance of Paul’s name change is because it is not explained. The audience participates in developing the identity of Paul. However, if one has been reading the narrative of Acts, it is clear that etymology is the key to understanding the significance of names such as Barnabas (Acts 4:36), Elymas (Acts 13:8) and later Sosthenes (Acts 18:17).

It is best to understand the significance of the name Paul as consisting of two components (etymology and narrative identity). The etymology of the name Παύλος refers to one being ‘small.’ Hemer notes that common variants of the time included Paullus, Polus, and Pollus. Even if it was one of his previous names it may have taken on deeper or stronger significance. This is suggestive of Paul being the least or smallest (cf. ‘for I am the least of the apostles’ 1 Cor 15:9). This meaning is suggestive of the broad Lukán theme of double (bi-polar) reversal wherein the least is the greatest and the greatest is the least. ‘The other component to consider is the statement that describes Paul in the immediate context. Whatever the name ‘Paul’ means, the narrator wants the reader to associate it with the identity of the true People of God – the ones filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:9). Even if one misses the gap and provide the etymology of the name ‘Paul,’ the critical information is supplied by the statement about the Holy Spirit. We might say that Paul is to be identified as the ‘least’ one who is filled with the Spirit.

6. Conclusion

The force of the argument presented here is designed to be suggestive and provocative rather than absolutely conclusive. What is clear is that scholars have considered other characters besides Paul in the Lukán narrative to have undergone a significant name change. Many will acknowledge that a ‘word-play’ is going on with respect to Bar-Jesus while refusing to consider that a word play is going with Paul’s name. Even those who purport to be interested in literary and rhetorical concerns do not examine the name change in a manner that is sensitive to the narrative unit and conflict with Bar-Jesus/Elymas that turns on the issue of identity. This study challenges this status quo by providing a reading of Acts 13 that is sensitive to literary and narrative dynamics. The hermeneutical concerns of this study seeks to move from the inside of the narrative world to the outside historical context. The conflict with Bar-Jesus/Elymas highlights the importance of one’s name and one’s identity. The fact that Paul’s name lacks an explanation may be best understood in light of narrative gap theory. The lack of explanation about the name change draws the audience into creating Paul’s identity by providing etymology and information provided by the narrative. Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles: the least/little one who is filled with the Holy Spirit.
Endnotes


‘The change indicates that Paul is becoming the prominent and leading member of the group.’ Darrell L. Bock, *Acts* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007), 445. Similarly, Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 400. Thomas E. Page concludes, ‘It is clear that S. Luke notes the change of name as important and marking an epoch; it would seem that his non-Jewish name is thus introduced at the commencement of his missionary labours as the Apostle of the Gentiles, in order to indicate that the narrative is no longer concerned with a comparatively unknown Jew, but with one who, under the name of Paul, was to win a wider and universal fame.’ *Acts of the Apostles* (London: Macmillan, 1886), 162.


11 Fellows, ‘Renaming in Paul’s Churches,’ 117.


14 Jaroslav Pelikan makes an interesting case for relating this episode to the...


20 For Talmudic literature on magicians see Shabbath 75a, also Didache 2.2, and Rev 22:15 (Kistemaker and Hendriksen, Acts, 461).


23 Bock summarizes two possibilities: 1) a variation of the Arabic word alim, which means ‘sage,’ 2) a name derived from the Aramaic haloma, which means ‘interpreter of dreams’ (Acts, 445). Both of these are based on etymology.

24 Bruce, Acts, 249.


29 For a discussion on the role of gazing into one’s soul see De Long, Surprised by God, 194.

30 It is also possible to view Paul’s name as significant in light of the heavy intertextual allusions to Isaiah. According to Isa 65:12 the Isaianic suffering servant will undergo a name change. Motyer explains that this name change is linked with the identity of the person: ‘the “name” signifies all that is essentially true of a person… As then so here, the different name “means” becoming a different person with different potentialities and prospects.’ J. A. Motyer, The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), 528. It is likely that Paul identified himself with the suffering servant and the change in Paul fits with this pattern. Thus, Paul’s name change identifies him as taking upon or fulfilling the model of the Isaianic suffering servant. However, it is unlikely that this
intertextual framework should be considered the dominant way to understand the significance of the name 'Paul.' This would require a change in pattern that differs from the significance of Barnabas, Sosthenes, and Elymas.

31 Hemer, 'The Name of Paul,' 183.
32 Hemer, 'The Name of Paul,' 183.
34 For the use of 'word-play' to describe what is going on with Bar-Jesus' name see Gangel, Acts, 213.
Abstract

This article is written for the purpose of exploring a way to lead a polytheistic faith, prevalent in the local Chinese Buddhist community (LCBC) in Brunei, to the reality of a monotheistic God as revealed in the Bible (1 Corinthians 8:6). It serves as a guide for the local Chinese church (CC) to lead the LCBC to see that God as a Creator is sufficient to be their God.

This article identifies the need of a missiological package in order to lead the LCBC to Christ. The CC needs to assist the LCBC to become receptive before the core of the gospel message is proclaimed to the community. This article thus presents a missiological package which consists of ministries of witnessing Christ with good conduct, building good relations, taking dialogic action, establishing a well-organized team, contextualizing the gospel critically, directing the community to the Father of all, and applying consensus and pluralism in mission.

Keywords: Chinese Buddhism, Chinese culture, worldview, Christian mission, evangelism, critical contextualization, and consensus and pluralism.

Agnes N. A. Woo received her doctorate in missiology from Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky.
The Yellow River is a place where the Chinese can trace their origin, a place where all the Chinese ancestors lived, and a place which the Chinese should call home...

The Chinese identify themselves as the descendants of the Yellow River. It was from the Yellow River that the Chinese spread out to other parts of the world. The Chinese live almost everywhere on earth. Wherever they are, they cannot eliminate the fact that they are the descendants of the Yellow River — bearing the identity of their ancestors and they inherited the rich and sophisticated culture and religion from their ancestors. Many of them have lived overseas and established their home from generation to generation. Their inherited faith and worldview are subject to the challenge of other faiths. A small portion of them have converted to Christianity. But, many still hold firm to their religious identity. The local Chinese Buddhist community (LCBC) in Brunei¹ is one of these examples. Under such a condition, it is unavoidable that a family with two different faiths, the Chinese traditional faith and the Christian faith, occurs in the LCBC. Conflicts and problems start arising. The tension arising from such a family gradually expands to become the tension between the LCBC and the local Chinese church (CC). The relationship is damaging. Chinese Buddhists (LCB) started to blame the CC for causing the breaking of family peace and solidarity. Because of that, they have a bad impression of Christianity. The unfavorable relationship discourages the LCBC from coming to Christ. Under such a situation, it is necessary to identify what are the main barriers to the gospel in the LCBC and how the LCBC can be reached with the gospel.

The Chinese in Brunei

The Chinese are the second largest population group in Brunei.² Among the Chinese population, Chinese Buddhists are predominant whereas Chinese Christians and Chinese Muslims are the minorities.³ The Chinese community in Brunei is composed of various dialect groups such as Hokkien, Cantonese, Hakka, Hainanese, Teochew, and Foochow. Most of them came from the provinces of Guangdong and Fujian in China (Niew 1995:82-83).

Commerce is the major living activity of the Chinese in Brunei. Almost all the commercial enterprises in Brunei are run by the Chinese. The Chinese widened their economic activities into various forms such as import and export trade, distribution and retail trade, various shops and department stores, restaurant and hotel services, vehicle and repair industry, banking and finance, insurance and real estate.

The Chinese have always played an important role in the country’s economic development and made a definite contribution to the country’s progress and prosperity...The
economic status of the Chinese in Brunei has long been firmly established (Niew 1995:90).

Significance of Religion

From ancient to present time, religion plays a significant role in the life and culture of the Chinese. In Brunei, the local Chinese Buddhists (LCB) are no exception. They are religious people and believe in the existence of God. They are aware that they can neither control their lives nor prevent any calamity by human effort. They thus look for divine help. They worship many gods in order to deal with their many needs in life. Each god serves them in one or more particular area/s. The faith of the LCB is polytheistic. They pray to different gods for different purposes in their polytheistic tradition. They worship whatever gods there be in order to hope for protection and blessing. To them, religion functions as a protector, a provider, a helper, and an adviser in their life. The price for the service is to worship various deities with sacrifices.

Religious values are deeply embedded in the Chinese worldview. Although many descendants of the Chinese have established their home and life in foreign countries and are subject to the influence of foreign culture, the belief of supernatural power which governs the world still exists in their worldview. It is not something that can be easily removed or erased from their worldview, especially the beliefs of the worship of heaven and ancestors which were strongly rooted in the heart of the Chinese people. In fact, the more they struggle for happiness and prosperity, the more they pay their attention to the divine worship and the practice of divination.

The Local Chinese Buddhism

The local Chinese Buddhism is a syncretistic religion made up of the teachings and beliefs of Chinese folklore, Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. The LCB, however, could neither differentiate the contradictions between all these faiths nor question them. They embrace and practice all of them. After all, Chinese Buddhism is an inherited religion, a religion belonging to their ancestors and practiced by them. The nature of Chinese Buddhism is dual characteristics: sophisticated and naive, superstitious and rational, and native and foreign.

Although many LCB neither know much about Chinese Buddhism, they naturally accept Chinese Buddhism as both their religion and identity. Chinese Buddhism makes the LCB feel that they are Chinese. It is commonly understood that a Chinese should live by the Buddhist faith. The LCB identify themselves as Buddhists. In this way, they manage to retain their religious culture in Brunei. The life pattern of the LCBC is influenced by Chinese Buddhism.
Reasons for Rejecting the Christian faith

The LCB reject Christianity because they dislike hearing about the claim of the CC: ‘truth is found only in Christianity’ and takes such a claim as discriminative to their Buddhist faith. They also dislike the CC claiming its Christian culture as superior to the Chinese culture and attempting to change the Chinese culture. The LCB are unwilling to forsake their traditional culture by becoming Christians. They are unfamiliar with and lack of understanding of Christianity. The LCBC regards Christianity as a religion in conflict with their cultural value such as filial piety, economic advancement, and divine and ancestral worship. Tension is formed between the LCBC and the CC as both parties hold firmly their beliefs and practices, which affects the efficiency of communicating the gospel. It is essential to reduce the tension in order to share the gospel efficiently among the LCBC.

Essentiality of a Missiological Package

The result of mission to the LCBC is unfavorable despite of all the effort the CC put in mission to the LCBC. The main obstacles in mission to the LCBC are identified as Christian expression of superiority, demand of forsaking the LCBC traditional culture, unfamiliarity and lack of understanding of Christianity, and contradiction between Christian teaching and the LCBC cultural value. Those obstacles lead to unfavorable relationship between the CC and the LCBC, which inhibit the LCBC from coming to Christ. The inappropriate way of presenting the gospel makes the gospel unattractive to the LCBC. The CC needs to remove those obstacles in order to lead the LCBC to Christ.

In a mission field, it is essential to make the repulsive into receptive before inviting them to accept Christian faith. The preparation of good soil for planting the gospel seed is essential in a mission field. It is thus important for the LCBC to become receptive in order to enable them to respond to the gospel. The CC thus requires a missiological package as an evangelistic method in mission to the LCBC. The missiological package should include elements such as witnessing Christ with good conduct, building good relations, having Christian-Buddhist dialogue, establishing a well-organized team, contextualizing the gospel critically, and directing the LCBC to the Father of all, the Source of life, our Lord, our Creator, and our God.

Witnessing Christ with good conduct, building good relationship with the LCBC, and having Christian-Buddhist dialogue are possible ways to overcome the conflict and tension between the CC and the LCBC. Without the tension, the LCBC would give the CC the opportunity to share the gospel to them and they would be more attentive to the gospel message. A well-organized team is essential to take the full responsibility of the ministry.
and study how the gospel can be contextualized critically in a way that enables the LCBC to understand that God who reveals Himself in the Bible is the God of humanity and salvation can only be attained by accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior. Besides, the CC has to lead the LCBC to “move from where they are to where God wants them to be” (Hiebert 1999:28). For examples, the LCB believe that “salvation through faith in Buddha, who alone could deliver mankind from its eternal suffering” (Yang 1991:123). The CC can utilize the same principle to lead them to understand that salvation in Christ is attained by having faith in him. This is a way to help the LCBC to receive salvation by shifting the object of faith from Buddha to Christ. The same principle can apply to assist the LCB to shift their faith in their ancestors and deities to God. God alone is sufficient to be their God. They do not need many gods to serve them but to have faith in just one God, the only God they need to worship. “God is the object of our faith: not only what we believe but also the person in whom we believe, the person we put our faith in” (Aquinas 1999:121).

Applying Consensus and Pluralism

The CC needs to apply Rescher’s concept of consensus and pluralism appropriately in mission to the LCBC.

1. Problem of consensus

Consensus is one of the characteristics of the Chinese people. Both the Christian and non-Christian Chinese communities function as consensus. Consensus provides the Chinese with “the reassurance of being on the right track” (Rescher 1996:43). But, it creates disagreements between the CC and the LCBC as both parties hold strongly their beliefs and practices without giving place to each other (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Illustration of the problem of consensus

[Diagram]
2. Need of applying pluralism

The CC has to realize that the gospel needs to pervade the LCBC through diversification. The CC should not expect all people to exercise the Christian faith according to the CC consensus, such as church tradition and policy, because there are other ways of experiencing God’s grace and truth. Therefore, as Christian witnesses, the CC believers should learn to see other worldviews which are different from theirs and lead the LCBC to understand that communication and friendship are possible even when there are different positions and views. Indeed, the CC should encourage the LCBC to express their worldviews so that the CC can understand them and know how to communicate the gospel to them. The CC needs to guide the LCBC to see Christ through pluralism such as other views, beliefs, and experiences (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Illustration of the application of pluralism in Christian mission

It is essential for the CC not to force the LCBC to believe what the CC holds but to guide them to see God’s Truth through their culture and allow them to experience Christ in a way different from the church tradition. In other words, the CC should not try to pull the LCBC out from their culture and put them in what the CC views as Christian culture. The CC should not claim that God can only be found in Christian culture (Figure 3).
Figure 3: Illustration of directing the LCBC to see God through Christian culture

In fact, the CC should lead the LCB to see God through their culture and help them realize that there are other views and beliefs they have not yet discovered and experienced (Figure 4). For example, the LCB worship heaven because they believe that there is a divine being overseeing the earth, from whom they receive blessings and punishment. They do not know who the divine being is. Their ancestors called him Heaven because he lives in heaven. They also believe that rain is provided by Heaven. The CC can utilize the view of heaven as a connecting point to lead the LCBC to see what God has revealed about himself in the Bible. "Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy" (Acts 14:17). The Bible clearly states that God is the one who "...causes sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous" (Matthew 5: 45); he is the one who created heaven and earth (Genesis 1-2); and he is the righteous judge of mankind (Psalm 7:11; Isaiah 33: 22; Ecclesiastes 3:17; 1 Peter 1:17).
Figure 4: Illustration of leading the LCBC to see God through the Chinese culture

3. Proper use of consensus and pluralism

Consensus is helpful in understanding the core teaching of God’s truth, such as the Trinity which is uniform knowledge. Since “rational insight into the real is beyond us, it is consensus that provides us with the functional equivalent that is the best we can, in the circumstances, manage to achieve in the direction of truth and knowledge” (Rescher 1996:14-15). It is essential to lead the LCBC to see human limitation and the need of exercising faith in accepting God’s Truth. In fact, God’s Truth is consensus. Nothing can be added nor deleted from the Bible (Revelation 22:18-19). Christian witnesses need to be confident in holding the position of consensus when applying God’s Truth in the presentation of the gospel (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Illustration of applying consensus in understanding God’s Truth

For examples, the LCB believe in many gods. They also believe that the worship of deities and ancestors can bring peace and blessings. The CC needs to direct them to understand the biblical truth: there is only one God who is the God of all, the Trinity. The trinitarian nature of God is understood as three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who belong to or
in one entity. The three persons are one divine being who exist at all time and same time. The Bible repeatedly emphasizes the oneness of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Together, they are one God not three gods. God reveals Himself as Trinity, which is beyond human rational mind to understand God as Trinity. As human beings, we can only respond to this Truth by faith. We cannot change nor modify the Truth according to what our mind can comprehend.

The Bible also tells us that “Worship the Lord your God and serve him only” (Luke 4:8). The God who reveals Himself to us in the Bible should be the one to worship (Revelation 14:7, Exodus 34:2). He is the one who provides every good thing to us (Psalm 16:2; James 1:17). Although God does not promise us that we would not suffer in this life, He promises that He would always be with us. He would protect us and give us peace if we are in suffering (John 14:27, 16:33; Psalm 91:2-6, 9-12, 14-15). “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1).

When coming to the practical dimension of human life which will be influenced by human experiences application of pluralism is required (Rescher 1996:67). Since different cultures have different ways to understand and experience God’s Truth, God’s Truth should be expressed differently in each culture (Figure 6). The “Bible, may be one, but it is... a one that admits of many constructions and interpretations” (Rescher 1996:79). To understand and accept God’s Truth, the concept of consensus is significant, whereas, to apply God’s Truth to different cultures, different evangelistic methods are allowed to be used (Figure 6). In other words, the concept of consensus is essential in helping the LCBC to accept God’s Truth with faith. The CC, however, can direct them to understand God by utilizing their cultural elements such as religious teaching and belief system.

Figure 6: Illustration of applying pluralism in mission to different cultures

\[
c = \text{culture}
\]
For examples, some Chinese Buddhist terminologies can be utilized in the presentation of the Christian gospel and some major themes of the Chinese Buddhist teaching can be utilized to assist the LCBC to understand the gospel.

The Chinese Buddhist terminologies such the Three Jewels (Zurcher 1962:17) can be utilized in the presentation of the gospel as follows:

**Chinese Buddhism: Three Jewels**
- **Buddha:** He could deliver mankind from its eternal suffering and is seen as the finder of the truth.
- **Dharma:** It is the teaching of the Buddha.
- **Sangha:** It is the Buddhist community who have attained enlightenment.

**Christianity**
- **Jesus Christ:** He is the Savior of the world (John 4:42) and the Truth (John 14:6).
- **Bible:** It is God’s Word to humanity (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- **Church:** It is the Christian community who believe in Jesus Christ and have eternal life (John 6:47).

The use of the major themes of Buddhist teaching such as the Four Noble Truths (Rahula 1974:16) is a way to lead the LCBC to see salvation through Christ as follows:

**Chinese Buddhism: Four Noble Truths**
1. **Recognition of suffering:** The world is full of suffering and every thing is vanity.
2. **Arising of suffering:** Humanity suffers because of their own desires.
3. **Cessation of suffering:** To cease suffering is to cease all desires.
4. **Path for the cessation of suffering:** Salvation can be attained through good work. It is essential to realize that we do not own anything.

**Christianity**
- **Christianity provides the same teaching** (Genesis 3:14-20 and Ecclesiastes 1:2).
- **Humanity suffers because of the desire of leaning on themselves but not God** (Jeremiah 17:5, 48:7; Ephesians 4:22; and Genesis 2:17, 3:6, 16-19; 11: 4,8).
- **To cease suffering is to stop leaning on own self (Proverbs 3:5).**
- **Salvation can be attained through faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:16). It is essential to realize that God is the Lord of creation, and all creatures including humanity are created by him. He is the Lord of our life (Genesis 1-2).**
By understanding the different uses of consensus and pluralism, Christian mission is able to identify the differences between the authority of the Bible and the various ways in mission. This helps the CC to realize the importance of developing a missiological approach according to the cultural need and allow the LCBC to come to Christ in their culture.

**Words of Encouragement**

Leading the LCBC to God might not be an easy ministry. It is difficult to eliminate the religious worldview of the LCBC even though they are born and live in a foreign culture as a minority. The LCBC have such a rich culture with a long history of religious tradition. They are born to be the heirs of their ancestors’ religious culture with or without their realization. Religious idea is somehow deeply embedded in their worldview.

As Christian witness, the CC should not lose faith for “What is impossible with men is possible with God” (Luke 18:27). Furthermore, humanity has the natural instinct to look for God. This is because humanity is created in the image of God. Therefore, there is a tendency for the LCB to come to Christ. It is a matter of how Christian mission utilizes their existing belief system to lead them to Christ. If the LCB have interest to know about Christianity, they are one step closer to Christ. The Bible teaches that “For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened” (Matthew 7:8).

To mission the LCBC, the CC needs to have good conduct, good relationship, good understanding, good teamwork, good biblical foundation, good approach, good message, and consistent faith in Christ. The CC must serve as the spirit of Paul who says, “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow…” (1 Corinthians 3:6).

**Conclusion**

It is essential to bring the CC and the LCBC together in the Kingdom of God and lead the LCBC to enjoy the blessings of God. When cultural difference is emphasized, tension is formed, which lengthens the distance between the CC and the LCBC. If the focus is placed on the cultural commonality, it will bring the CC and the LCBC closer to each other. Both parties will be even closer if they seek the same God (Figure 7). The CC, however, must understand that culture is something that God allows humanity to have. It can be used in mission but it cannot be seen as the authentic standard because of its imperfection as a man-made product. To ensure a culture is on the right track, it is necessary to take the Bible as the authority to countercheck the culture because the Bible reveals the standard of God.
The LCBC is a community who seeks to know God and wishes to find the right God to serve. The CC must first lead them to have interest in the Christian faith and then explain to them what the gospel is. The CC can study the LCBC by conducting research among the LCBC, which helps the CC to gain insights for mission. The CC can then develop an appropriate way for presenting the gospel to the LCBC according to the insights which have been evaluated in light of the biblical truth. The presentation can be in a form of teaching, Bible study, preaching, or and sharing (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Illustration of steps for sharing the gospel to the LCBC
The CC should design a program for the mission to the LCBC and set challenging, realistic, and measurable goals. The program needs to be carried out persistently. During the process, evaluation of the progress and corrective measurement are required in order to adjust the program according to the new found needs and ensure the productivity of the program. The program must be supported by equipping the CC believers to perform the ministry. The CC needs to approach the LCBC both individually and corporately (Figure 8). “I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some” (1 Corinthians 9:22).

Figure 8: Illustration of individual and corporate evangelism

1. Individual influencing an individual

![Diagram of individual influencing an individual](image)

2. Individual influencing a community

![Diagram of individual influencing a community](image)

3. Community influencing an individual

![Diagram of community influencing an individual](image)
4. Community influencing a community

The CC should attempt to have more contacts with the outside world to get more information for mission. The CC can send its believers to various parts of the world to receive training so that they can be exposed to various ideas and gain new insights for mission. In this way the CC can equip its believers with the adequate knowledge to mission the LCBC. The significant task in mission to the LCB is to lead them to see the monotheistic God. There is only one Master of life, God - the Father of all, who provides our needs and takes care of us. He is the one and only divine being worthy for humanity to worship.
Bibliography

Aquinas, Thomas

Hiebert, Paul G., R. Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tienou

Niew, Shong Tong

Rahula, Walpola

Rescher, Nicholas

Yang, C.K.

Zurcher, E.

Endnotes

1 Brunei is a country situated on the northeast coast of the island of Borneo.

2 Brunei has a population of 348,200. The largest population group in Brunei is Malay (73.8%), followed by the Chinese (14.8%) as the second largest population group. Other population groups are aborigines and others (11.4%).


4 Contextualization must be done in light of the biblical truth.

5 The gospel must be presented in a way that the LCBC can understand and feel related.
ROBERT A. DANIELSON

Spanish Language Christian Academic Publishing

With the growing importance of the Global Church, there is a rising need for scholars and librarians to access material from other parts of the world. Spanish-language material used by the Latin American Church is a rich source for understanding Latin American theology in both the Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions.

History

Some of the oldest religious books in the world are the ancient Mayan codices found scattered in a few museums in Europe. These “books” of folded bark paper were very durable, but most where destroyed during the Spanish conquest when these items were sought out and burned as dangerous and heretical writings. The most well known examples today are the Dresden Codex, the Madrid Codex, and the Paris Codex. But the tradition of religious publishing did not stop with the conquest of the Americas by the Spanish and Portuguese. In 1519, Hernán Cortés landed and began the conquest of Mexico. Conversion of the indigenous population to Roman Catholicism was part of the overall plan, so in 1527 Juan de Zumárraga was chosen by Charles V to be the first bishop of Mexico and Protector of the Indians. Along with establishing a school for Indian girls, several hospitals, and dealing with the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Zumárraga also established the first printing press in 1539 in Mexico City with an Italian, Giovanni Paoli (Scialabba 2005:10). A collection of 400 Colonial Spanish publications from the British library is available on microfiche from IDC Publishers (http://www.idcpublishers.com). It includes the earliest surviving imprint from Mexico, Zamárraga’s Doctrina breve muy provechosa de las cosas que pertenecen a la fe Católica y a nuestra Cristiandad en estiho llano para común inteligencia (1543). "Zamárraga argued that a press would be vital in the important task of converting the indigenous population to Christianity."

Hanks (2010:90) notes that by the end of the 1500’s Spanish missionaries recognized the value of printed translated works to avoid the problem created by faulty translation and “defective hand-copied translations.”
A second colonial publishing center was quickly established in Lima, Peru. “The same evangelizing motive prompted the establishment of a press in Peru. The second Peruvian imprint, and the first full-length book, was a trilingual (Spanish, Quechua, Aymara) catechism printed in Lima in 1584.” Given its colonial history, the Roman Catholic Church dominated colonial publishing in Latin America. The majority of the books were catechisms, sermons, devotional material, religious biographies, and works on theology and doctrine. Guibovich details how the Inquisition in Peru operated to maintain ideological control over the books available in the Spanish colony. It was almost impossible for people to even obtain Protestant material and needless to say such books could not be published in Latin America during this time.

The first known organized Protestant publisher in Latin America was in Toluca, Mexico, when Baptist missionary, J. Edgar Davis, began operating a foot-powered press in his kitchen and published his first book on November 17, 1905. This was the origin of the Baptist Spanish Publishing House. In 1910, during the Mexican Revolution, Davis even had to make a deal with Pancho Villa to print some of his revolutionary propaganda in order to keep his press in operation for religious purposes. Despite this measure, conditions in Mexico led Davis to relocate the press to El Paso, Texas in 1916, which has been the home of Casa Bautista de Publicaciones ever since.

Given the length of history and the geographical breadth of this subject, it is impossible to cover all of Latin American Christian publishing, except in a cursory way. Therefore, this survey will look at the five major regions of Spanish-speaking Latin America, as well as publishers from Spain and Spanish language publishers in the United States who are major participants in Christian publishing in Latin America. Only a few key publishers from each region will be mentioned, and it is important to remember that publishing in Latin America is a very fluid situation and is constantly changing as old publishers disappear almost over night and new ones appear very rapidly. Finally, this essay will conclude with a brief look at organizations which are important to Latin American Christian publishing in a general way throughout the region.

**Mexico**

Since Mexico was the first place to host Christian publishing with Juan de Zamárraga, it is suitable that we begin a survey of Christian publishing here. In terms of Mexican Catholic Theology, a group of Jesuits formed the Centro de Reflexión Teológica in 1975 which publishes the journal *Christus* (www.christus.org.mx). Another Jesuit publication from Mexico is the journal *Revista Mirada*, which focuses on spirituality and human rights.
Ediciones Las Américas (www.edicioneslasamericas.com) was originally set up by Central American Mission in Guatemala as Editorial Centroamericana, but relocated in 1956 to Puebla, Mexico, and thus represents one of the older Protestant publishing presences in Mexico. Publicaciones El Faro (www.publicacioneselefaro.com.mx/index.php) is one of the main Protestant publishers, producing material for the National Presbyterian Church in Mexico, as well as a journal, El Faro. Another Protestant voice is Misión Latinoamericana de Mexico (www.milanex.com) which publishes a journal Revista Prisma which is more popular in nature.

Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama)

In Costa Rica, one of the major Protestant academic publishers is Editorial Sebila, the publishing branch of the Universidad Bíblica Latinoamericana (www.ubila.net/Libreria.html). Of special importance is the journal Vida y Pensamiento, but also the newsletter Faces which is available online in English (www.ubila.net/Faces.html). In addition, through the Universidad Nacional, books are published by the Escuela Ecuménica de Ciencias de la Religión (www.una.ac.cr/teologia/publicaciones.htm).

Costa Rica is also home to the Departamento Ecuménico de Investigaciones with their publishing branch Editorial DEI (www.dei-cr.org). This group publishes primarily scholarly Protestant material including Revista Pos which examines theology and the social sciences and is downloadable from the website, and Revista de Interpretación Bíblica Latinoamericana (Revista RIBLA).

Similarly in El Salvador, UCA Editores (www.ucaditores.com.sv/uca/) is the publishing arm of the Universidad Centroamericana José Simón Cañas, Departamento de Teología. This publisher is Roman Catholic and is committed to preserving and spreading the writings, sermons, and ideas of Archbishop Oscar Romero, the well-known Salvadoran church leader assassinated in 1980 while saying mass for his support of the poor and oppressed of that nation. This publisher also publishes two key journals, Revista Estudios Centroamericanos and Revista Latinoamericana de Teología as well as a series Colección Teología Latinoamericana.

In Guatemala, the Seminario Anabautista Latinoamericano prints a number of Anabaptist resources and other Protestant material through their Ediciones Semilla (www.semilla.org.gt/ediciones.html). Another interesting publisher is the Centro Bartolomé de las Casas, which was founded in 1992 in Verapaz, Guatemala to work on dialog and inculturation with Mayan Christians which is published as a series under the name Ak Kutan (http://www.akkutan.info/publicaciones.html). A prominent Catholic publisher in Central America as a whole is Editorial Lascasiana, which has published books in Guatemala,
Nicaragua and Costa Rica. This publisher produces the journal Alternativas, Revista de Análisis y Reflexión Teológica.

While Honduras and Panama do not appear to have any predominant Christian publishers, Nicaragua is the home of the Centro Ignaciano de Centroamérica (http://pastoral.uca.edu.ni). This group is a Catholic organization devoted to social justice which produces two publications: Revista Diakonia and Entérate-Boletín Informativo. Another Catholic publisher which focuses on lay ministry is Teyocoyani (www.teyocoyani.org). They have published a number of resources aimed at developing Catholic leaders from Base Communities. Nicaragua is also the host of the Centro Interreligioso de Estudios Teológicos y Sociales (CIEETS) which is a Protestant group focused on issues of social transformation. They produce two publications, Boletín Comunidad, and the more academic Xilotl: Revista Nicaragüense de Teología.

**Spanish Caribbean (Cuba, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico)**

For numerous reasons, the Spanish Caribbean is not a major producer of publications. The political situation in Cuba, economic difficulties in the Dominican Republic, and the close proximity and open markets to the U.S. Spanish language publishers in Puerto Rico all tend to discourage Christian publishing in this area. There are however, a few publishers worth noting.

Located on Cuba is the Seminario Evangélico de Teología Matanzas, founded in 1946 by the Methodists, Presbyterians and Episcopalians (www.cubatheological-seminary.com/publications.htm). The main importance in terms of theological publishing is the journals Cuba Teológica and Didáje which are available online.

On Puerto Rico, the Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico (www.se-pr.edu/servicios/libros.htm) was founded in 1919 by Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and the Disciples of Christ. Besides books, they also produce the journal Revista Presencia.

**South America- Andean Zone (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela)**

A major important Christian publisher in Bolivia is the Instituto Superior Ecuménico Andino de Teología (ISEAT) (www.iseatbolivia.org). This groups focused on indigenous religion and Christianity in the Andes, releases two periodicals: Revista de Cultura, Religión y Desarrollo, and Revista Fe y Pueblo. In addition they publish two series of books: Teología y Filosofía Andinas and Religión y Desarrollo en los Andes. Also in Bolivia is the Instituto Latinoamericano de Misionología (www.skidi-on.com/mision/publicaciones.php) which has published a few books on missiology from a Roman Catholic viewpoint.

Colombia is perhaps the most dominant country in the region in terms of Catholic publishing. It is the central location of the Centro de Publicaciones...
of the Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano (CELAM). CELAM (www.celam.org) is a Roman Catholic organization connecting the 22 Catholic conferences of Latin America which was founded in 1955. Besides the Centro de Publicaciones (www.celam.org/publicaciones) and their major journal Boletín CELAM, they also include the Centro Bíblico Pastoral para América Latina (CEBIPAL) (www.celam.org/cebipal).

Ecuador is the headquarters of CLAI Ediciones, the publishing arm of the Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias (the Latin American Council of Churches)(www.claiweb.org). Of particular importance is their journal Signos, which helps cover news and articles from a wide diversity of Christian groups throughout the region. Another important work from Ecuador is the Catholic missiological journal Spiritus (www.spiritus.org.ec).

Peru is home to Ediciones Puma del CENIP (Centro de Investigaciones y Publicaciones) (www.edicionespuma.org) which is a major Evangelical publisher, although many of the books are translations of English books by people like John Stott. A Catholic work for over 40 years among the people of the Andes is the Instituto de Pastoral Andina (www.ipandina.org) which puts out two publications, Pastoral Andina and Allpanchis for the study of mission work in the area.

From Venezuela comes the online newspaper, Verdad y Vida (www.verdadvida.org/inicio.html) with a decidedly conservative look at the issues relevant to evangelicals in South America.

South America- Southern Cone (Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay)

One of the leading Evangelical publishers in the Southern Cone of Latin America is Ediciones Kairos in Argentina (www.kairos.org.ar/index.html), which is the publishing branch of the Fundación Kairos, an organization founded in 1976 and led by Hispanic theologian, René Padilla. The organization was created to promote integral mission and seeks to combine both proclamation and demonstration of the Gospel. The organization also produces two key journals: Revista Kairos and Revista Iglesia y Misión.

Argentina is also the home of the Instituto Universitario ISEDET, a university founded in 1969 by the historical Protestant churches in Latin America, including: Anglican, Disciples of Christ, Evangelical Lutheran, Methodist, and Presbyterian. This organization publishes a number of scholarly academic resources (http://publicaciones.isedet.edu.ar/ojs/), in particular the journal Cuadernos de Teología and JOLAH (Journal of Latin American Hermeneutics).

There are other important publishers in Argentina. For Catholic material, Grupo Editorial Lumen (www.lumen.com.ar/), and for Pentecostal material (mostly translations of international leaders like T.D. Jakes, David Yonggi Cho, etc. into Spanish) there is Editorial Peniel (www.peniel.com).
While Argentina dominates the Southern Cone, Chile does have a presence in Christian publishing as well. The Comunidad Teológica Evangélica (www.ctedechile.cl/) was founded in 1964 and is a joint effort by Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and Pentecostals. Paraguay is home to the Centro de Estudios Paraguayos Antonio Guasch (CEPAG) (www.cepag.org.py/) which is an organization associated with the Jesuits and their interest in social justice work among the Guarani tribe. This organization publishes two journals: Revista Acción and Revista Acción Popular. Also in Paraguay, the Coordinadora Nacional de Pastoral Indígena (CONAPI) (www.conapi.org.py) published a journal Diálogo Indígena Misionero (DIM) which was an academic publication on work among indigenous peoples. This was published at least through 2006, although I can find no recent information on this publisher.

In Uruguay, the Catholic school, the Facultad de Teología del Uruguay, Monsenor Mariano Soler (www.facteologia.edu.uy/publicaciones_libros.html) is one of the main Christian publishers in that country and also produces a journal called Soleriana.

**U.S. Spanish Language Publishers**

As mentioned earlier, one of the earliest attempts at Spanish language publishing in the United States was Casa Bautista de Publicaciones founded in Mexico in 1905 by U.S. missionary J.E. Davis, which moved to El Paso, Texas in 1916. Today it is still a major force in Protestant Evangelical publishing, although now it often goes under the name Editorial Mundo Hispano (www.casabautista.org).

The first nationally organized approach to Spanish language publishing in the United States began in the 1990’s with Thomas Nelson’s Grupo Nelson (www.gruponelson.com), which now includes five imprints: Editorial 10 Puntos, Editorial Betania, Editorial Caribe, Editorial Católica and Líder Latino. Around the same time Zondervan launched Editorial Vida (www.zondervan.com) which has been very successful especially in works on popular Christian spirituality.

The Spanish Evangelical Publishers’ Association also organized at the end of this period and their annual Expolit book fair in Miami (www.expolit.com) has led the way in bringing various publishers from this genre together. In addition, Editorial Unilat, Editorial Portavoz from Kregel (www.portavoz.com), and Casa Creación (from Strang Communications) (www.casa creacion.com) have also entered the Spanish language Christian book market. While these publishers have had great success, they are still predominated by translations of popular English writers into Spanish.

Today, a number of denominational publishers also provide resources in Spanish. Libros Desafío (www.librosdesafio.org) provides material from the Reformed Church tradition. Editorial Concordia (http://sites.cph.org/
editorial) is the Spanish language branch of Concordia Publishing House which produces Lutheran books. *Editorial Bautista Independiente* (www.ebi-bmm.org) is another publisher of Baptist material for the Spanish market. *Casa Metodista de Publicaciones* (CMP) (http://intro.metodista.cat) is one source of Methodist material.

There are also special organizations for Hispanic theology which produce books in Spanish. The *Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana* (AETH) (www.aeth.org) formed from a meeting in 1991 of U.S., Canadian, and Puerto Rican theological educators. Currently they produce three main book series: *Serie Conozca su Biblia, Serie de Introducciones,* and *Serie de Tres Meses.* Another very new step is the Society of Biblical Literature’s new Ancient Near East Monograph Series (www.sbl-site.org/publications/Books-ANEmonographs.aspx) which is completely open access and free online. Currently the first two volumes are both in Spanish, though the series is not specifically limited to Spanish materials.

**Spain**

Spain remains an important influence in Latin American publishing due to its historic and linguistic connections. Commonly known as *la madre patria* or “the mother country,” it is a major source for scholarly Christian material, especially from the Roman Catholic tradition. The largest publisher of Protestant Spanish language material is *Editorial CLIE* (www.clie.es) which is also located in Spain and was founded in 1924 as the second oldest Evangelical Spanish language publisher in the world. It was founded by Samuel Vila, a young Evangelical who found no Protestant seminaries in Spain, so he went abroad and worked with C.H. Spurgeon. After his studies he decided to return to Spain and create a publishing ministry to provide academic resources for Spanish-speaking Protestants. Another Protestant publisher is Andamio (www.publicacionesandamio.com) which also publishes Evangelical material.

Roman Catholic publishers in Spain include *Editorial Verbo Divino* (www.verbo divino.es) which publishes the *Comentario Bíblico Latinoamericano,* *Comentario de la Casa de la Biblia,* and the *Biblioteca Bíblica Básica* among other major academic Christian resources. *Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos* is another major Catholic publisher, as is *Ediciones Universidad De Navarra, S.A.* (www.eunsa.es) which publishes the *Simposios Internacionales de Teología* along with many other academic theological works.

**General Resources**

One large Roman Catholic group spanning all of Latin America is the *Confederación Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Religiosos* (CLAR) (www.clar.org) which publishes the periodical *Reviṣta CLAR* and other works of Catholic theology and religious life.
For Protestant scholars, the *Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana* (www.ftlal.org), which is known in English as the *Latin American Theological Fellowship*, provides vital access to the theological works of Hispanic Theologians through its English-language *Journal of Latin American Theology: Christian Reflections from the Latino South*.

For librarians interested in locating Christian Spanish-language resources from Latin America, there is no good central distributor. Librarians have formed the *Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM)* (www.salalm.org/about/index.html) back in 1956, but this is not particularly focused on Christian materials. Distributors like *Libros Latinos* (www.libroslatinos.com) and *Libros Centroamericanos* (www.libroscentroamericanos.com) help fill the gaps in collections, but they are not focused on religious materials and so collection development using these sources is rather arbitrary. Some organizations, such as Latin America Caribbean Library Services (LACLS) (www.laclsl.org) are working to help religious libraries in Latin America, but so far collection development does not seem to be part of their work.

A growing number of online resources are also becoming available. Items such as *Directorio Catolico de Internet* (www.galeon.com/dircat/publicaciones.htm) with many links to Roman Catholic Spanish language material, *Centro Online de Juan Wesley* (http://wesley.nnu.edu/espanol/index.htm) with many full text Methodist material, and Northwestern Theological Seminary’s online Spanish material (www.ntslibrary.com/Libreria-Virtual.htm) are good examples of this trend. Two other useful online full text sources are *Revista Electrónica Latinoamericana de Teología* (http://servicioskoinonia.org/relat) and *Red de Revistas Científicas de América Latina y el Caribe, España y Portugal* (http://redalyc.uaemex.mx). It is also possible to find many Spanish language journals on the Directory of Open Access Journals (www.doaj.org). In addition, the Library of Congress has made the *Handbook of Latin American Studies* accessible online (http://lcweb2.loc.gov/lhas) with some links to electronic sources.

**Current Issues**

Roman Catholic publishers continue to dominate Latin American academic publishing. The Protestant market is flooded with translations of English writers from the United States, although these are mostly popular books on spirituality. It is much more difficult to find Latin American Evangelical writers. A larger area for concern is the lack of access to international publishing by indigenous independent Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Neo-Charismatic writers. Often these works are self-published and distributed only within small church-based bookstores. Without wider distribution, the voices of the fastest growing, and largest community of
Protestants in Latin America is largely unheard, although many of them are beginning to tap into online venues.

Latin American Christian publishing continues to be a huge untapped source of theological work and pastoral wisdom which is currently being lost to the greater Christian community around the world. Electronic publishing and the use of the internet has expanded access, but there are few central directories which allow people to easily find this material. It is to be hoped that the Global Church will become more involved in helping the Latin American Church enter into theological dialog with other Christian communities, by opening more access to the Spanish language publishing markets and distribution systems.

Robert A. Danielson is an affiliate professor and faculty associate at Asbury Theological Seminary with a Ph.D. in Intercultural Studies and a background in the anthropology and cultures of China and Central America.

Endnotes


3 Hanks, William F. Converting Words: Maya in the Age of the Cross. 2010, Berkley, University of California Press.


BRIAN EDGAR
A Review Essay: Four Views on Church and Politics

Good and Bad Ways to Think about Religion and Politics
Robert Benne
2010. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans

Politics According to the Bible: A Comprehensive Resource for Understanding Modern Political Issues in Light of Scripture
Wayne Grudem
2010. Grand Rapids: Zondervan

Christianity and Politics: A Brief Guide to the History
C.C. Pecknold
2010. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books

The Challenge of Pluralism: Church and State in Five Democracies, 2nd ed.
Stephen Monsma and J. Christopher Soper
2009. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers

The various dualisms of church and state, religion and politics, faith and society, Christ and culture, and church and world express different dimensions of the same general relationship, one that is at the heart of the church’s missiological task and thus the subject of perennial debate. The four books reviewed in this essay lay varied stress upon theological, historical, biblical and comparative resources but they all speak to this relationship in terms of contemporary secular society. There is a significant level of agreement – at least in theoretical terms – but the comparison also highlights the fact that there are a number of unresolved questions and issues relating, firstly, to the influence social and cultural factors have on the formation of identity and the use of core theological principles; secondly, the nature of the church as the body of Christ; and thirdly, the relationship between the various forms of secularism that exist around the world.

Robert Benne is Emeritus Professor and Director of the Roanoke College Center for Religion and the Society and his Good and Bad Ways to Think about Religion and Politics (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010) is a short book with
five chapters – really four plus a brief introduction justifying the writing of another book on religion and politics. It has chapters on “The Separationists” (both militant secularists and ardent religious people who sharply separate religion and politics) and “The Fusionists” (those who, in various ways, bring in religion and politics so close together they actually become one). Both approaches are seen as destructive to Christianity and a disaster for politics. He then shifts from analytical to constructive mode in a chapter on “Critical Engagement: Moving from Call to Public Policy” which argues that there is room for a critical engagement between Christian ethical thought and public policy. Then, in “The Practical Engagement of Religion and Politics” he presents a typology of four ways that religion affects politics, moving from those that are noncontroversial with a low profile, to the more controversial and high profile kinds of engagement. At the former end is an ethic of character where individuals have an indirect and unintentional influence on society. What he refers to as the ethics of conscience is the situation where religion intentionally connects its moral teaching to specific issues in the public sphere. The section on the third model – the church as social conscience – where the church becomes more persuasive in its approach has good advice on the formal role of the church where direct action is carefully modulated and occasional, often preferring the ministry of the church to come through individual members rather than corporate action. The final approach is designated the church with power where there is regular, direct and intentional action. He is less comfortable with this and, by and large, it is to be avoided. In a relatively just, pluralistic and stable society the first three modes should predominate. Nevertheless there are instances, albeit temporary and infrequent, where strong direct action may be necessary. His willingness to accept this as a possibility despite unease with it is indicative of his sensitivity to context.

Good and Bad ways to Think About Religion and Politics is brief, lucid, sensible and sensitive. It is self-critically Lutheran and its strength lies in the way in which Benne raises the question as to how clear the line of thought can be between core theological principles and specific public policy outcomes. He is sharply critical of both liberal and evangelical churches and socially conservative and socially progressive political agendas. In this regard, he argues, that there has been a good deal said about faith and politics that is genuinely bad. He demonstrates the way both conservatives and liberals become convinced that they are able to move in a straight line from biblical principles to certain types of political positions. It is this mode of thinking that creates dissension between individuals and denominational structures. Insufficient attention, he argues, is paid to the influence of intervening factors, such as family and regional culture and history, race, gender, class, peer group, religious tradition and levels of self-interest. These social factors
may well be observed in the external situation being evaluated while being unexamined in terms of their influence on the development of an individual's own position and the way he or she interprets the world. Implicit throughout *Good and Bad Ways to Think About Religion and Politics* is the question of self-identity and the context out of which one speaks. The desire for social involvement has to be balanced with the need to avoid the dangers of being too convinced of the rightness of any particular direct connection between biblical principles and party-political agendas. The question then is how then to proceed? With caution and a preference for theological consensus. And asking the question about the influences on one's own identity is itself useful, hopefully leading to engagement without too many simplistic, straight-line connections.

Wayne Grudem's *Politics According to the Bible: A Comprehensive Resource for Understanding Modern Political Issues in Light of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010) is, on the other hand, an example of straight-line thinking. It is a detailed review of a wide range of public policies in the light of biblical thought and is self-confessedly Republican in orientation. Its 619 pages are divided into three parts. There are five chapters in “Basic Principles” on the role of government (examining unhelpful views about Christians and government; proposing a secularism that places the obligation on Christians and not the state to provide a social, moral compass; outlining biblical principles concerning government and arguing that the appointment of certain kinds of judges is the most important issue facing the USA today). The theological principles that make up Grudem's biblical “worldview” (concerning the goodness of creation, moral evil and human responsibility) are neither exactly the same nor inconsistent with Benne's biblical “core” (concerning the nature of salvation, humanity as exalted and fallen, and service) but the rest of the journey tends to move in different directions.

Part two deals with a range of specific issues including the protection of life; marriage; the family; economics; the environment; national defense; foreign policy; freedom of speech; freedom of religion; and special groups (discussing the responsibilities of bureaucrats; affirmative action for particular groups; farmers needs; tariffs on business products; medical practitioners; Native Americans; and gambling). It is no small thing for one person (especially one whose previous work has tended to be in other areas) to attempt to cover the nuances involved in this range of material. Part three provides some concluding observations on the media and the application of the issues discussed in part two to Democrat and Republican policies. He notes that almost all of his judgments align with Republican policies and he endorses them as “much more consistent with biblical teaching.” There is a final chapter on providence, the future of the US and the possibility of revival.
Politics According to the Bible has a huge agenda. Grudem is aiming to provide a resource for, amongst others, the pastors that he encourages to be involved in social engagement and it will be a useful resource for many people. On the other hand, because it is so detailed it is inevitable that it is not only exposed to Benne’s criticism of the principle of straight-line thinking, but also to criticism by those who disagree with individual policies that are expounded. With regard to the former Grudem argues that it is not possible that anyone with a consistent worldview will be able to be even-handed in regard to these parties, one will inevitably fall one way or the other. And therefore he has no need to be apologetic towards those who disagree on specific policies. Those who want a defense of Republican policies will be pleased by it but others will not, though they may be challenged to think.

Grudem’s biblical worldview and his view of government lead inexorably to certain policies. For Benne the question is the way that a person’s biblical worldview and view of government is formed by their social and religious background. The influence of context on one’s mode of thinking (which does not necessitate the conclusion that it is theologically wrong) is probably seen most easily by those outside. This book is, in the main, written for the USA and judgments about the validity of its support for various policies is best made by those involved but, as a non-American I would like to see a greater level of cultural awareness when he extrapolates and the American model becomes the standard for other parts of the world. It is a problem that the more confidently one moves in a straight line from biblical principle to policy outcome the more one will identify that outcome with the only right and biblical approach and the more difficult it becomes for others to determine whether what is proposed is being defended as biblical or as American. Although the discussion of health care is largely focused on the US debate Grudem does extrapolate in general about what governments ought to do and, without entering into the specifics of the debate, it is possible to observe that from an Australian point of view the assumptions upon which the Republican versus Democrat debate is founded seem unusual and unnecessary. We have parties that reflect the general values of Republican and Democrat but the health debate functions along different lines altogether. So too with regard to the attitude towards guns. When the discussion shifts from guns in the USA to the United Kingdom the advice is that, based on an Associated Press report of 253 more gun offenses (of what kind?) in London (a city of 12-14 million) in one year compared with the previous year, that the police there probably should wear guns as a matter of course. It is also surprising to read that foreign aid is to be viewed as “a specific area that the United States can use to promote its own interests” albeit that this is immediately followed by a second thought “and also do good for other nations”. Even that concession, however, is then undercut
by the very first priority in foreign aid being the provision of military aid.3

If then, the first major on-going issue for the current dialog between church and politics relates to the influence social and cultural factors have on the formation of identity and the extent to which this influences the ability to confidently connect basic theological principles with specific policy outcomes in a secular society, then the second issue relates to the perceived nature of the church. One of Benne’s primary concerns is the way that denominational bodies of various theological and political persuasions make pronouncements on public policy and in that regard it would be useful to have a more extended reflection on the nature of the church. Grudem’s approach is to focus on the role of individual lay people and pastors and in general, in contemporary discussion, more is said about the nature of the state end of the church-state relationship than about the church. This is where C. C. Pecknold’s Christianity and Politics: A Brief Guide to the History (Cascade Books, 2010) can come in to help. Indeed, it clarifies the relationship between the church as the body of Christ and the modern state as a “body-politic”. Pecknold is Associate Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at the Catholic University of America and his book is 174 pages of the history of selected moments in the relationship between Christianity and politics. It begins with the theo-political visions of ancient Athenian and Roman philosophers which sets the scene for early Christianity’s introduction of a new political vision. There are chapters on Augustine’s “two cities”; medieval Christianity; the beginning of the modern conception of the state; discussions of Luther and Machiavelli, and then Calvin and Hobbes; the eighteenth century and then a final summary chapter focusing on the role of conscience and seven historically orientated models of relating Christianity and politics.

It includes a focus upon the Christian contribution to the development of the modern nation-state and thus includes discussions of theological concepts that have been adapted including the notions of time, the eschaton, community, conscience and, especially, the “mystical body” of Christ and the church. Pecknold engages in a discussion of the work of Sheldon Wolin and Henri de Lubac on the socio-political adaptation of the mystical body, from its Eucharistic use, through its application to the church and then to Christian society as a whole and finally as a model for the imaginary “body” of the modern state. He is helpful in establishing the connection between ecclesiology and the form of secular society that emerged, and in his concluding chapter has sections on conscience and the church - but not the individualized conscience for, as he says, “We have forgotten the ends to which the conscience is directed and the ecclesial location of its formation.”4 It is a brief, readable, historical and theological introduction to church state relationships. Those who wish to discuss the nature of the
relationship between church and state need to have a grasp on the nature of both those entities and Pecknold provides a good, albeit fairly focused, resource for thinking this through. Christianity and Politics brings us to the modern nation-state but in addition to an understanding of the theological background it is important to develop a sense of the way that the modern secular state has developed into different forms. One of the great difficulties in public debates about the nature of modern society is the assumption that there is one model of secularity when, in fact, there are very important differences between the various expressions of that which is involved in a secular society.

In this regard Stephen V. Monsma and J. Christopher Soper have provided a great help with The Challenge of Pluralism: Church and State in Five Democracies, 2nd ed. (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2009). This is a thoroughly revised and extended edition of the book that first appeared in 1999 and is a very useful resource. The first chapter is an introduction to their research on the nature of the relationship between church and state in secular societies – the plural is essential as it emphasizes the fact that there is no one model of secularism. The point is emphasized that the actual practice of the relationship between church and state has much to do with each nation’s unique history, a point that connects with the general thesis of Charles Taylor that modern secularism is the result of newly constructed and historically dependent self-understandings. Modern secularism in its various forms and, consequently, our present spiritual predicament cannot be understood apart from history. Monsma and Soper ask three basic questions: firstly, how far can a democratic policy go in permitting religiously motivated behavior that is contrary to societal welfare or norms? Secondly, should the state encourage and promote consensual religious beliefs and traditions in an attempt to support the common values and beliefs that bind a society together and make possible limited, democratic government? And thirdly when religious groups and the state are both active in the same fields of endeavor, how can one ensure that the state does not advantage or disadvantage either religious or secular belief systems over others?

They explore the answers to this in five chapters on five stable, secular democracies, providing a brief description of the salient characteristics of the nation; an historical summary of church state relations; a discussion of how the country has handled the free exercise of religion, especially for minority religious groups; and then special attention is paid to policies as they relate to issues of education and religiously-based social service organizations. They examine the United States (which is characterized as involving strict separation), the Netherlands (principled pluralism), Australia (pragmatic pluralism), England (partial establishment) and Germany (partnership and autonomy) before a concluding chapter on church and
state in pluralistic democracies with a number of basic observations about what can be gleaned from this study. In eastern Australia there has recently been an extended debate about the role and the funding of chaplains in state schools. If only those participating in the public dialog had all read the case-studies on religion and education in this volume there would have been much more light than heat. Hearing, for example, the arguments in Germany that a failure to fund faith-based organizations while funding their secular counterparts is to be viewed as discriminatory might have meant avoiding the common claim that the only form of secularity involves the strictly separationist model. This book helps greatly in understanding the nature of secularism and brings together theoretical and historical arguments about the way that societies do, and could, operate.

These four books share a common concern for healthy, secular societies where religious faith flourishes and they are predicated on many of the same theological and biblical principles. Yet, as we have seen, there are significant variations with regard to the way that this works out in practice. There is a need for more work on at least three issues: firstly, the influence social and cultural factors have on the formation of identity and the extent to which this influences the ability to confidently connect basic theological principles with specific policy outcomes; secondly, the nature of the church as the body of Christ, involving individuals of conscience who are joined together by a common faith and yet often separated by subterranean and often unexplored dimensions of personal and social history; and thirdly, the relationship, in both theory and practice, between the various forms of secularism that exist around the world. When nation-states are fundamentally separated these variations are of little consequence but as the various parts of the world come closer together a dialog between them becomes ever more important.

Brian Edgar is professor of theological studies at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky.

Endnotes

2 Grudem, Politics According to the Bible, 204-205.

3 Grudem, Politics According to the Bible, 450-451.


GARY L. McINTOSH

Reaching Secular Peoples: A Review of the Books of George G. Hunter, III

Among those who are interested in evangelism in the United States, the name of George G. Hunter, III has become legendary. No one, to my knowledge, has explored the evangelization of secular peoples as closely or deeply or broadly in the last half century. Beginning as a college student in the 1960s seeking to evangelize secular weightlifters on muscle beach in Southern California, Dr. Hunter entered on what has become a life long journey of discovery. Empowered by early frustrations of being unable to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ to secular peoples in Venice, California, he has focused his understanding of several disciplines—communication theory, church growth theory, etc.—on the essential task of making disciples. This article is a brief overview of his fourteen books (to date), as well as his developing thought.

Training Church Leaders

George G. Hunter, III received his formal education at Florida Southern College (B.A. 1960), Emory University (B.D. 1963), Princeton Theological Seminary (Th.M. 1964), and Northwestern University (Ph.D. 1972). During those years he served as a pastor of two different churches, and between 1965 and 1972 he was Director of Preaching Evangelism and Advocacy of the United Methodist Church's Board of Evangelism and a leader of the New Life Mission. It was at this time that he produced his first book.

Rethinking Evangelism: A Symposium (1971)

During the early 1970s, the General Board of Evangelism offered training for pastors called New Life Missioner Training School. The purpose of the schools was to train United Methodist pastors to lead New Life Missions. Participants in the training read several books and articles as supplemental material. Over time it became apparent that it would be profitable to make some of the supplemental readings available for wider exposure among United Method Churches. Thus, Rethinking Evangelism was born. As editor Hunter compiled lectures and articles written by Bishop James Armstrong,
Donald Soper, Carl Michalson, Canon Bryan Green, and Harry Emerson Fosdick, while writing the introduction and chapter six “A New Model for Christian Witnessing” himself.

Today it is fashionable to declare that Christendom is dead and that we are now living in a post-Christian age where the older forms of evangelistic outreach no longer work. However, Hunter saw this reality in 1971 and declared, “Christendom is grasping its last breaths, and fundamentalist and pietistic forms of evangelism have largely failed to confront post-Christendom man in his depths or in his systems for change.”

He also pointed out that popular religion in North America was “essentially a folk religion” and one that “men approach out of a consumer orientation” for what they get out of it. Thus, to effectively communicate the Good News of the Gospel, Hunter suggested that evangelists must (1) take secular culture seriously, (2) communicate the authentic message so that it lodges in popular consciousness, (3) employ secular language in place of religious jargon, (4) respect the sanctity and freedom of human personality (i.e., not coerce or manipulate commitments), (5) particularize the Gospel to individual needs, (6) offer reconciliation of relationships, and (7) see evangelism as the penultimate process toward the ultimate end of making disciples.

Since there is no normative way that people come to Christ, Hunter reminds his readers that “What matters is not how men make the great transition but, that they make it.” Thus, evangelists must not look for the one way to evangelize secular people, but to adapt their evangelistic approach to each person. Adaptations must be made so that the evangelistic pitch relates to the needs, wants, and desires that motive people.

Hunter sees this adaptive approach to evangelism as moving from particular to general rather than from general to particular. The old form of evangelism, according to Hunter, was a deductive one that moved from a general commitment to Christ to particular understandings of how such a commitment impacted war, race, community needs, pollution, or even personal needs. However, secular mankind has changed their way of thinking so that an inductive approach that moves from the particular to the general is more effective. Effective evangelistic approaches start with a person's individual needs and moves from there to a general commitment to Christ as savior.

The heart of Hunter’s thought in Rethinking Evangelism is “that evangelism is not an end in itself, but is the handmaid of mission.” In using an inductive approach to witnessing, the evangelist invites non-believers to join in following Jesus Christ at a particular point of mission. As the non-believer participates in a particular mission along with a group of Jesus’ disciples, he or she experiences a taste of the Kingdom. This loving exposure to Christians
on a particular mission acts to draw the non-believer toward a general commitment to Christ as Lord and Savior. In many circles today Hunter’s inductive approach from the particular to the general is being called missional, but he was advocating it forty years ago.

Focus on Evangelism: Readings for Thinking It Through (1978)

From 1972 to 1976 George Hunter taught in the McCreless Chair of Evangelism at the Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University before taking on the role of Secretary for Evangelism of the United Methodist Board of Discipleship. Shortly thereafter he edited Focus on Evangelism: Readings for Thinking It Through (1978) to bring together helpful resources on evangelism that were not readily available to the average church member. While some Christians felt comfortable using a “canned” approach to evangelism, Hunter recognized that some, perhaps many, church members desired to think it through for themselves. Thus, Hunter pulled together twelve insightful articles to help church leaders “think it through.”

The book offers an anthology of ideas by twelve authors on key evangelistic questions, such as, What is evangelism?, What is the matter with preaching?, and Would Jesus Stoop to Canned Evangelism?, and on practical issues, such as The setting for making Christians today, The art of Communication, and Counseling the Seeker.

While he does not contribute any chapter to the book, in the introduction Hunter shows his passion by encouraging the reader to start reaching out to people and “Avoid like the plague this debilitating paralysis of analysis.”

“‘The harvest is great,’” he declares, “‘and many ‘lost’ people are receptive, searching . . . waiting to be ‘found’ by Christ’s holy flock and brought as new disciples into his fold.”

Hunter concludes the introduction admonishing readers “don’t wait until you have everything straight and all of your questions answered before your church reaches out . . . Above all, do not neglect that empowerment promised by the same Spirit who is now preparing people in the world to hear the Great News and to receive Him and the life of the kingdom.”

Interpreting Church Growth

During 1977 Hunter took a sabbatical to study church growth with Donald McGavran at Fuller’s School of Intercultural studies. While there, he sat in on courses with McGavran, C. Peter Wagner, and Charles Kraft, while also spending much time in private discussion with each. Following the sabbatical, church growth thought started appearing prominently in his writings, as evidenced in Contagious Congregation.
The Contagious Congregation: Frontiers in Evangelism and Church Growth (1979)

Donald McGavran wrote the Foreword to *The Contagious Congregation: Frontiers in Evangelism and Church Growth* (1979) and began “Here is a rich book couched in pungent English. It talks good sense, makes needed distinctions clearly, and disagrees with erroneous positions courteously. It is good reading.” McGavran describes precisely the way George Hunter writes and speaks, as those who have studied with him and listened to him can attest. Hunter’s language is always “vivid, colorful and readable.”

As the subtitle explains, George Hunter draws upon his study of church growth thought to present an assertive strategy for reaching people for Christ. He strongly calls attention to the fact that a lack of evangelism coincides with a lack of growth in most churches in the United States. “This is one reason” he writes, “why so many congregations do not grow—they do not engage in intentional ‘evangelism.’ The other reason is that they do engage in evangelism—but in ways which are outmoded, or not ‘indigenous’ to the culture of the target population.”

Hunter’s purpose in writing *The Contagious Congregation* was to “inspire and equip the leaders of congregations to evangelize in ways that with integrity really do attract people, that make new disciples, that expand Christ’s church, and that make evangelism a credible word and enterprise again.”

To fulfill this purpose, Hunter defines evangelism in church growth terms of making disciples and incorporating new believers into Christ’s Body, a local congregation. He reiterates the importance of using an Inductive-Mission Model, first described in *Rethinking Evangelism*, which begins with people’s motivational needs as described in Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Human Motives.

Hunter tips his hat to McGavran’s Church Growth Theory by including the concepts of resistant-receptive peoples, the need for multiple evangelistic contacts, and the importance of relationships (what McGavran called bridges), but extends the understanding of each as to its empowerment of effective evangelism. He taps into his knowledge of rhetoric, particularly Aristotle’s understanding of *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*, to build a proven model for communicating the Gospel to secular resistant people.

Finally, after declaring that “The Church Growth movement’s greatest contribution to this generation’s world evangelization will be its stress upon receptivity,” Hunter outlines practice indicators to know when people are open to the Gospel and are thus winnable to Christ.

Finding the Way Forward (1980)

In the late 1970s the Board of Discipleship produced the film *Finding the Way Forward*, to which George Hunter wrote a companion study guide by
the same name. As a simple and practical guide, the book offered ideas for implementing evangelism and church growth strategies in local congregations. Specific steps are given on how to identify new people with needs a church might meet. It also offers insights on providing ports of entry for newcomers, as well as clear ways to assimilate them after they are reached. Hunter made good use of the most relevant church growth insights of the time.

**Church Growth: Strategies That Word (1980 with Donald McGavran)**

Donald McGavran was invited to address a Congress on Evangelism for the United Methodist Church being held in Miami, FL in the late 1970s. About that time Lyle Schaller was editing a popular series of books called the Creative Leadership Series published by Abingdon Press. Since McGavran was not well known among Methodists in the United States at the time, Schaller suggested to George Hunter that he coauthor a book based on the lectures McGavran had presented at the Congress on Evangelism.

With McGavran’s cooperation, Hunter took the four manuscripts that McGavran had used to lecture at the Congress, and turned them into three chapters on the history of church growth, training laity for church growth, and reaching new people through new congregations. Hunter then wrote an additional three chapters on using existing social networks for evangelism, motivating people for church growth, and helping smaller churches to grow. Hunter edited the chapters to make a very useful tool for local congregations. The book was widely read throughout the United States.

Hunter used his chapter in the book to continue introducing United Methodists to the research and discoveries of the Fuller Church Growth School of Thought. Building on research by C. Peter Wagner, McGavran, and Win Arn, he added his own examples from field research among Methodist Congregations, and further insights from the pen of Lyle Schaller. The book presented in simple terms the emerging strategic thinking about evangelism at the time.

**... and Every Tongue Confess: Toward a Recovery of Our Essential Mission (1983)**

In 1981 George Hunter received the Philip Award from the National Association of United Methodist Evangelists for his work in evangelism with the Methodist Church. His years of ministry as an evangelist, consultant, and denominational leader, however, led to his belief that the United Methodist Church no longer had a consensus understanding of its mission. Hunter suggests in *... and Every Tongue Confess* that the answer is found in the Bible.
This book is the most direct Bible study that Hunter has written. In it he goes straight to Scriptures—Philippians, Romans, Acts, Haggai, Ezra, and Romans—to build a case “that every person’s birthright is to have the opportunity to know the one true God whose Word and presence is mediated through Jesus, and to obey this God in life supremely, through the support and power of the messianic community.”  

... and Every Tongue Confess is a hidden treasure of theological and biblical rationale for God’s mission of seeking and saving the lost. It is a treasure because it offers rich insights into well-known (Philippians, Acts, and Romans) and not so well known (Haggai and Ezra) writings. It demonstrates effective strategies for communicating the Gospel in a time of religious pluralism, and debunks significant excuses for a lack of evangelistic practice in our churches. And, it is a hidden treasure because most leaders are unaware or, and certainly few have read, this challenging book. ... and Every Tongue Confess! clearly demonstrates that Hunter’s understandings about effective evangelism are rooted solidly in biblical truth. While Hunter is not a “desk” theologian, his field theory rests on a solid theology.

Declaring Apostolic Mission
Beginning with To Spread the Power: Church Growth in the Wesleyan Spirit, George Hunter moved into a new phase of publications. While his early books mostly grew out of his work as a denominational leader, this book signaled a focus on a wider audience. Too, his earlier books had to a great extent reflected McGavan’s church growth theory; this book incorporated more of Hunter’s own research and thought, particularly an emphasis on apostolic mission.

To Spread the Power: Church Growth in the Wesleyan Spirit (1987)
Growing out of his own graduate and post-graduate studies of communication and applied behavioral sciences, To Spread the Power was a second-generation text on church growth. It was a groundbreaking book in that it was the first to seriously integrate John Wesley’s strategies with Church Growth Thought. Chapter two appropriately is titled: “John Wesley As Church Growth Strategist.”

The book also extended and added fresh insights to the growing body of church growth knowledge by defining, explaining, and applying six mega strategies for church leaders: Identifying Receptive Peoples, Reaching Out Across Social Networks, Multiplying Recruiting Units, Ministering to People’s Needs, Indigenizing the Church’s Ministries, and Strategic Planning for a Church’s Future.

In this book Hunter introduces the beginning of a theme that is he unpacks in future books: apostolic ministry. Here he writes of restoring
apostolic confidence, advancing the apostolic movement, and the importance of evangelism in apostolic ministry.

**How to Reach Secular People (1992)**

If Hunter has been obsessed with anything, it is the desire to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ to truly secular people. When this book was released in 1992, he had been at it, that is, studying how to reach secular people for thirty years! The book opened the eyes of numerous church leaders to see and understand the secular peoples of Europe and North America.

*How to Reach Secular People* informed pastors that the Christian West (Christendom) was lost. It declared that Modernity was spent. The book offered hope by defining and profiling secular people, offering useable insights on how to communicate to them, describing how apostolic congregations and apostolic Christians could reach them.

As was his growing practice, Hunter inculcated church growth theory, ideas from John Wesley, and fresh perspectives from communication theory to the complicated task of reaching secular men and women. While his earlier books positioned Hunter as a specialist in Church Growth, this one established his credentials as the leading exegete of secular people for the church. The book is honest, comprehensive scholarship at its pragmatic best.

**Church for the Unchurched (1996)**

By the mid 1990s, what came to be known as seeker churches were in full bloom. Some churches that targeted seekers, another word for the unchurched, had grown to mega church size, capturing the imagination and press coverage of Christian and secular publications. Along the way, the seeker church approach to ministry gathered its share of criticism, which brought pain to some saints who fostered seeker strategies for church growth.

When *Church for the Unchurched* was released in 1996, it was immediately hailed as an apologetic for the seeker church movement or rather what Hunter prefers to call apostolic congregations. Indeed Hunter did offered support for seeker services as a reemergence of what churches had always done, target special services toward the nonchurched. However, Hunter presented his views by expanding on a theme he had introduced in previous books: the apostolic church.

Hunter defined an apostolic church as one where the leaders believed they and the church were called and sent “by God to reach an unchurched pre-Christian population.” He built on the concept of an apostolic church by relating old forms of ministry to this new concept. Specifically, he explained the features of an apostolic congregation, as well as how it could reach secular people, employs small groups, communicate the gospel, and
be culturally relevant. If *How to Reach Secular People* was the more scholarly book, this one was the more popular in its applications.


Using the story of the fifth- to ninth-century Celtic Christian movement, Hunter advances his thought on the recovery of apostolic mission. In this popular book he captivates the reader through the telling the story of Patrick’s mission to Ireland. Throughout the story, Hunter demonstrates clearly that a new kind of church, an apostolic church, replaced the Roman parish church and thereby succeeded in winning the Celtic peoples to faith in Christ.

Patrick’s mission to the Celtic people focused on being and doing church in a manner that suggests a mission ecclesiology for reaching the west again. Hunter describes five themes that may be helpful to evangelizing post-modern peoples today. First, Celtic Christians evangelized as a team. Second, Patrick’s mission “prepared people to live with depth, compassion, and power in mission.” Third, Celtic evangelization incorporated imaginative prayer that engaged people’s feelings as well as their minds. Fourth, the Celtic approach placed a high value on hospitality by welcoming strangers, guests, and refugees into the communion. Fifth, Patrick reversed the Roman model—Presentation, Decision, Fellowship—and thereby created a Celtic model—Fellowship, Presentation, Decision.

It was this last strategy that captured the essence of a new way to reach secular people. Hunter describes this approach as follows. “(1) You first establish community with people, or bring them into the fellowship of your community of faith. (2) Within fellowship, you engage in conversation, ministry, prayer, and worship. (3) In time, as they discover that they now believe, you invite them to commit.” At the time of writing, this Celtic way of evangelism was startling to the minds of church leaders in the west, but today it is considered the wise approach.


The challenge of doing ministry in an apostolic manner is formidable. Transitioning an older congregation steeped in doing church the Roman way to doing church in a Celtic way is fraught with unprecedented barriers. Thus, Hunter wrote *Leading & Managing a Growing Church* to fill in the missing link of how to lead and manage a turnaround church.

Hunter writes the book in three sections. The first four chapters help Christian leaders “get on board” with management principles. Chapters five through nine describe essential management concepts of analyzing, planning, organizing, delegating, appraising, and controlling. Finally, in
chapter ten, a “Breakthrough Project” model for turning around a church is presented. The Hunter Congregational Health Questionnaire is offered as a resource for discovering the current situation of a congregation.16

While Leading and Managing a Growth Church at first appears to depart from the theme of apostolic ministry, it fits naturally into the flow of change management. Moving a church into an apostolic frame of mind takes significant leadership and management skills. This book is a tool that will help church leaders move a congregation toward a new paradigm of apostolic ministry.


In Radical Outreach Hunter continues to unpack the concept of apostolic ministry in greater detail. The book was written to be a textbook for a three-hour Master of Divinity course in Apostolic Ministry at Asbury’s School of Theology. Using a composite fictional congregation called Old East Side Church, Hunter challenges all churches to reach three categories of populations: pre-Christian secular people, those often thought of as hopeless, and recent immigrants.

Hunter builds the book on Paul’s prescription for church renewal in 1 & 2 Corinthians. While the Corinthian church was dysfunctional, it was also a church on mission. In contrast to current books on church health and/or renewal, Radical Outreach declares, “churches are not called to become ‘renewed’ or ‘healthy’ first, and then to reach out. Pathological churches experience renewal and greater health as they abandon their narcissism, reach out, and experience new people who have just discovered grace entering their ranks.”17

Many of the standard church growth themes—cultural relevance, empowered laity, hospitality, and evangelistic conversation—are restated in new ways. However, the importance of ministry with so-called impossible people is introduced in chapter five. In this chapter Hunter deftly describes the use of recovery ministries for outreach to secular people. Paul Rader, who wrote the forward to the book, says “this chapter on addiction alone is worth the price of the book.”18


At first glance, Christian, Evangelical & . . . Democrat? appears to be way out of the mold of a George Hunter book. A close read, however, discovers that it carries the same desire as all of his books, that is, to reach secular people.

The book does challenge the idea that Christian Democrat is an oxymoron, similar to “jumbo shrimp,” “just war,” or “working vacation.”
However, Hunter’s concern is not just to make a social commentary. Rather he is “concerned for the soul and the credibility of evangelical Christianity.”

Specifically, Hunter writes to encourage Christians to remain active in all political parties, indeed all segments of society, in order to bear testimony to the availability of new life in Jesus Christ. He writes, “My ‘agenda’ is to encourage evangelical Christians to (once again) love Democrats as well as Republicans, and to be involved as ‘salt’ and ‘light’ in both parties (once again), and to invite pre-Christian Democrats (and Republicans) to become followers of Christ.”

The Apostolic Congregation: Church Growth Reconcived for a New Generation (2009)

With The Apostolic Congregation, Hunter connects full circle his church growth roots and his apostolic passion for extending the grace of Christ to all peoples. He “restates core Church Growth principles and insights, but he also extends the categories and enlarges the knowledge about conversion evangelism beyond what is already known.”

The Apostolic Congregation does not simply dress up old ideas in new garb, but offers original designs for making disciples. Catalytic growth, proliferation growth, movemental growth, and apostolic growth provide increased understanding on how to reach secular people in today’s post-Christian context.

Hunter not only explains what Church Growth really means and why it is needed, but he also describes apostolic Christianity’s main business—making disciples of all nations for Jesus Christ!

Summary Thoughts

This short overview of the books of George G. Hunter, III shows the development of his thought during the last forty years. While his writings are too rich to completely analyze in so short of an article, the following are a few summary thoughts.

First, looking back from today’s vantage point, it is surprising to see how far ahead of his time George Hunter was in his understanding of evangelism and other church growth issues. Today it is trendy to say that Christendom is dead and that we are now living in a post-Christian age where the older forms of evangelistic outreach no longer work. It is also common to hear people decry the prevalence of a consumer-orientation in churches. However, Hunter was declaring both of these ideas as far back as 1971.

Second, Hunter is not only the first interpreter but also the premiere interpreter of Donald McGavran’s Church Growth Thought to a Wesleyan audience. His sabbatical in 1977, which allowed him to study directly with McGavran, led to a developing friendship and collaboration with McGavran.
in 1979. Since that time, all of Hunter’s books reveal evidence of Church Growth Thought.

Third, no one to my knowledge has done as thorough or significant a job in wedding field research, sound theological understanding, and academic rigor in the research of evangelism. His combination of careful research with cogent language to express ancient principles for reaching secular peoples is tops.

Fourth, while he works out of a Wesleyan theological and historical tradition, Hunter engages readers across all theological spectrums with an irenic spirit of grace, cooperation, and collegiality. Indeed some leaders in the field of Evangelism (if not most) say that Hunter is the leading advocate of evangelism in North America.

Fifth, another of Hunter’s contributions to the literature and practice of mission ecclesiology is approaching today’s evangelistic challenge historically. His strong affinity for ancient apostolic movements—Celtic and Wesleyan—roots his insights solidly in Christianity’s historic past. While some writes may focus on recent Church history, Hunter delves into the ancient church to pull out facts, insights, and principles that are applicable to today’s challenges.

The good news is that George G. Hunter, III is not finished writing. His retirement from full-time teaching at Asbury Theological Seminary opens the way for him to focus even more time on writing. His forthcoming book on The Recovery of a Contagious Methodist Movement is surely be a winner. I look forward to reading it, as well as future books destined to come from his prolific pen.

Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D. is professor of Christian Ministry & Leadership at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University.

Endnotes

2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., 7.
4 Ibid., 52.
5 Ibid, 53.
6 Ibid., 53-54.
8 Ibid.
10 Ibid., 20.

11 Ibid., 21.

12 George G. Hunter, III, ...and Every Tongue Confess! toward a recovery of our essential mission (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1983), 3-4.


15 Ibid., 53.


18 Ibid., 11.


20 Ibid., xiv.

Book Reviews

A Peaceable Psychology: Christian Therapy in a World of Many Cultures
Alvin Dueck and Kevin R. Reimer
Reviewed by Anthony J. Headley

I found A Peaceable Psychology: Christian Therapy in a World of Many Cultures a most insightful, provocative and challenging read. The book fits within the broader multicultural literature on psychology but uniquely weds to it a distinctive Christian perspective. In it, the authors describe their vision of a peaceable psychology. The term, a peaceable psychology, is no simple concept to grasp. Rather, it is complex and multifaceted, demanding multiple lenses to understand its nature. However, the authors did a superb job in attempting to make their vision plain. This vision is made clear by contrasting it with Western psychology and laying out singular aspects of a peaceable psychology. In the process, they drew upon a rich body of resources, including a variety of disciplines such as theology, philosophy, sociology and history among others, in order to provide breadth and depth to the subject. I found the journey into these various realms fascinating, mind-stretching and illuminating.

In different chapters within the book, the authors described concepts such as an empire psychology, secularese, boutique multiculturalism, thick and thin psychology, and morality. Through these chapters, the authors provided a withering critique of mainstream Western psychology, in particular, American psychology. For example, in chapter two, the authors used the concept of empire to critique American psychology’s collusion with military projects and procedures and its neglect of the local traditions of the cultures into which it is imported. They noted that, "... American psychology is so enculturated that it reflects the same values that characterize the political and economic priorities of the nation" (p. 37). Similarly, in chapter four, they discussed secularese, described as psychology’s lingua franca. For them, secularese is the primary psychological medium for communication.
Unfortunately, this medium marginalizes the religious language of clients. But **secularese** is not only a language but also a set of practices emptied of the transcendent and relying only on dysfunction and pathology to explain human situations.

Through these and other terms elucidated in the other chapters, the authors described a psychology which largely stands in contrast to a peaceable psychology. For them, Western psychology fundamentally negates clients' religious and ethnic particularity. In contrast, a peaceable psychology validates these aspects of the client. In addition, it takes seriously the presence of evil and privileges the poor and their language. It is willing to relinquish power, suffers with the poor, advocates for the voiceless, responds to the effects of violence and seeks reconciliation. A peaceable psychology also looks to Christ, seeing him as a lens for understanding individual suffering and as the foundation upon which one builds a therapeutic ethic and practice. The authors used several examples from different cultures, primarily Latin American, to further illustrate their theme. Most prominently, they used the example of Juanita, a Guatemalan woman who had experienced violence during the civil war, including the cruel killing of her husband. For the authors, Juanita’s suffering face represents the face of the suffering God and is not simply a client to be diagnosed and treated. Rather, according to the authors, a peaceable psychology would respond ...to the effects of such violence with the suffering and resurrection of Jesus” (p. 22).

To further flesh out its meaning, the authors splattered across the book little nuggets which described the nature of a peaceable psychology. These descriptions largely focused on what a peaceable psychology does. I offer a few of these examples: “A peaceable psychology privileges the suffering of the poor and the language they use to understand it” (p. 18). “A peaceable psychology takes seriously the particular, local stories reflective of an indigenous psychology” (p. 22). ... a peaceable psychology does not impose a common language on the “public square” of therapy.” It invites the client to bring his or her “private” religious language into the public setting of therapy” (p. 73). In addition, in chapter nine, the authors provided some examples of persons who practice a peaceable psychology. They pointed to José, a Central American psychologist concerned with reconciliation and Ignacio Martín-Baró, a social psychologist in El Salvador who “... wrote passionately about a psychology that could be liberating, that was just, and not a servant of violent government.” (p. 186).

The end product of these varied efforts to describe a peaceable psychology is a topic and book which are well illustrated and depicted. I came away from these discussions with my mind stimulated, my eyes opened in a fresh way and with new insights and concepts for understanding how psychology has been shaped by a western mindset. I also came away with
new thoughts and perspectives on how different psychology might operate if it was grounded on Christ.

However, although I largely agreed with many of the conclusions drawn, I also came away with some questions. Given their austere critique of Western and American psychology, I wondered whether the envisioned peaceable psychology could be taught within a program in the West and more specifically in the USA. Moreover, given the preponderance of positive examples drawn from Latin American people, cultures and psychological practitioners, I wondered if the authors implied that only such cultures could truly approach their vision. If this is the case, what are the implications for training in the West? Does this mean that training programs in the USA, especially those which self-identify as Christian (including those at which the authors teach), are truly incapable of developing a peaceable psychology? Would such programs have to step outside of their Western biased culture to begin to approach this vision? In some ways, the answer seems to be yes, especially when one considers that at least one of the authors does quite a bit of training of his graduate students in such cultural contexts.

Anthony J. Headley is professor of counseling at Asbury Theological Seminary and a Licensed Psychologist in Kentucky.

Globalization and Theology

Joerg Rieger

Horizons in Theology

Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010

Reviewed by Nathan Crawford

Joerg Rieger’s Globalization and Theology is another fine contribution to come out of Abingdon Press’ series Horizons in Theology. This series seeks to theologically illuminate areas that are quite relevant to theology but at times are not adequately dealt with. In this vain, Rieger’s text offers a theological account of globalization. He does this by analyzing the forms of power that are prevalent in globalization and how theology deals with them. Rieger’s main concern is to counter top-down forms of power. Top-down power is both a hard and soft form of power. The Roman Empire’s attempt to regulate and control life and even Christian doctrine is a form of top-down, hard power. The “Hellenization” of Christianity is a form of top-down, soft power because this was not a conscious or national decision, but something that occurs as the upper classes impose their way of thinking upon lower classes. For Rieger, both of these forms of top-down power are quite prevalent in globalization and must be dealt with and, in most circumstances, resisted through theology.
Rieger structures the text into two broad sections. The first is an analysis and critique of hard power while the second analyzes and critiques soft power. The section on hard power shows how this type of power focuses large concentrations of both wealth and influence/power in the hands of a few people to the detriment of the larger majority of people. Hard power does not offer room for alternative forms of existence because this would decrease its power. Instead, this form of power structures the way of life for those people living within its structures. Rieger argues that in order to counter hard power there needs to be a focus on the majority instead of the minority. He says that the globalization that has helped to further consolidate hard power has also lead to the sharing of knowledge and resources of those oppressed by hard power. Now the majority can become a collective that actively resists the dominant forms of hard power. Rieger points to the resistance to hard power that occurs theologically in the person of Jesus and the Christian declaration of “Jesus is Lord.” Jesus’ power works from the bottom up as the incarnation shows God in the flesh of a “day-laborer” and Jesus brings together those who are under the rule of hard forms of power. Thus, the incarnation is a place where bottom up power resists the top down structure of hard power.

The second section of *Globalization and Theology* focuses on soft forms of power. Rieger argues that at this point in time, globalization is now a form of soft power in that, while not a government of empire, it is influential and still seeks (and accomplishes) focusing the majority of wealth and influence/power in the hands of the few. Soft power also works to erase difference through the inclusion of all under some sort of encompassing heading or rubric. As an example, Rieger points to Bartolome de Las Casas, a missionary from Spain to the New World, who was aware of the problems confronting the Native Americas but still wanted to convert them to being Christians in a Spaniard way. The result is an attempt to erase the difference that exists. Las Casas did not force their conversion but shaped his society in a way that “encouraged” the Native Americans to become “Christian.” Soft power still supports and endorses clear power differentials. The result is still imperial, even though it does not occur through the form of hard power. Rieger counters forms of soft power by turning to ways that theology embraces bottom up forms of power that resist these soft forms of power. He points to the work of John Wesley with the early Methodists and the work of liberation theologians. In both of these examples, Rieger notices the coalescing of groups who affirm each other’s differences, yet are still able to resist the hegemonic encroachment of soft forms of power brought in and through globalization.

Rieger’s text is an excellent piece for thinking through the implications of globalization for theology, as well as how theology responds to
globalization. While the text could offer more details at times, it is meant to be introductory in nature. As such, it is ideal for almost anyone who is interested in the issues surrounding globalization and wants to learn more, especially from the perspective of a theologian. In all, then, it is a recommended text.

Nathan Crawford is adjunct professor of religion and philosophy at Wesley Seminary at Indiana Wesleyan University as well as youth and young adult director at Trinity United Methodist Church in Plymouth, IN.
WESLEYAN STUDIES SUMMER SEMINAR

✓ Meet with Asbury experts.
✓ No tuition charges.
✓ FREE housing at the Asbury Inn.
✓ Scholarships for airfare available for international researchers.

Now accepting applications for June 2012!

Asbury Theological Seminary and Asbury University will be holding a Wesleyan Studies Summer Seminar (WSSS) in June 2012! This seminar has been established to develop and support research, writing and publication in the broad field of Wesleyan studies. The seminar will promote the work of serious researchers by:

1. Making scholarly resources available to participants.
2. Fostering dialog between researchers and experts in the researcher’s field.
3. Creating an environment for conversation, study and networking among scholars in the field of Wesleyan studies.

Designed for those who are working on articles, dissertations, and book length manuscripts in the field of Wesleyan studies with an eye to publication, the WSSS will take place June 4-28, 2012 on the Asbury Seminary Kentucky campus with sessions being held on Monday and Thursday afternoons.

Applications must be received by January 16, 2012.

Applicants will be notified of their acceptance by March 16, 2012.

This seminar is limited to ten persons. Application includes: application form, fifty dollar application fee, a full vitae, a description of the current research project as well as a projected plan for publication.

Application can be found online at asburyseminary.edu/wesleyan-studies