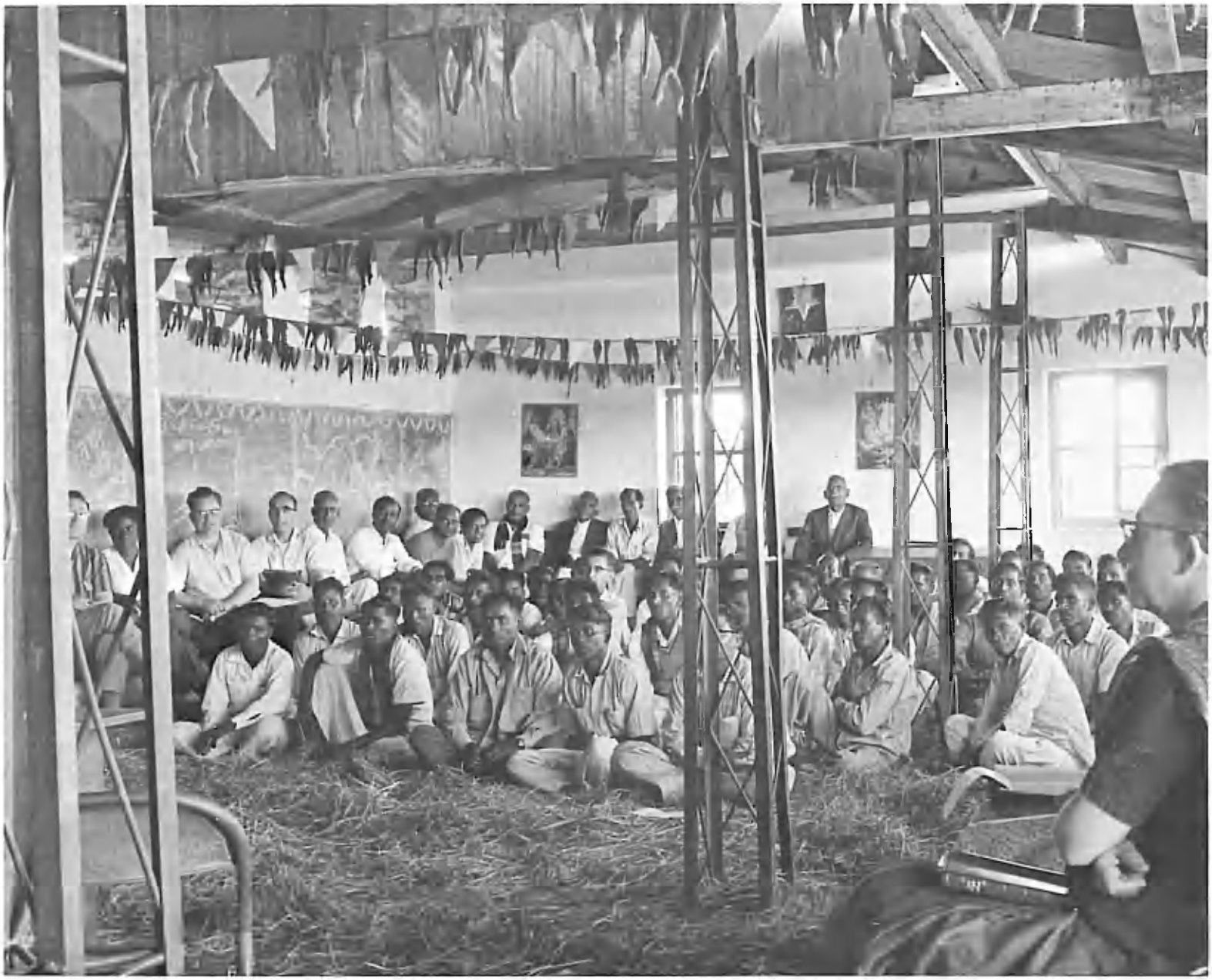
# MENNONITE LIFE

JANUARY 1966



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MENNONITE LIFE

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## COVERS

The cover features a Mennonite Conference session at Mauhadi, India, 1961. (Back cover) The Public Health Nurse, Taiwan, takes time out to teach children Christian songs.

## PHOTO CREDITS:

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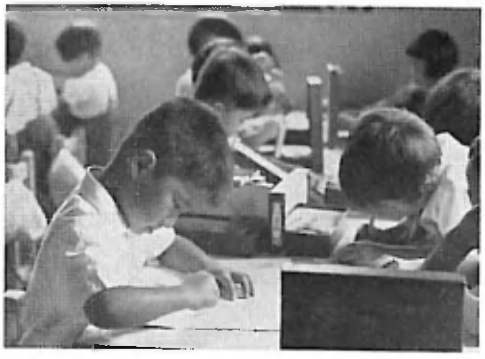
# IN THIS ISSUE

the theme and the story of the content are given on the front and back cover. If we were to attend a conference in India (front cover) or a school (back cover) we would find an atmosphere very much different from that to which we are accustomed. ¶ The Christian outreach or missions are being evaluated critically. During the post-war era, new nations have come into being and old religions have been revived in an atmosphere of nationalism. The traditional, paternal attitude of Christian missions in non-Christian countries is on its way out. New and old nations can obtain technical know-how and Western cultural values via channels other than those of the mission stations. The awakening of the nations and the growing self-esteem causes Christianity to restudy its program abroad. ¶ The challenge which we confront is presented from a number of angles. First of all, our attention is called to the fact that we must be ready to "cross frontiers" which is also being emphasized in the need for the "training of missionaries for the world of today." A veteran missionary expresses his experiences and impressions in "the challenge as I see it" while an anthropologist highlights through personal experiences the necessity that the missionary "identify" himself to some extent with the culture of the area to which he is going. It would indeed be wholesome to hear and read more about how "younger churches" look at the West. The two African students relate from their point of view what the "role of the Western missionary" should be in their country. A similar challenge is presented by a missionary in Japan. Missions are not only in need of readjustment in approach, methods and outlook, but also in a re-evaluation of "a biblical view of missions," and a study of the "theology of the church's mission." In addition a better acquaintance with the "non-Christian religions" is essential. ¶ An unusual feature of this issue is the INDEX, covering the last five years (1961-65). At this occasion attention should be called to the INDEX which appeared in the January 1961 issue as well as the INDEX in the January 1956 issue. These combined guides enable the readers to have at their fingertips the information contained in twenty years of *Mennonite Life*.

*The Younger Generation in Japan*



# The Church Crossing Frontiers

*By Orlando A. Waltner*

SINCE THE TIME of William Carey, the church has pushed relentlessly across geographical frontiers. All manner of boundaries and terrains have known the footsteps of the missionaries. With new worlds beckoning or national boundaries defying, the missionary negotiated, prayed and worked his way over every continent. And no joy was greater than to report, "Thank God we gained entrance into another area where for the first time the message of God's redemption in Jesus Christ is now being brought to the people." These geographical frontiers could prove to be formidable barriers. Passports, visas, emigrating and immigrating officers, and customs did in some cases make difficult the crossing of national boundaries. And too frequently the church felt its mission accomplished when such boundaries were crossed. Today we must stress the word frontiers. What are these frontiers? Where in the contemporary world do these frontiers run? Does the missionary obedience of the church imply the crossing of frontiers always and everywhere until the end of history?

Recent developments in the theology of missions have given the biblical expression, "the uttermost parts of the earth," its more true and universal dimension. This should help at some points to overcome the incomplete or inadequate understanding we have had of the church crossing frontiers.

In the first place, because Jesus Christ offers salvation and hope to the whole world, and because belief in the universal fellowship of the redeemed has to be shared and proclaimed the world over, any obedient church will continue crossing spatial and spiritual barriers until the end of time. Some writings have caused frustrations on the part of missionaries and the church. Consider these words: "The missionaries' sojourn in the country is only temporary. They are like the scaffolding of a building which is being built. The scaffolding looks very imposing sometimes, but it has all to be removed again. Only the building—the native church—is permanent. The better the missionary performs his task, the sooner he will no longer be needed." Formulated in this abrupt way, the position of modern missionaries is inadequately described. Quite naturally questions arise as to whether missions are still relevant. The task awaiting us is the definition of meaningful frontiers.

In the second place, now that the home base of mission finds itself established everywhere — as the church is found in all major countries — frontiers and boundaries which were geographical and national now become social and cultural. More study and thinking must be focused on these frontiers. Alienated from the church are groups of people—workers, industrialists, scientists, students, artists, and others. Christ's rule needs to be proclaimed afresh to these "foreign" or "alien" circles which have lost touch with the language, ordinances, and the inner life of the Christian congregation. For these people the church may have come to be a matter of folklore. And so the missionary congregation finds frontiers close to home. In fact, the laymen in every walk of life appear to constitute the task force which is called to cross these frontiers. The real encounter between faith and unfaith seems bound to take place at the level of the local parish, between people sharing a common way of life, the same block of flats or an identical profession. In this emphasis of social and cultural frontiers with which the church must struggle, the slogan, "the church is mission," takes on practical meaning and possibility.

In the third place, the universal dimension of Christ's mandate to evangelize overcomes the purely "west to east" pattern of missionary obedience. To churches of the east have come insights and understanding on the cost of discipleship and the nature of corporate living complementing and at points correcting the interpretation which the western churches embrace. As we seek to discover our larger responsibilities in crossing frontiers, we need to help churches of the orient to discover world frontiers which they are called upon to cross. And at points such frontiers for them will lie close to our communities. Only in this kind of togetherness can we find the fulness of life in Jesus Christ. And only in this kind of redeemed living will the world be persuaded of its need for Christ who takes away the sins of the world.

This issue of *Mennonite Life* confronts us with the reasons and bases for involvement in world mission and reminds us of the new commitment and approaches through which witness to Jesus Christ can be more decisive and persuasive.

# Training Missionaries for Today's World

*By Donald N. Larson*

TODAY'S WORLD demands well-trained missionaries. What are we doing about it? Today's missionary, a product of this new and different world, is at work in many corners of the world each with its own problems. In some countries there has been little change through many centuries; in others, communities throb with the desire for change; and in still others, rapid social change has brought about upheaval in old ways of doing things. How does the missionary adjust to the demands of new situations? What are the special requirements for serving the Lord in his particular corner? Today's missionary frontier is radically different from the one which pioneers encountered one hundred or even fifty years ago.

Let us take a look at the missionary candidate. In most respects he is like any one of us: strongly influenced by American ways of doing things, having struggled through infancy and survived the teenage years. Today he is an adult, a product of the heaviest concentration of materialism in the world, strongly influenced by a technological and highly industrialized society. Like other individuals, by the time he reaches adulthood he has developed a set of premises, "eyes" through which he views and interprets the world around him. He tends to accept his own ways of thinking and behaving as normal. "Our ways are good and right." Yet while his laymen friends stay home to support him, the missionary candidate leaves home to face one shocking experience after another. He withdraws from the very things that give him security. He gets a new look at the world. Perhaps for the first time he looks at his own world "from the outside." To be a successful missionary in a far-off corner of the world, means that he must learn to understand another's point of view; that he, an "alien," must try to see the world from another person's, a "national's" premises. If nothing more, he must learn to coexist peacefully. If he fails at this, he will never reach his objectives. As a matter of fact, the ideas and behavior which the missionary seeks to instill are often shocking to nationals. If new ideas are to take root, a degree of adjustment is necessary both for missionaries and for nationals. Missionary strategy today begins with a new understanding of the old problems, and new missionaries need to be prepared accordingly.

Our newer understanding of the problems which missionaries face is different from earlier times in four ways. First of all, we know now that human behavior has a kind of structure. All aspects of peoples' lives in a particular community are dependent upon one another. All aspects of life form a kind of system. Second, an "outsider" needs to develop a "domestic" point of view in order to make a meaningful contribution. Third, new ideas can not all be accepted at once; they must be introduced a few at a time. Fourth, a missionary must have a cross-cultural perspective; that is, he must be able to see and understand both his own world and the world of the nationals whom he seeks to evangelize, and the likelihood of developing this is slim, unless a missionary immerses himself in the language and culture of these people.

## *Aims*

When a missionary society starts out to prepare a candidate, there are seven major concerns. First, they try to help a candidate to see himself and his own world more objectively, to see how the world has shaped him, to see how his own sense of values is influenced by the world, to see how his real values are different in some ways from those that he talks about. Second, the preparation helps him to get along without the symbols of security which his own familiar surroundings provide; it helps to cushion him against the shock of having to learn new routines, to solve new problems, to consider new options. Third, the missionary society helps the candidate to see life as the national sees it, to see how the national's world has shaped him, to see how the national's world provides him with security. Fourth, preparation must help the candidate to see that missions are a kind of interference with the status quo of belief, practice and ritual deeply embedded into ways of life. It is important for the missionary to see the meaning of a Christian witness. Fifth, the missionary society helps the candidate to understand and appreciate what the mission has done, to see current trends, to have a good appreciation for current problems, to find a vital relationship in the present situation. Sixth, a missionary's preparation must help him to see what changes will be required of him in order to participate

as an alien in someone else's corner of the world. Finally, preparation must help the new missionary to formulate goals for becoming an "alien" witness for Christ with a relevant message for a community, a bridge between his own world and theirs.

Missionary preparation today, then, focuses attention on helping the candidate to gain a cross-cultural perspective.

### *Current Practices*

When John Smith volunteers for missionary service today, his organization usually sends him through a period of screening. Rarely is he accepted without some evaluation of his background, experience, and general ability. With some organizations this screening consists simply of procuring letters of reference; with others, routine screening includes extensive letters of reference, transcripts of school records, histories, autobiographies, medical reports, psychological tests and psychiatric interviews. In most cases the candidate knows that he is being screened; in some cases, however, screening is "behind the scenes." The need for missionaries today is great; probabilities that willing people are turned down are low; only the most obvious "poor risks" are "descreened" once they volunteer. The screening process itself sometimes shows a volunteer that he should look elsewhere for an avenue of service.

Once a volunteer is "screened in," a period of preparation begins. At this point he is usually known as a candidate or volunteer. With most societies some preparation takes place on the field; other aspects take place at home.

Preparation at home may mean anything from a week's visit to a mission headquarters to an entire year of closely supervised study, conferences and tours. Some organizations in fact, consider this period of preparation as a kind of last stage screening. Preparation at home usually has three aspects. The outgoing missionary needs an outfit, and he needs the right to reside as an alien in a foreign country. The home office will usually help him with these physical aspects of preparation. This involves matters of freight, baggage, transportation, travel documents, clearance through customs and immigration, etc. Second, there is the mental preparation for the missionary task. When the needs of the field and the strengths of a candidate are evaluated, a society may feel that the candidate should enroll in a certain special program somewhere. This may mean a year at a college or seminary. It may mean practical courses in medicine, first aid, home nursing, radio, mechanics, etc. Some organizations even require that the candidate begin intensive study of a foreign language during his last few months at home.

Certain institutions have been established especially for the preparation of missionaries. The Christian and Missionary Alliance, for example, about five years ago, established the Jaffray School of Missions, a one year program for college graduates preparing for missionary service, primarily designed for its own missionaries although available to others. Its chief emphasis is "guided study," seminars in which each student works on his own field study under the guidance of the faculty.

The Missionary Orientation Center, Stony Point, New York, established about six years ago by a Board of Managers representing six major denominations, is placing its emphasis on the missionary's understanding of the modern world and the church in that world, seeking to make the Gospel relevant. For about twenty weeks the candidates live in a community of out-going missionaries; during this time they hear lectures and join in discussions which focus on the problems of the prospective missionary in our modern world.

The Toronto Institute of Linguistics, which convenes each June, brings together about 80 missionaries each year from dozens of organizations for a one-month "crash program" in how to learn a language. While a certain amount of time is devoted to the development of a cross-cultural perspective, most of the time is devoted to learning another language, with exercises and activities designed to help the new missionary to learn a language effectively.

The Summer Institute of Linguistics (Wycliffe), convening on the campuses of several North American universities each summer, has a broad appeal to missionaries, and also to students without the missionary vocation in mind. Offering credit toward graduate degrees, SIL is without equal in the intensity with which it presents linguistics and attempts to develop technical and analytical skills.

The Hartford Seminary Foundation (Kennedy School of Missions), the Institute of Church Growth, and others, focus special attention on the problems of Christian missions overseas.

A large number of organizations sponsor institutes or conferences of their own, lasting a week or two, in which the entire range of problems is covered in a rather general fashion. Depending upon the organization and its sensitivity to newer points of view, these conferences may be very significant for the new missionary, or they may simply serve to indoctrinate him in what the organization feels to be its unique contribution to missions.

Missionary preparation does not end at the airport nor at the dock. Once he leaves the homeland, the missionary begins to encounter a flood of problems. With the advent of jet travel, he goes from the totally familiar world to the radically different, from one continent to another, in a matter of hours. One couple, for example, landed at the airport of a huge foreign city. A slip-up somewhere in planning meant that no one was on hand to meet them. For the

better part of two days they wandered around with two small children, trying to make contact with their organization's representatives. The results were disastrous: to this day the wife has not freed herself from the shock of loneliness and despair which overcame them.

Many missionaries reside in a kind of staging area after their arrival. For a few days, weeks or sometimes months, they may await a permanent assignment, or they may engage in language study, or work in a local church or institution. In some instances there may be opportunity for a short visit to their future station or to a typical village situation. Time spent in a staging area may be significant and worthwhile, although in certain cases it contributes to the new missionary's frustrations. In some cases, active guidance in mission policy and procedure is given at the staging area. New arrivals are escorted around, meet important people, get acquainted with national leaders. In a number of places, Manila; Bangkok; San Jose, Costa Rica; Campinas, Brazil; and various cities in India, there are cooperative programs of intensive language study in staging areas. Upon completion of these programs, the missionaries are transferred to stations for permanent assignment.

For many new missionaries, preparation ends officially with the arrival at a station. There they are thrown into the routines with no additional preparation. In situations where things are carried out in familiar patterns the missionary may fit in very quickly. In other situations, where missionaries and nationals work closely on all matters of concern, a new missionary may be pretty well out of it for the first few months. The training period at the station, formal or informal, is an important part of the missionary's preparation.

Some organizations are beginning to conceive of the entire first term as preparatory. One mission, for example, imposes a well-designed program of language requirements on each missionary. The missionary must complete these requirements during his first term. Comprehensive tests are given just before his furlough, and if he fails to meet the standards, he may not be permitted to return for a second term. Another mission requires comprehensive reports and plans for research to be undertaken during the furlough year. A missionary is not permitted to return for a second term until he has demonstrated his capacity to do research during a year of graduate study at an approved institution. They insist that a second termer be prepared to make a noble contribution to the life of the church.

### *Sizing Up the Situation*

How do we evaluate the effectiveness of missionary preparation today? Some programs appear to be treating nothing in depth in an attempt to treat everything. Some programs are so involved in a particular organization's ways of doing things, that the candidate fails to get a broad understanding of the problems. Sometimes a missionary gets a load of information about the rice growing patterns of Northern Thailand, when he needs to know something about the dependence of people in the Philippines on the corn crop. While one organization is emphasizing the importance of "doing things our way," another is focusing attention on the importance of a missionary's learning to live harmoniously with missionaries of other groups. When missionaries reach the field, they sometimes learn that too little attention was given to problems which they now feel to be of major concern.

There is obviously a widespread concern that some improvement in missionary preparation come about; yet it seems that there is little agreement over what this preparation should consist of. While some organizations feel the importance of the ideas mentioned at the beginning of this article, what seems to be lacking is integration and a consistent application of sound principles to the problems of preparing a missionary. Two major problems demand serious attention in the preparation of today's missionary. First of all, present programs of missionary preparation should try to develop better ways for helping a candidate to gain a cross-cultural perspective toward his missionary service. The second major problem arises for the transitional character of our age, in which mission and national churches encounter new problems. The matter of cross-cultural perspective is also involved at this point. Present programs of missionary preparation are not helping the missionary, in some cases, to find an effective way to participate in this transitional situation. He encounters problems with national leaders, with his own colleagues and with missionaries of other organizations. Often he is unprepared to cope with them.

The missionary who leaves the border of the USA today is almost always a one-culture, one-language person. Fewer and fewer have grown up in homes where parents used another language, where there was deep pride in national backgrounds in Europe. Fewer and fewer know the meaning of subsistence level living. More and more are dependent upon people and objects for their balance and sense of security. Fewer and fewer are men of ideas, philosophers. For these reasons missionary preparation must be seen from the cross-cultural perspective. The candidate needs to see how his own culture has shaped (and bent) the simple gospel of Christ, how it will inevitably be shaped (and bent) by the people to whom he brings the Gospel. He needs a viewpoint which sees all of life glued together by what men believe. He needs to see language itself as a principal means of communication. Though it is incapable of conveying all that he wants to convey, it is completely

effective and indispensable for conveying important truth. He needs to see before him the major alternatives: Will he do his missionary work while he remains in physical isolation from nationals? Will he try to imitate their way of doing things so as to win their favor and open the door toward his service? Will he seek to identify himself with their aims, values, convictions, so as to understand their position as a backdrop for presenting his own? Until as a matter of course a candidate gains the perspective of other people in other cultures, and until this is supported and surrounded by a kind of Christian perspective, missionary preparation is likely to do little more than perpetuate prejudice, fortify positions and inhibit the spirit-led creative urge of the world-be innovator.

## *The Waiting World and the Waiting Missionary*

No, the whole world is not waiting for the Christian missionary to deliver them from their problems. In the past decades the climate of tolerance has changed radically. An awakening of national and racial consciousness means new problems for today's missionary force. In some parts of the world there is downright hostility. In other places, pockets of isolated people are still being found where no Westerner has yet resided. In some parts of the world the church is represented by dozens of denominations, while in other parts a single, uniform witness is presented without competition. In some areas a strong national church has developed, making the missionaries' role a confusing one, while in other areas only the embryo of a national church is apparent.

These are important factors in the missionary's preparation, for his image of the waiting world and the situation which he will encounter are often wildly diverse. From the first exposure, the new missionary may face frustration, even disappointment. The insistence of older missionaries that new ones receive better training often arises from an attempt to help them face the impact of really living in a foreign country. Once the new missionary is aware of new routines and learns them, a new kind of security upholds him. Missionary preparation is an attempt then to interpret the waiting world to the waiting missionary.

The waiting missionary is nearly as complex as the world which awaits him. In some cases he is young, single and untried in a vocation of any kind. In other cases he is retired, a grandfather, looking for a last vocation. In the waiting line are experienced Ph.D.'s and the young people they have taught; seminary trained pastors with mechanics, pilots and builders from their congregations. All sorts of people are volunteering today. All sorts of motivations are involved. Today's missionary does not simply respond to the great commission as did the pioneers of the past. He becomes a cog in a wheel, the filler of a slot in an organization. He has a role to play; he has a unique vocation; he embarks on a new career. Missionary life is defined in new terms, terms which reflect our modern world's influence on an approach to missions. Yet missionary preparation today still begins with the great commission, with an appraisal of the cost of discipleship and with an honest evaluation of one's commitment and one's abilities. No program of missionary preparation can replace the preparation which the spirit of God provides. For this preparation no man has found a suitable substitute.

*A farmer on the Yalva-Sanga Indian settlement initiated by the Mennonites in the Chaco near their settlement in Paraguay.*

# The Challenge As I See It

*By S. F. Pannabecker*

*(Was presented at General Conference session, Estes Park, 1965)*

WHAT I HAVE *to say can only outline where the challenge is. The real challenge is for you to define it more carefully for yourself. There are three facets to the challenge to the church as I see it: first, to understand the changing world in which we live and our relation to it, for it has been bewildering to us as a church; second, to understand God's purpose and operations in this world, for this may provide orientation and certainty for us; and third, to find a worthy response, in which every Christian believer will have to find a task meet for his talents.*

Once there was a clear distinction between good people and bad. Once there was a clear distinction between civilized and uncivilized. We judged good people by their likeness to us and their degree of civilization by attainment of Western standards. So came the "white man's burden," with the geopraphical concept of missionary work, in which the missionary represented Christendom's obligation to the world. Religious fervor and cultural confidence made him effective. God used him.

Times are changing. Two world wars have lowered the esteem in which all white men were held. A rash of independent nations forty to fifty of them in the last twenty years—have come into being by the overthrow of erstwhile colonial powers. A supposedly passive, subservient China has been transformed into a hard, passionately insistent, militarist Communist nation. Old religions, thought to be dead or decaying, have been given new vigor, while at home impressive ecclesiastical organizations sometimes called the church are rather ineffectively attempting to influence patterns of life which are really being determined by a secular technology and urbanization in ways that are unbelievable and unforseeable.

The church's mission is carried on in this complex of change. A comparative failure of the church at home is matched by a comparative success abroad where there is a growing church with capable leaders. The church abroad resents the paternalism once characteristic of the missionary, while the church at home questions the validity of a clerical ministry with special rights, privileges, and authority. As for the average believer, those who think, know that vital Christianity is not something to put on and off with Sunday clothes; yet too many are willing to relinquish their Christian responsibilities for most of the time. The missionary, the minister, and the church are all caught in an old system that is a hangover from the past.

How do we live in this world that is now broken and misguided—nation against nation, have-nots against haves, black against white, East against West, even youth against adult—yet a world technically mature, with increasing intellectual demands, but lacking moral fiber and apparently insanely bent on self-destruction?

## *God's Purposes and Work.*

It is trite to suggest that the world is changing. It is a part of our human limitation to think that God's creation could be static. God's world has always been dynamic and changing. In this changing world God's Spirit has always moved men in ways appropriate to the occasion as they yielded themselves to Him. Jesus said, "My Father works until now, and I work." What is He doing?

God has been working in creation and since to raise up beings "in His own image" who will respond to Him in trust and fellowship. This is God's work and His problem is that, to be of any value, such response must be voluntary, not forced. Defeated—if one may use the word—in creation, God has persisted unceasingly and in diverse ways to reconcile and redeem a willful race. This is the message of the old Testament, the meaning of the call of Abraham, of Israel, the prophets, the captivity, the remnant, the suffering servant, and the Messiah. In the New Testament, Jesus as the Messiah validates by his very death and defeat the eternal purposes of God, and, resurrected, is reincarnated through the spirit in his disciples who are his body, the church. The church—ineffectual and imperfect as it is—is yet the visible assurance of the promise of full reconciliation. It is as Paul says, "the

earnest of our inheritance," or as we would say, the down payment on the final accomplishment of God's purposes.

### *The Response to God's Call.*

At every step of the way God has fitted his working to the changing situations. He is still doing that. The Christian faith is that his will is being accomplished, that in Christ there has come a reconciliation that is overcoming and that his day—the Day of the Lord—will see the final realization of his purpose. Until that time, we as the church are in the hands of the Holy Spirit, witnessing to the reconciliation that has come in Christ and calling men—all men, everywhere—to be disciples and learn of him.

> As the Apostle Paul says, II Corinthians 5:18 (NEB)
> He has reconciled men to himself, and has enlisted us in this service of reconciliation.

The third challenge, therefore, is, in the light of our understanding of the world in which we live and the purposes of God as revealed in Jesus Christ, to make a fitting response.

The vocation of the foreign missionary in its nineteenth century, traditional, geographical and cultural dimension was once regarded as the most acceptable response to God's call. At an earlier age the martyr and then the monk were, in turn, regarded as the ideal Christian expression. The day of the martyr and the monk is gone. Now the day of the missionary is going. Yet each of these in their turn caught up and embodied a concept of maximum devotion that stirred the hearts of the faithful. All failed as ideals in that they were too limited; as some were called, so some were excused, nor was all of life involved. The only response that can be acceptable today is one which catches up every disciple, demands all of his person, for all of the time. What we need is not so much a new concept of missions as a true concept of the church.

Forgetting ministers and missionaries for the moment, the call is for witnesses—a throng of witnesses—with the devotion and zeal of the martyr, the monk, or the missionary. The peculiar quality of these witnesses is that each takes seriously his responsibility to participate in God's purposes. He looks to the Holy Spirit to guide him in daily contacts, not necessarily ecstatic or supernatural, but perhaps even more effective because normal. He experiences the inner fellowship that accompanies the "peace of Christ." He practices the "rhythm of worship and witness" in which worship inspires witness and witness validates worship. Among these witnesses, who are "ministers" (minister means slave) there is no hierarchy, except that of love and obedience. His baptism is his commissioning and the Lord's Supper is his ordination. The Lord, the church, the whole world is waiting for a cloud of such witnesses.

This concept of the church as a witnessing body is embodied in the phrase, "the Church is the Mission," which has become somewhat popular. It implies a rejection of the idea that the church has missions. That the church is the mission is a profound insight. This can be a powerful challenge to the committed congregation. Expressions of sympathy and support to those submerged in the local ghetto may be as valid as layettes to the Congo; witness of a good life in Miles Laboratory at Elkhart is as missionary as preaching in Patagonia; professional service of a Christian doctor in Newton, Kansas, may really be the church in action. Relief, Pax, V-S workers, short-term or long-term, Mennonite Disaster Service, may all be involved in significant church witness. I am torn between the insight that "the Church is Mission" and the knowledge that my church is not mission—at least not always. Where is the church to rise to this challenge?

What then, are there to be no more "missionaries," no more "ministers," no "clergy," only witnesses? Practically speaking, specially appointed ones will always be needed for work that continues to demand special attention. The at-home-and-abroad geographical distinction will have no significance in God's sight. So also, for cultural and vocational distinctions. From our limited point of view some servants may cross boundaries, or frontiers, into unfamiliar and "foreign" regions. Whether these strange areas are political, racial, cultural, economic, or whatever, the witness is now in a new land and, in as far as he is a "sent-one," commissioned by the obligations of his baptism into the body of Christ, in so far he is a "missionary." He is simply a "minister" who has crossed a frontier. This distinction between missionary, minister, or witness is admittedly a very hazy distinction, in fact, the distinction may entirely evaporate when it is remembered that hardly any witness can function for Christ without crossing some frontier.

If certain ones seem more outstanding or spectacular than others, it is only that their duties are more apparent, their preparation more involved, or their service less interrupted with other concerns. Servants of this type will always be needed in considerable number. They will be well trained, selected with great care, and if serving in a foreign land, like the traditional missionary, they will be understanding and humble partners of their national colleagues.

Ideally, all such specially selected servants will be symbols of the responsibility of every Christian to be involved in active witness for Jesus Christ, the Lord of the church, across all frontiers. Their validity as symbols is contingent on the acceptance of this responsibility by the whole church. Apart from this they are shooting stars in the blackness of night; with this they are elements in a firmament of light. The final challenge to this day is that truly the church be the mission.

# Reciprocity in Identification

*By Jacob A. Loewen*

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*The idea of reciprocity in identification was originally conceived during the author's first term of missionary experience in Colombia, but it was actually born experientially during the* 1959 *summer literacy testing program at the home of F. Glenn Prunty at Jaque, Panama. A number of the associated ideas advanced in this paper have grown out of the visit of the Choco Indian, Aureliano Sabugara, to the United States[1] and the return visits by the missionaries on the invitation of the believers in Panama. This Choco experience has highlighted at least three definite areas on which such reciprocity should manifest itself: the exchangeability of the participants' material facilities; a willingness on the part of both to know and to be known; and reciprocal recognition of and respect for individual worth and status.*

THE VARIED FACETS of the problem of identification have led many concerned missionaries to ask themselves and others, "What is a realistic goal in the matter of identification? For what should I strive?"

I have tried to wrestle with these and other questions in my own experience and now want to propose that reciprocity can be a realistic and practicably attainable goal in any missionary-national identification.

## *False Identification*

It has been adequately demonstrated by missionaries of Roman Catholic and Protestant faiths that "going native," the attempt of absolute identification in terms of standard of living, by no means guarantees inner identification. In fact, this kind of false identification may indeed close the doors for a reciprocal relationship with nationals who "misunderstand"—or who may actually understand too well—such behavior on the part of the foreigner. Nida effectively verbalizes the nationals' suspicion of missionaries going native. "If these Europeans know how to live better than we do, why don't they? We would if we could."[2]

On the other hand, remaining aloof from what the nationals eat, have, or do is equally objectionable.

All too often we have said there is feeling against the missionary because he lives in too nice a house. Actually T. Stanley Soltau comes much closer to reality, in my opinion, when he says that it is not nearly as important what kind of a building or property one has, but it is how one uses these facilities that is decisive.[3]

This idea is also documented rather effectively in the letter from Jane and Wendell Sprague who report how an African leader speaking to the missionaries said that their so-called wealth—nice homes, clothes, appliances, etc.—was no real problem to the Africans as long as the missionary's heart was right.[4]

And when the missionary's heart is right, staying in the guest bedroom of the missionary residence could be a very ego-building experience for a national who had often wondered about what it might feel like to sleep in a soft bed. The important point, in my estimation, is that the national's home, whatever it be, and the guest room in the missionary residence, however good or modest it be, should become exchangeable.

This matter of exchangeability of facilities has become a rather interesting outgrowth of the exchange visits by Aureliano Sabugara, the Choco Indian, and the American short-term missionaries. This reciprocity began to develop during the summer of 1959 when the missionaries, David Wirsche and Jacob Loewen, were testing the Epera literacy materials at Jaque. Both the missionaries and the Indians came to the home of F. Glenn Prunty. In order to give the missionaries more control over the working day it was decided that at least the noon meal should be eaten together. Thus every noon the missionary teachers and the literacy students shared in a fellowship meal, which consisted of both missionary and national food. While the lunch was being prepared after the morning classes, both missionaries and Indians would go out into the ocean, where the Indians tried to teach the foreigners how to ride the surf. At first the mis-

sionaries were very clumsy at this, and it was a source of great amusement for the Indians to see how the missionaries were swamped by the waves again and again. But gradually as they gained some efficiency, the nationals actually stood by and cheered, happy that they had been able to teach something to these foreign teachers. At the end of the school day the missionaries and the Indians again took off an hour during which they played volleyball, a new experience for the Indians; and it took some time for them to get acquainted with the sport and to learn to appreciate playing it. The rules had to be modified somewhat to get them to participate, but gradually they learned to play a very respectable game of volleyball.[5]

It was in this setting of cooperative playing that Aureliano, during a rest period, inquired about the cost of the missionary's trip to Panama. When he learned about the amount, he asked, "Does it cost the same amount for a person from Panama to go to your country?" The affirmative answer elicited the following comment from him, "Well, since I have given God the hand and am walking on God's road, and don't drink any more the way I used to, I can save enough money from my banana cuttings to come and visit you in the United States." And this is just what he did.[6]

## *Exchanging of Facilities*

During his stay at the missionary's home, where he occupied the guest room, he participated in all the activities of the American family. Whenever he needed to go to town to make some purchases, the author took him in his car. When his laundry needed washing, the author's wife washed his shirts and other things for him. He ate the food that was on the table with the rest of the family, even though there were some things, like salads, which he did not like. All in all he was a very congenial guest. His parting prayer—offered at the airport while waiting for the flight which was to take him back to his family in Panama - - was most heartwarming. He asked God for the opportunity to have the missionary come to his house in Panama so that he and his wife could share their things with the missionary in the way the latter had now shared their things with him. And so in 1961, when the missionary went to Panama for the next summer program, he was really paying a return visit to the home of Aureliano, who had in the previous year visited him.

The reception of the missionaries at Aureliano's home was almost overwhelming. He helped string their hammocks, he set up substitute worktables for their work and he saw to it that they had water to wash and to shave in the house. While the missionaries pitched in by purchasing rice and some of the other commodities that were "store" items in the Indian household, Aureliano assumed the burden of the provisions for the whole period of their visit. His comment to local visitors about the guests in his home was that they were just like Indians who belonged to the family. It is reminiscent of Soltau's statement:

*Congregational singing in the Chulupi language in the mission church at Filadelfia, Paraguay.*

"They eat our food with us, and we feel close to them."[7] This also parallels Reyburn's experience that to "empty a pan of caterpillars" is more convincing identification than many pious words and kind deeds. Certainly the highest tribute for a missionary is to be accepted by nationals as their equal: "White man Kaka is eating caterpillars. He really has a 'black heart.' "[8]

Another interesting incident, highlighting the reciprocity of services, took place one afternoon when the missionary went to the river to wash his own nylon shirts. As soon as Aureliano realized this, he rather excitedly and almost disappointedly called to the missionary saying, "When I was at your house, your wife washed my shirts, and when you are at my house, my wife will wash your shirts."

A similar scene took place when the missionary tried to pay him for the use of the canoe, in which they had been traveling. He said, "You never charged me far taking me around in your car when I was in your country; and certainly you don't expect me to charge you when you are at my house."

Already during our early contacts with the Choco in Colombia we had learned that whenever a visitor came into their homes and if they received the visitor with respect and welcome, the lady of the house always gave the visitor some food. With the acceptance of this food the visitor indicated that he was putting himself under the protection of the head of the house. This was very significant, because as we realized later, poisoning and witchcraft were so rampant that people who did not partake of the offered food thereby indicated their suspicion of the host and by the same token laid themselves open to the suspicion that possibly they themselves were on an evil mission. For this reason we found it necessary to always stock candy or crackers, with which to treat the Indians who came to our home. Thus, whenever a group of people (no matter how large) came to our home, we would invite them into the house and my wife would give the oldest Indian sufficient crackers or pieces of candy for distribution among all those present.

## *The Willingness to Know and to Be Known*

One of the first qualities that a missionary needs is the continuing willingness to learn. This quest must be motivated by a genuine concern for and a deep appreciation of a way of life that is different from one's own. The cheap sentimental, romantic approach, which gushes over "native things" as if they were very quaint novelties, rather than to provide for reciprocity, will lead to psychological distance, for no one wants to be regarded lightly. The missionary will have to take both the national and the national way of life seriously, regardless of how strange or exotic a practice may seem to him. A common substitute for the genuine willingness to learn and to know is a kind of paternalism, in which the missionaries speak familiarly in terms of "our people," "our Christians," and "our Indians." We need to remind ourselves that such statements are a reflection that the speaker is really building his own ego, and that he views himself or his mission as the center and the national people as a "nice flock of dependent satellites."[9]

*The first humble hut of a family at the Yalva-Sanga Indian settlement.*

A missionary in West Africa made it a regular practice during his itinerant evangelism to stop in a village for several days and evenings and to inquire concerning the local beliefs in God, before trying to deliver his message. After having explained their way to him, the elders invariably asked him to explain his faith. The missionary used this approach not only to elicit curiosity; he was convinced that in order to effectively tell the people about God, he would first have to understand their way of thinking.[10]

Earl Stevick provides a rather convincing example of the value of the "learner approach" in identification in his account of entering a store in West Africa to hear the people talk. The proprietor's wife greeted him with a subservient, but aloof "Yes, boss?" However, when Stevick mustered his best Shona to say, "I have come to stand and to listen to the people talk, so that I can learn to speak Shona more correctly," the lady relaxed and asked him to come to the best place in the store, but no longer as a "boss-foreigner," but as a friend.[11]

Soltau also makes this same point when he says that when entering an unevangelized village, a foreigner must always be prepared to spend days or weeks before he can really enter into the lives of the people and before he can communicate the good news to them in terms of local idiom. By saying this, he does not in any way want to reflect on the missionary's lack of consecration, intelligence, or learning. He is simply underscoring the fact that the missionary is a foreigner and will remain such, and that he must constantly be a learner even though he al-

ready knows much about the language and the way of life of the people.[12] For the resident the point of concern in learning is not so much absolute mastery as progress. There are plenty examples on record of good learners who became stagnant and settled for getting by.[13] Genuine respect for the national way of life often coincides with good language learning. In fact I agree with Smalley that progress in language mastery and cultural understanding are often outward visible signs of inward identification.[14]

But there is another facet for the missionary to consider. There must be a willingness on his part to also be known. This will require willingness to sacrifice privacy. We of the West have developed a real obsession for privacy of life and person. We have well-developed social mores which keep us from asking a person how many suits of clothes he has. And, because the nationals may not always respect this personal privacy, the missionary feels that he must lock his barrels to assure at least some privacy. Again, we feel that it is not polite to ask the amount of monthly income a person receives, but revealing this may be precisely the price that we must be willing to pay if we as missionaries want to know and be known, if we want to establish a reciprocal relationship with individuals in the different culture in which we are trying to serve. As Eileen Lageer so aptly says, "In missionary work, at least in this part of the world, the gospel is always easy to give, but it is the *imparting of our souls that counts and hurts.*[15] (Italics mine.)

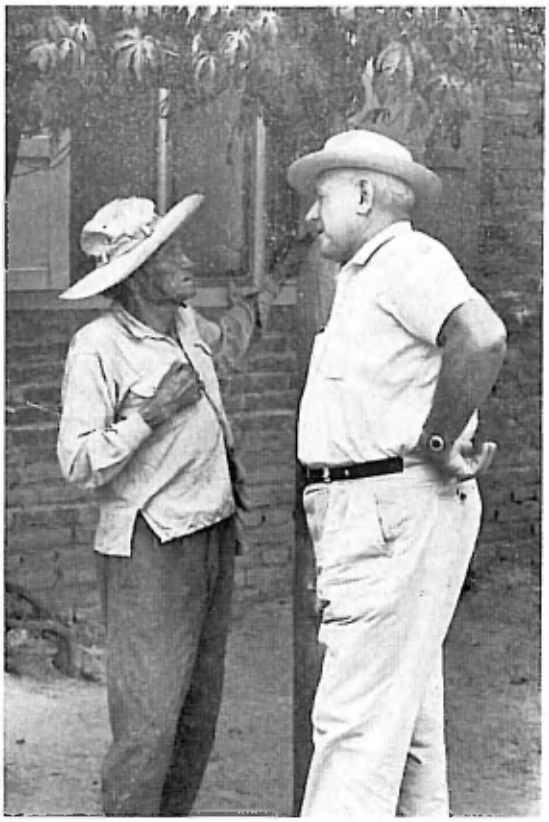
To illustrate this, permit me to refer to Aureliano again. During his visit in the United States, he, of course, took the liberty to inquire of the missionary as to the type and the amount of income he had, the amount of money he paid for his house, whether he owned it, whether he rented it, how much it cost him to operate the car, and so on. In the course of these discussions the missionary took pains to be open and honest about his income, the total amount of his expenditures, the amount he paid in tithes, etc. When the missionaries visited the Indian church in 1961 it was rather surprising for them to experience that on a Sunday afternoon after the communion service, Indian Aureliano used the wages of the two American visitors as his point of departure in an appeal for national volunteers to witness to people in other areas. After stating the wages of the workers, he outlined their monthly payments for house, for light, for car, for water (and here he added parenthetically, "You see Jake doesn't have a river by his house"), and for tithes; he concluded, "So you see he really doesn't have enough left over to come here. But when he does, he comes here not for fun but because he wants that we who are his friends should learn to know God, so that we too can walk on God's road and do what God wants us to do." As a result of this testimony one of the Indians got up and said, "If Tiger and Fox (Imama and Kuriwa, the intimate nicknames of the two visiting missionaries) are willing to make a sacrifice to come here to give God's message to us, I am ready and willing to be a missionary for other people also." To our great joy this man not only volunteered but actually left the next morning to take the message to a village several hours down river.

## *A Psychological Concern for Privacy*

This concern for privacy in our culture is manifested in the vast number and variety of physical closures which we have developed. We have separate rooms for children of different sexes; we close the door when we are changing clothes, we lock our doors, cars, and letter files. But all of these locks are really only cultural reflection of our great psychological concern for privacy.

I became aware of a new dimension of privacy during my learning to dress in a Waunana home. The Indian home has no walls; and in this large open area often three, four, or even more families may be living. The person who wants to undress in privacy generally walks into the middle of the floor, takes his dry clothes over the wet ones and drops the latter and then adjusts the dry ones. The first time I changed in the Indian home, I went to one of the outside edges of the house, turned my back toward the people and carefully began to undress. The people, of course, not recognizing my concern for privacy, wondered what I was trying to do by this secrecy, and so they all flocked around and leaned over me to see what might be different enough about my anatomy to make me so secretive. I learned quickly and thereafter I always enjoyed privacy by changing my clothes in the center of the house where no one paid any further attention to me. I think this capacity of respecting privacy—psychological privacy, if you will—is relatively foreign to us.

Because we have not learned this type of psychological privacy, we are very dependent on walls, doors, high fences, and locks to mark what we consider private. Everything not enclosed or locked thus tends to be viewed as public. In the Choco situation we who were working with the Indians were often embarrassed when others of our missionaries visited the Indian homes with us. Because there were no walls or curtains to hide a shaman's paraphernalia on the shelf, these visiting missionaries often went to these shelves and picked up objects and looked at them. This was a serious breech of privacy in the eyes of the Indians. They would never touch such items because in the first place they were afraid of the spirit powers associated with these objects and in the second place that shelf, like many other places in the absolutely open house without even an outside wall, was the private domain of the individual. Its being open



*Heindrich Duerksen,* Oberschulze, *leader of Fernheim Colony, conversing with representative of the Yalva-Sanga Indian settlement.*

did not in any way make it public from the Choco point of view.

Another problem that I have observed in this connection involves the use of a foreign language in the presence of the nationals who do not understand it. In the absence of physical walls, the missionaries attempted to provide privacy by employing their home language to say things the rest were not to hear. This, to my mind, is not only very impolite but also definitely harmful to the establishment of a relationship of reciprocal trust.

This willingness to know and to be known will definitely have to go beyond the mere externals or the outer shallow kind of identification which is so often characteristic of our Western social relationships. We greet our neighbor politely but we know possibly no more than his name. In the missionary-national relationship, if ours is a genuine concern to know and to be known and to develop a genuine reciprocal relationship, we must remember that no amount of externality will be sufficient. While we may overtly express real interest, if this is not the genuine attitude of our heart, we will be in serious difficulty.

### *Paramessage*

Nida has recently added to his earlier statements on the SMR[16] (Source, Message, Receptor) in the structure of communication, a dotted M which stands for paramessage. The paramessage involves our inner attitudes—the prejudices and the values—which may substantiate, which may detract from, or may even vitiate completely the message that is being orally transmitted. In a recent meeting with psychiatrists, I was struck by the statement of one of them who said that children, schizophrenics, and primitives have not lost their sensitivity toward the paramessage of others. They are able to read the paramessage, the attitudes of a person, more readily than a normally acculturated person who through enculturation has learned to block out many of the cues.

An example of such reading of a paramessage which contradicted a spoken message we observed some years ago when a North American missionary lady, who had real difficulty in accepting nationals in the private sanctum of her missionary residence, made extra efforts to invite national believers to her home on Sunday afternoons to have a cup of coffee with them. One day a group of these nationals were visiting in the author's home and began talking about this missionary lady. One of them said, "You know, we have never been able to enter that woman's home." Not understanding the impact of the statement fully, we corrected the speaker saying, "Surely you have been at her house a number of times, and you had coffee there with us together last Sunday." The national then responded, "Yes, we've been in her house, but she has never opened her home to us. That is closed for all nationals." In this case even the very solicitous entertaining of the missionary had not helped to block out the destructive and contradictory paramessage of her inner attitudes.

On another occasion a group of nationals were talking about a deceased missionary lady and one of them made the comment, "You know, she had some real problems in her life. She always felt that nationals were dirty. She always had to wipe off the chairs and the floor as soon as they left." While we as missionaries had been somewhat aware of this situation, we had never realized that her negative attitude had so clearly filtered through to the nationals.

Our willingness to know and to be known will have to be personal and individual. All too often we display a pious kind of humanitarianism, one which loves "all the natives" but which would definitely shrink from the identification with any individual person.[17] We will have to be willing to take off our personal cultural masks and to let other individuals know who and what we are if we want to encounter the person with whom we are trying to establish identification, because only then will this person also be able to reveal who and what he is.

This type of a relationship will not be easy to establish. In fact, genuine sharing, transparency, or reciprocity is quite rare even in our evangelical testimony meetings. In place of transparency we as protestants have fallen prey to using what Nida calls "protestant Latin." This is a kind of spiritual jargon which is used to demonstrate the supposed warmth and genuineness of one's experience, but which in actual fact reveals nothing about the person or his experience. The Christian experience is an intensely personal one—man meeting God face to face. The prophets of old were conscious that God knew them by name. They spoke with the conviction of personal experience. I have been struck by the fact that in the book of Acts, Paul's conversion is told three times, and at two of the occasions, Paul's very life was at stake.[18]

### *Reciprocity in Communication*

If we look at this willingness to know and to be known from the standpoint of communication, it becomes readily apparent that what we are trying to achieve is a bidirectional flow of communication. Under a paternalistic relationship the communication is unidirectional, downward from the superior to an inferior. It is very difficult for an inferior and a superior to maintain a reciprocal communication relationship. Since the missionary task revolves around the intelligible communication of the message, feedback from the recipient becomes the indispensable indicator for the source as to how his message is getting through. In our own culture, business firms frequently find it necessary to sample the opinion of the populace as a kind of social feedback to determine the community's reaction to their product. A sensitive missionary will likewise be concerned with feedback from his recipients in order to enable him to adjust his communication until it is being understood and is meeting the needs in the lives of the recipients.

The value of this kind of reciprocity was highlighted in an experience by David Wirsche in the summer of

*The male side in the worship service of the Mennonite mission church at Filadelfia.* *(See also page 11).*

*Paraguayan Indian woman working with an animal skin.*

*Woman doing bead work in a Chulupi Indian village at Filadelfia, Chaco.*

*Sunday school in Indian mission church in Filadelfia.*

1962. In the course of teaching some arithmetic to the Indians he tried to explain the concept of zero. He had spent a number of hours on several occasions trying to explain this illusive mathematically necessity before Aureliano finally grasped the concept. This happened just as they were called to lunch. When they got to the house and were about to have their regular prayer before the meal, Aureliano called the attention of all the people in the house and said, "God has spoken this morning. He has told us what zero is." Then he proceeded in his prayer to thank God for the insight that had now come to the people—that they now knew what zero was. After he had finished the prayer, he turned to Wirsche and said, "Now, Fox, if you ever want to explain this zero to other Choco people, you ought to explain it like this . . ." Here was a good example of reciprocity in communication. It shows how exchange can serve to sharpen the communication's focus of the message.

The missionary who wants to communicate good news to the national will, therefore, have to spend time—often many hours of time—listening to the concerns, fears, and superstitions of his audience. At first this may seem a waste of time to him because he would so much like to deliver the important message of the love of God. However, once we recognize that effective communication is a dialogue—that, in fact, all genuine witnessing is really dialogue—we will realize how important the listening stage is in establishing a reciprocity with the people of other cultures.

In an earlier article[19] we have discussed some of the service styles that the Indian church has developed. For us it has been very instructive to observe how effective a feedback-oriented style of service has been in Choco evangelism. Such discussion took place between believers, both missionary and national, and between believers and unbelievers.

A further example can be seen in the encounter that took place at a communion service where the exchange extended from the missionary to believer to believer. One of the believers who could read Spanish got up and said that the service had been wonderful, but it represented only half the truth. When Jesus instituted communion he washed the disciples' feet.

All eyes now turned on the translator and several asked why this had not been included in the Choco translation. The translator explained that there were four Gospels, but that only Mark had been translated into their language. Could the missionary prove that the Gospel of John told about footwashing? A Spanish Bible had to be gotten. The passage was then read in the Gospel of John. An intense exchange between believers followed this presentation and ended in the concensus that since they now knew that Jesus had washed the disciples' feet, they might as well obey it already, even before it was translated into their lan-

guage.

Such bidirectional communication also took place between the believers and unbelievers. A good example is seen in the account of the medicine man attending the communion service on whom Aureliano called for a word of advice. The medicine man's response was, "I have watched the proceedings of this day with real interest and I am convinced that the Word you are teaching is of God. But you know that I do not belong. You know my involvements with the evil spirits. I would like to get free, but I cannot." To this Aureliano responded, "Yes, we know your involvements and we will pray for you that you find a way to be delivered from the evil spirits. For God is stronger than all the evil spirits." And to everyone's joy, a year later this same medicine man belonged to the church.

### *The Recognition of Individual Worth and Status*

A third and very fundamental lesson that I feel I have had to learn in my relationship with primitive people is the matter of respecting their approach to reality and society as equally valid as my own. Maybe such mutuality could be extended even to our respective body odors. I remember how Aureliano one day asked me whether it would take long for him to smell like an Indian again once he got back to his people. "Now," he said, "I stink just like the rest of you Americans."

Smalley goes so far as to say that without this respect it will impossible for the missionary to identify with others,[20] and we could add that the absence of respect will also mean that he in turn will not be respected by the nationals. Reciprocity and mutuality of respect are fundamental to reciprocity in identification.

For Aureliano the U.S. visit meant the enlargement of his concept of people. To witness this growth of his "people concept" was a most interesting experience for us. It was after an interracial prayer meeting which he had enjoyed very much that he confided, "I have been thinking. If we can pray together like this, then you and I are really more Epera (i.e., members of the same tribe) with each other than with Indians who do not walk on God's road." Just as Aureliano's concept of us had to grow until we changed from "white beings" to people, so we need to expand our concept of people and brethren so as to be able to accept as members of the family of God, men from all tribes, nations, and races. This is an important issue for us. Many of us who come for the first time to a preliterate society with our technological gadgetry are quite susceptible to the delusion that our way of life as a whole is superior. If we add to this our greater financial resources, our broader education experience, and our deeper awareness of history, it is so easy for us to ethnocentrically conclude that we are, indeed, superior. There is no little danger that we develop a kind of "boss" or "great white father" image of ourselves. Such an image permits the foreigner to feel that it is entirely just for him to demand immediate attention by the native government officials. This self image can easily cause the missionary to feel that the natives are disrespectful and that they are very grabby about authority and status. Soltau records a painful example of this ethnocentric self-satisfiedness and the accompanying downward slant approach toward nationals in the report of his travel with another missionary couple. While traveling on a launch from the dock to a ship anchored in mid-river a number of Chinese people were sitting on a bench enjoying the river scenery. Much to Soltau's chagrin, the senior missionary pre-emptorily ordered these people to move so that he could sit down. Such action, of course, is only possible if one's self image is grossly and ethnocentrically inflated.[21]

Soltau, however, also provides an example of a positive reciprocal attitude in the account of the missionary who visited a notoriously anti-Christian Confucianist, who was causing a lot of trouble and persecution for the local Christians. The Confucianist invited the missionary to come in and to sit on the ground. The missionary tried to get in a few words of greeting, but the man seemingly paid no further attention to him. For one and a half hours while the missionary was hoping to make a contact with the Confucianist scholar, the latter only discoursed with another visitor. When the missionary finally left, he felt himself to be an utter failure. To his amazement, the native Christians came to him next day saying, "Last night you really made a friend. The Confucianist scholar is going all about the village, saying that you are one of the most humble and polite individuals that he has ever seen, because he made you sit on the floor for a long time and you did not become angry."[22]

While this may be easier to do in societies that have more of a class structure, it is equally important also in preliterate folk societies where the chiefs may have a lot less external marks of status that we be the first to recognize and pay tribute to those who bear tribal responsibility. It will be very easy for the missionary to be misled in paying high tribute to the culturally marginal or the social outcast who is willing to pay court to the missionary and to neglect to pay respect to the leader of the community who has remained relatively aloof.

Wirsche reports a rather narrow escape from making just such a mistake. He was about to begin a literacy program at Lucas in the home of a believer who had invited him for that purpose. On a sudden inspiration he decided to call on the blind old chief, to ask him for permission to conduct the literacy

work in the area, to seek his counsel as to how to set up the program, and to get his advice on individuals who might make potential teachers for teaching others to read. The chief, who had expected the missionary to by-pass him, was overjoyed when the missionary called to him. He said, "If you want to cooperate with us, we are going to help you in whatever way we can." And so he assigned a home, provided for the necessities, and also appointed several individuals as potential teachers of others. He added, "If you would have worked with that other individual, who is not really walking on God's road as he says he is, we would not have cooperated with you."[20]

It was interesting for me to observe that in the service of the dedication of the first Choco church, Aureliano, the newly selected leader of the church, paid tribute even to the unbelieving shaman who attended this special service. The full account appears earlier under the feedback discussion. This wise request for counsel by the church leader went a long way to save the shaman's self-respect and to prepare the way for his becoming willing "to give God the hand." Again, the warmth and intensity of the prayer response by the congregation indicated the depth of their identification. Max Warren ably underscores this when he says that identification means "sympathetic entering into the life of another." Again, only a "deep mutuality" can save identification from the "purely romantic" and "unreality. . . . The true dignity of the relationship demands the recognition of mutuality."[21]

Another example of this situation was reported at a recent Mennonite Central Committee meeting in Chicago. The Moros, a nomadic tribe of the Paraguayan Chaco who have killed a number of white men in recent years, have now decided to join the people in civilization. The chief of one of the bands attached himself to the head mayor of the Mennonite colonies in Paraguay and would not move from his vehicle. Though they had no common language, and no one knows how he had ascertained "the chief" of the white people, somehow the primitive Indian had discerned the leader and was now also seeking the same type of recognition on the part of the colony administrator.

## *Search for Equal Status*

During our experience at Noanama, Colombia, we found that invitations to meals were an excellent way of paying our tribute to people's social status. The national people were well aware of the fact that we often enjoyed the company of other missionaries. They knew that at such times we put out the best china, the prettiest tablecloth and consumed quantities of choice food. Very often we and the visitors were embarrassed by the many Indian and Negro faces that were pressed against the screening of the porch to watch these entertainment proceedings. My wife and I decided to do something about this embarrassment. We decided to invite local villagers to similar banquets. And so in the course of time we invited not only missionary families, but also local families: white, mestizo, Negro, and Indian. The only difference that we made at such occasions was that when we invited people who were not used to using cutlery at the table, the setting included only spoons. We used the same china and similar menus were served to all the visitors.

William Reyburn makes the point that the African wants to be treated as a self-respecting person. He says, "He does not want to be the only first-class citizen, but he certainly wants to also be included in this category.[25] And we do well to recognize that the need on mission fields today is not for fathers, people who will be paternal in their attitudes toward the members of the younger churches, but for brothers, who will be willing to treat as equals those who will obey the gospel message.

Probably one of the most unsettling experiences that I remember of my own missionary career was in the connection with drunken Indians. Since drinking was such a prevalent vice among them, I wanted to make sure to dissociate myself from it. Whenever a drunken Indian tried to stay at our place for the night, I refused him lodging; or, if they got drunk after they had arrived at our place, I would march them off the yard. One night at midnight, a drunken Indian stumbled into our porch. I got up to lead the man off the yard. As we went, he was hanging heavily on me because his legs could scarcely carry him any more. As I walked him across the bridge that separated the compound from the village, this Indian turned and said to me, "Jaco, today you are hurting me very much. When I am sober, then I know what I am doing. But when I am drunk, I do not know what I am doing; and then I need you as a friend. You only want to be a friend to me when I am sober." I have never again had the nerve to march a drunken Indian off my yard, realizing that he needed me as a brother and friend at that time possibly more than at any other.

[1]Jacob A. Loewen, "A Choco Indian in Hillsboro, Kansas," PA, Vol. 9, No. 3 (May-June 1962), pp. 129-144.

[2]Eugene A. Nida, *Message and Mission* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1960), p. 62.

[3]T. Stanley Soltau, *Missions at Crossroads* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954), p. 118.

[4]Jane and Wendell Sprague, "Missionary Standard of Living," PA, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1959), p. 19.

[5]William A. Smalley reports how he and William D. Reyburn joined a group of Africans in a local game. Even though their performance was very crude, the nationals seemed happy about it. Later they reported that this was the first time a missionary had ever played with them. Foreign games taught by the missionary are sometimes viewed as "work."

[6]Loewen, "A Choco in Hillsboro," op. cit.

[7]T. Stanley Soltau, *Facing the Field* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1959), p. 30.

[8]William D. Reyburn, "Identification in the Missionary Task," PA, Vol. 7, No. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1960), p. 9.

9 Soltau, *Missions at Crossroads,* op. cit., p. 118.
10 Eugene A. Nida, "The Relationship of Social Structure to the Problem of Evangelism in Latin America," PA, Vol. 5, No. 3 (May-June 1958), p. 119.
11 Told by Earl Stevick at Missionary Orientation Center, Stonypoint, N.Y., 1962.
12 Soltau, *Missions at Crossroads,* op. cit., p. 156.
13 Reyburn, "Don't Learn That Language," PA, Vol. 5, No. 4 (July-Aug. 1958), p. 177.
14 William A. Smalley, "Educational Remarks: Respect and Ethnocentricism," PA, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Jan-Feb. 1958), p. 191.
15 Eileen Lageer, "Poured Out," *His* (May 1963), pp. 27-28.
16 Nida, *Message and Mission,* op. cit., pp. 33-61.
17 Albert Camus, *The Rebel, An Essay on Man in Revolt* (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), pp. 18-19.
18 Acts, chapters 9, 22, and 26.
19 Jacob A. Loewen, "The Church Among the Choco of Panama," PA, Vol. 10, No. 3 (May-June 1963), pp. 97-108.
20 "Editorial Remarks," op. cit., p. 49.
21 Soltau, *Facing the Field,* op. cit., p. 49.
22 Ibid., p. 51.
23 David Wirsche and Jacob A. Loewen, *Report on the Summer Program in Panama,* 1961. An unpublished report to the Board of Foreign Missions of the Mennonite Brethren Church.
24 Max Warren, "The Meaning of Identification," in Gerald Anderson, *The Theology of the Christian Mission* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1961), pp. 229-238.
25 Reyburn, "Practical Problems: The Missionary in Human Relationships," PA, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Mar.-Apr. 1958), pp. 88-89.

# The Younger Churches and the West

*By Ferdinand Ediger*

SOME PEOPLE DO not appreciate the need for self-study and criticism and hence tend to panic and become defensive in the face of evaluation. When the subject of our concern is the world mission of the church, however, we recognize that the younger churches of the East have a great deal to say to those of us who are connected with Western missions. The church is the church only wherever the brother is taken seriously. We may assume that a desire for the virtue of humility and a desire for growth are somewhat dependent on a knowledge of "as others like us."

In today's world, the missionary image is changing. People are beginning to realize more and more that just because one goes abroad to serve one is not at the top of the spiritual ladder as was held a few years ago. Nevertheless, missionaries are survivors of an increasingly rigorous process of selection for service on the field, and should therefore be above average in physical hardihood and in mental and spiritual qualifications.

Missionaries are dug out of the same clay-bank with the rest of men and have the same human streaks running through them. At the same time, they are the most severely selected group of workers now in the Christian movement and they show it.

## *A Wreath Around the Neck*

Many a wreath has literally been hung around the necks of missionaries. A lay person from Canada visited medical mission work in India and now loves to tell in a moving way how simply hundreds of former leper patients arranged for a farewell service for the missionary doctor who was leaving their area. The ways and means that they used to symbolize their appreciation for what he had done left no doubt in this Canadian's mind that the deeds of love were really a continuation of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. This story can be duplicated many times as one sees the evidences of God's grace having worked through the Western missionary.

The living God knocked at my heart in a positive, realistic and never-before-known way through the preaching of these foreign missionaries. It was the dawn of spiritual awakening for me. Whenever we remind ourselves of the days of our conversion, the faces and words of missionaries who led us to the Christian Faith come back to mind. This may be one of the few rewards from the Lord to the foreign missionaries which they themselves scarcely recognized.

Missionaries' vitality is often manifested in their practical Christian service activities. Nationals from several of the Eastern countries observe that one seldom sees Buddhist priests actually engaging in acts of love toward the poor or sick. Natural calamities strike hard and often in the East and numerous incidents can be cited where the compassion of the living Lord was shown through these foreigners from the West who engaged for weeks in work camps and feeding programs.

Takashi Yamada of Japan gives praise to the role of the missionary in the way he displays the Christian life to the Japanese in Christian family living and devotion.

This is something undeniable that everyone who comes to have contact with missionaries can sense. The beautiful character we see in missionaries as the fruit of the Spirit is something we don't have unless we become Christians. We Japanese have so long been immersed in the feudalistic patterns in human relations, family life, and in the whole social structure as well. So the right concept and proper image of man has not been established in our society as a whole and because of it, we face various problems and tragic incidents here and there. For this kind of human society, living examples of missionaries as Christians and servants of God are no doubt, great challenges. As a matter of fact, from the Meiji era on, many Japanese have found themselves disciples of missionaries prior to becoming disciples of Christ because of their fine example.

This is also confirmed by Yoshiro Ishida in an address he gave at Nojiri, Japan, *The Pattern of a Modern Missionary.*

Missionaries, coming out of the long tradition of the Christian life, contribute greatly by bearing witness to Christ in their practical daily life in society. We Japanese pastors can learn a great deal from them in this respect also.

In the area of the study of cultures and religions, nationals readily admit that Western missionaries have done more than they. It is felt that missionaries are better equipped, because of their very foreignness, to make observations and detailed studies in anthropology which the nationals cannot do. This used to be more the case than it is now. The best anthropologists were missionaries. One frequently hears Japanese pastors referring to insights arrived at by missionaries.

The sense of urgency to win men to Christ is also very evident in the Western missionary and this becomes an inspiration to the nationals. Perhaps this characteristic or unique contribution that missionaries make is due to the unique place of "foreignness" which symbolizes the temporary but positive existence of Christians in this world. Accordingly, the West would greatly profit from missionaries coming to this country from the Eastern younger churches. As apostles are sent by the Holy Spirit and the church, they have a mandate and a "drive" that is urgently needed in world evangelism.

## *Something Left to Be Desired*

After the wreaths have been laid at the missionary's feet and around his neck, there are also experiences that leave much to be desired. Unfortunately, missions have largely gone out from the West to the East and certain bad patterns have evolved. Often the gospel has come wrapped up in the same package with trade, colonial expansion and military pursuits. The Communists tell us that Christian missions are an arm of Western imperialism. Others tell us that China fell to the Communists because Christian missions failed. There is much truth to the view that "foreign missions" continue to suggest to earnest and

*Japanese Christian youth singing at a camping ground.*

generous supporters a kind of nobelesse oblige of the Christian West. The "haves" are sharing with the "have nots." How different it was for Paul of Tarsus to lay the claims of Christ before Festus. The younger churches have been on the receiving end and that experience alone has distorted matters. They have not been caused to feel that in every country of the world the church is called to be engaged with Christ in his mission to the world.

Very rarely does there exist among us as Westerners a vivid and responsible awareness of what it means for Western Christians to be partners in obedience with churches in other lands. In the East, many nationals wonder about the real mission of the church and feel real frustration and embarrassment in trying to find what their relation shall be to the "mission" where many rules and regulations, policies and instructions have been decided without them. Instead of a partnership there is prevalent either a type of colonialism or an absence of communication. One may find many such situations among main line Protestant missions as well as among the newer mission groups that have appeared on the scene as a "Johnny come late." Communication is probably the biggest problem. It is a human problem with which Christians of various backgrounds have trouble. It is precisely a problem with which the reconciling gospel of Christ should help us. Nationals desire a strong tie with both the streams and history of their respective country's Christians and with the "mission." This is hard to comprehend so long as the Western missionary does not realize that together with the nationals we shall be partners in obedience to Jesus Christ. A self-consciousness as well as a group-consciousness as Christians in relation to the commission and responsibility, given by Christ, to the world is necessary for healthy growth and outreach.

### *Partnership and Identification*

Partnership, or brotherhood, desires expression in many areas. Identification is one of them. Identification requires a wrestling with difficult issues, and only the grace of Christ can make it a possibility. The missionary has to deny himself of that culture, thought patterns, and forms of existence that may set him apart from the nationals. The question that the missionary must ask is, "What is there about me that is non-essential and what must I add that is essential as I seek to witness for Jesus Christ in this new and different culture?" Food is a specific area in which adjustments must be made. Eating a diet of raw fish, sea weed and rice in Japan, or curry that is "hot enough to burn one's insides out" in India, are (for the Westerner) examples of "becoming all things to all men, that by all means, I might save some." Living habits and dress require on the part of the missionary a willingness to adjust and change from

*Susan Martens is teaching bedside nursing with the use of a doll patient.*

that to which one has been accustomed. Even religion needs identification. How would one identify with the Buddhist lady who asks to add the Christian faith to her faith in Buddha? She says that there are many roads leading to the top of Mt. Fuji but they all get there. National Christians deplore the fact that many missionaries seemingly can not find any points of affirmation in the religion of their compatriots which can serve as contact points to declare Jesus Christ to them. Many Western missionaries forget that God's Spirit was witnessing to the nationals before the missionary got there.

When it comes to identifying with Communism, the emotional block is even greater. Missionaries seem to feel that there is absolutely no contact point that one can find without compromising one's faith. Here Orientals can calmly tell the Western Christian that a concern for the downtrodden, the poor and the oppressed is a Chirstian concern as well as a concern of many who choose Communism. Cuban Christians who attended the Second All-Christian Peace Assembly in Prague in 1964, told a delegation of Americans how the older Christians of Cuba had been adversely influenced by Western missionaries and they had longed for the day when American bombers would come and deliver them from Communist rule. In the West, we do well to remind ourselves that Christ is above political systems and that there is something in every man with which we can identify and have empathy, even on a personal level, before we can expect to declare unto him Jesus Christ. The Gospel must be unclothed of its Western garb. We need to become involved in Man's affairs even to the narrow line of temptation. We cannot give the gospel to men by tying a package to a long pole and extending it to them. What a challenge!

Since Christian missions are mostly from the privileged to the under-privileged, partnership requires

that we must be willing to suffer with the nationals. Very few missionaries actually ever experience poverty, hunger, and deprivation as the nationals do. It was not thus with Jesus Christ. He identified with the lowly. Rather than giving huge sums of money from the West, (money often weakens a man) the missionary will have to dedicate himself to enduring hardship more. Often material aid and financial help cause opposite effects from those intended, especially when given in improper ways. The tremendous financial gap between the national pastor and the Western missionary (also between the Western missionary and the average layman in the home congregation in the West) suggests that something is awry with our dedication to the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. We have a neat way of excusing ourselves by saying, "The best is none too good for the kingdom of God."

During the last few years some mission boards experienced a failure in a considerable number of their missionaries to return to their field of service after their first furlough. Some of these losses in personnel are due to frustrations experienced in the area of working in partnership with the indigenous churches. Those who have not quit the field have often found specialized jobs in administration and desk work. Some of these are very significant. The younger churches feel that criticism is valid at this point, however. At the Willingen Conference, the delegates from the younger churches were enthusiastic about the need of recovering a missionary initiative and stated,

We hesiate to pass sweeping judgments, but we feel that the Younger Churches require foreign missionaries who go forth to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and not to sit at administrative desks.

Mention must also be made of the desire of the national Christians for more lay Christians from the West coming to serve. Often the short-term worker can do a good job of identifying. The youth of the PAX worker and his ability to enter into the everyday relationships and life of the people is highly welcomed. In Japan, an education committee from a prefecture quite removed from an area where PAX workers were teaching English asked a mission for someone who "was not a professional missionary." Evidently the interest is for contributions that are not in the realm of the "holy man" image. An outstanding lay Christian's contribution is that of the late William Merril Vories. He not only became a friend of the Japanese but he himself became one of them and in a real sense, "he was more than they." He made the land of Japan his home.

Western missionaries still have a place to fill in the East, . . . and we can say that Eastern missionaries also have a place in the West. The task is a demanding one, however, and a "more than average" is needed to break through the barriers and walls before us to the effect that we will experience the real renewal of the church by the working of the Spirit and that we can be real living witnesses for Christ to the world. As one Christian has said, "It still remains to be seen what God can do through one who is completely dedicated to Him . . . and by the Grace of God, I want to be that person." Here is after all the criterion of the value in knowing "how others like us."

# The Role of the Western Missionary in Africa Today

*By Johnson Rakama and Timothy Shindika*

THE WORK OF the Western missionary in Africa is not yet finished. Western Christianity and African Christianity ought to blend together, for they are one in Christ.

In one respect, not much has changed from the old missions, because most of the old missionaries are still alive on the mission fields. It is true that missionaries in the past did not usually identify themselves with the Africans to the extent that the Africans feel they should have. An illustration of this is the practice of having homes away from the Africans. At some places, this went to the extent of those homes being fenced or guarded. This was one of the things that made it impossible for fuller identification to take place. The African scene is currently changing because of the African's concern for autonomy, a political enlightenment infiltrating also the church.

The Western missionary in Africa has at times done

*Kaleta Ameile is presenting a radio message in studio, Luluabourg, Congo. Charles Sprunger is at the console.*

violence to the traditional way of life or culture and has destroyed values which existed in that culture, though to be sure he had some premises to justify his actions. Take the example of marriage, which looks very complex to the Western way of thinking. In some cases the Western missionaries have even gone to the point of fixing the number of heads of cattle to be given as dowry. This makes dowry not a symbol of marriage like the wedding ring which cost money from one of the parties! When dowry is fixed it becomes a price, but this is not as it should be. Dowry, to an African, is a token and confirmation of marriage. This is mostly expected from the husband. If he is really serious about marriage, he should be willing to give something so that his marriage is valid. Free marriage, on the other hand, is invalid. The Western missionaries who have been denouncing dowry have been acting contrary to the traditional values.

To take another example, sometimes boys and girls have been flogged because they were seen standing together greeting each other. Quite a number of boys and girls have been dismissed from nurses training schools for the simple reason that they were engaged while in school. In other cases, letters into mission girls' schools were censored, and a few headmasters or principals went to the extent of fencing the schools.

More examples could be given of missionary practices that were against traditional African values. Sometimes it seems that the practices established by the missionary were not even true to Western values. Today the Western missionary faces the problem of Africans coming over to the Western world only to find exactly the opposite of what the missionary condemns.

We feel that the missionary's attitude toward traditional religion and culture in Africa should be one of understanding, seeking to preserve the values in the context of the society in which the missionary works. Snuffing and dancing, in the African eye, were and are not sin, but there have been cases where such things have been condemned as sin for the African.

The Western missionary in the newly independent countries of Africa is sometimes also seen as an obstacle to nation building, to the attainment of national unity, though it should be clear that this is not the purpose of the missionary. With so many different denominations all over the continent and each denomination endeavoring to get as many members as possible, there are bound to be divisions and confusion among the people who are in large part illiterate. In one case the Catholic missionaries appealed to the people by telling them that in their missions the people could smoke and drink a little. Since these things, as mentioned earlier, were not regarded as sin in the African mind, the Catholic missions received more members than ever before from both the non-Christian and the Protestant denominations. With such conflicting interpretations, a Quaker, for example, is bound to dislike a Catholic Christian and vice versa.

As for the missionary's relation to the churches in Africa, we feel that the Western missionary should bring an understanding between people, regardless of sex, creed or color, and should share with them the fact that God is for all the people of the world. We feel that the newly started program of training young Africans in church ministries should be encouraged. It is through such a program that a better understanding between the African Christians can be brought about. Through such a program also the trained African pastors and ministers working together with the Western missionaries can come to understand more fully the problems that really confront the African Christians.

Today missionaries are still needed not only as technicians — teachers, doctors, nurses, agriculturalists, builders, printers — but also as spiritual missionaries. On the one hand, we do not believe that people can really decide to become Christians if their daily problems are physical disease, poverty and ignorance. But spiritual missionaries and technical missionaries, although not identical, go hand in hand and they cannot be separated from each other in Africa.

Since the countries in Africa have been under the rule of foreign powers for many years, there is bound to be some sentiment against some of the things a Western missionary does, as a result of mistreatment by former administrators. Although such resentment exists in Africa, we are of the opinion that it will die out eventually. "Lay" missionaries, teachers for example, are greatly needed in Africa. We want more schools in Africa to eliminate illiteracy, but this is impossible without teachers. "Lay" missionaries take earning jobs in Africa at the request of various African governments; so this does not in any way present a

political problem in those countries.

We would like to see the contemporary missionary being oriented to cope with the "wind of change" in Africa. We would like to see him come with the idea of equality, with the attitude of love and sympathy which will, as a matter of fact, win the African. We strongly believe that the characteristics of a contemporary missionary in Africa should not be those of the newsman or journalist. The missionary should be able to see and extend the appreciation of the African for the contribution of Western missions. He should not only report the problems and the things he finds strange and exciting. We believe that missionaries should keep out of politics in the African countries.

Recently, churches in Africa have started "sending" their own missionaries. The Quaker churches of Kenya send missionaries to Tanzania and Uganda. African Inland Churches in Tanzania and Kenya have also appointed missionaries.

We do not believe that there is as much need for the churches in Africa to send missionaries to America as there is for American churches to send missionaries to Africa. We feel that churches in Africa, for instance the Mennonite churches, should send some African Christians to America so that they can learn to know various churches and see how these churches are run and how services are conducted.

Finally, what is needed above all else is that Western and African churches should cooperate more fully together, in mutuality, to build the kingdom of God.

# A Biblical View of Missions

*By Peter Fast*

THE MISSION OF God's People is not mission unless it is God's. Because God is God, besides whom there is no other, the missionary imperative is already implicit in God whom the people of God serve in worship and adoration. The corollary of this statement is that God's mission, carried out by his people, is not primarily for his people. The idea of one God, of unity in religion, carries with it the idea of universality.

Furthermore, the fact of God's mission can only be realized if somewhere among the nations there are people who serve and worship other gods than the One who is. Thus the belief in one God in and of itself, does not create the missionary imperative. The mission of God's people is mission to those who do not know his name.

His name is I Am. He is a living God and will continue to be what He is in spite of the nations and the quality of service and adoration rendered to him by those whose God he is. He is a God who chooses not to keep silent, but rather One who chooses to work in history and among the nations, who chooses to reveal himself, thereby not only using history as a vehicle of revelation, but saving history and mankind from a meaningless, futile progression of time. The One whose name is I Am is not a whimsical God like the gods of the nations. He is a God with a purpose, thus giving meaning and direction to the course of history. God's mission involves the whole sweep of history, not only the present moment, important as it may be. It is concerned with the beginning as well as with the end, with creation as well as the new creation.

Mission, then, is concerned with faith in God, who because He has revealed himself to man and in Christ has redeemed man, wishes to be made "known" to those who "know" (not in the Greek sense of apprehension of abstract principles, but in the Hebrew sense of recognition of and obedience to) his name. I Am has acted purposefully and powerfully in history.

If it is true that God works in history in order to effect his redemptive purpose among the nations of the world, if it is true that God has revealed himself

in history and we come to "know" him because of such a revelation, then it is also true that in order to encompass and fulfill God's mission, we dare not base mission on humanitarian, ethnological, or historical grounds. We do not need to justify mission through apologetics. Nor can we be content to base mission on a few strikingly relevant verses of the Bible. Because mission is concerned with the beginning as well as the end, with Genesis as well as with Revelation, we do what we are because of the Bible.

Thus in order to determine God's mission, we are required to exegete the biblical text.

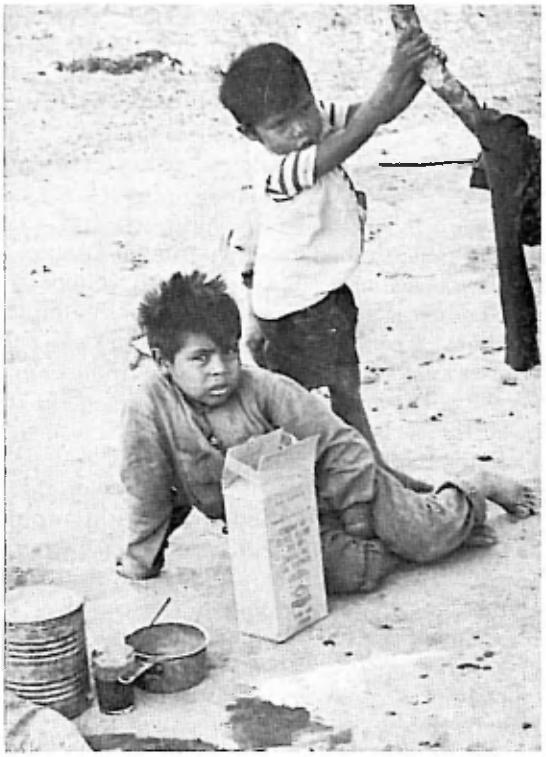
## I

From a biblical perspective the three points of mission are God, the People of God, and the nations. This division of the nations into people of God and nations, however, does not carry any value judgments, as though God could be accused of favoritism and thus become a stumbling block to the nations (Israel versus the nations, or the Christian West versus the non-Christian East).

A biblical understanding of mission cannot begin with the New Testament nor with the beginnings of Israel as a nation, nor with the call of Abraham because mission involves also the nations of the world. Creation is the stage on which the drama of divine redemption is being carried out.

God has acted and shown himself Lord of creation. He continues to act and to show himself as Lord of history and the nations. From a biblical perspective, the nations as well as individual man, are always considered as man or nations in relation to God. God's work in Israel is but a continuation of God's activity in creation and among the nations. Indeed, Israel's background is God in creation and among the nations, electing one of the many, setting the nations apart from Israel, not as a goal in itself (this is the perverted interpretation given to this act of God by Israel herself, i.e., particularism), but in order that the other nations may also come to "know" Jahwe (universalism).

Having elected Israel does not mean that God has abandoned the nations. On the contrary. Israel is the answer to the problem of the nations, including at one point Israel herself. Thus, as J. Blauw has indicated, being called God's people is never a national term, but always a religious one. Nations themselves do not become so many different types of political units, some which must be fostered, others which must be opposed. Nations for God's people always have religious value, regardless of their political ideology. Nationalism (advancing the cause and interest of one particular unit) among God's people, then as well as now, is a basic denial of the essence and nature of this people. The term "nations" in biblical language is not employed to characterize them sociologically, but to describe them in their relationship to God.



*Boys at the Yalva-Sanga Indian settlement, Chaco, Paraguay.*

God is still Lord of all nations and thus he can employ the nations to advance his cause and purpose.

In the final analysis, the negative meaning of nations in Judaism cannot be justified. Already in the Old Testament, especially in the second part of Isaiah and certain Psalms, the difference between "heathen" and "Israel" is largely dissolved. The nations shall also find a place in the eschatological Kingdom of God (e.g. Is. 2:2-4). With the great commission to make disciples of all nations, that is to make them what the disciples themselves are, this difference is entirely obliterated. For, as Karl Barth asks, how could he, to whom all power is given, have ever intended founding a pious little Jewish club?

At the present moment, however, the difference is striking. According to the Bible, the nations are those people who know not God (Jer. 10:25; I Thess. 4:5). The missionary impulse is derived from this difference and the possibility that this difference can be obliterated.

On the other hand, from the point of view of the Gospel, Paul declares that there is no difference between the heathen and the Jew (Rom. 1 and 2). The Gospel of John considers the hardened Jew, not as

God's people, but as part of the evil world. The Gospel is for both, those who know not God, and those who no longer know him.

The church as God's people will always be the "other" element in this world (1 Pet. 2:9-10). This people is never meant to become part and parcel of conquest and subjugation. She must be able to withdraw from the "suction power of conformity to the world" such as colonialism which has made the atmosphere of many mission stations unbearable (J. Blauw). She must vigilantly guard against the great danger of mistaking paternalism for brotherhood. The people of God are always a people called out for service and responsibility in the Kingdom of God for the nations of the world.

The marvel about this People-of-God element among the nations is the fidelity of God to this people. In spite of the frequent denial of the nature of this people, by the church itself, God's cause still prospers and advances. As Hendrik Kraemer has demonstrated, the only ecclesiastical feature about the church in the Dutch East Indies was that it was called a "church." Ministers of the church, a church created in the image of government hierarchy and religiously neutral, were officials of a government institution, not pastors and leaders chosen by the congregation. It is a witness to the fidelity of God that a Christian community sprang up at all as a result of this body.

The prime responsibility of this people of God is to actively align itself with the universal purpose of God in history. That is, to be God's mission, to actually be the people of God. From this viewpoint it is true to say that the church does not have a mission, but is mission, because she does that for which she in the first place was called out: to be a sign of God's continued, active presence in the world having relevance and meaning for the relationship between God and all nations, not only the relationship between God and his people.

The mission of the people of God is thus a two-directional one. It is directed inward as well outward. "Missionaries" are "sent" to the people of God so that this people may "know" what it is to be the people of God. So Moses, the first missionary about whom we have any knowledge, was sent to the children of Israel, not to the nations. The prophets were sent to God's people. Jesus himself came to his own.

## II

Mission, in the narrow sense of the term as being sent out with the message of salvation to the nations of the world, hardly finds an adequate basis in the Old Testament. What is emphasized is another aspect of mission. Israel is to exist as God's people and to suffer as such among the nations. Then Israel will be a light to the nations so that God's salvation will reach to the ends of the earth. But this is not accomplished by words or activity, but by presence. This movement of mission is sometimes described as centripetal, in contrast to the outward going aspect of mission which is centrifugal. It is not Israel which is sent to the nations. The nations are "gathering" at the navel of the earth, Mount Zion (Ezek. 38:12). Kings lead their nations in great processions to the mountain of Jahweh, "to your light" and to "the brightness of your rising" (Is. 60:1-3). Israel calls on the nations to praise the Name of Jahweh, for Jahweh is not only King of Israel but also King of the nations.

This centripetal movement of mission is also clearly evident in Judaism. The object of Jewish mission was to "denationalize" the nations and make them Jews, to bring them to worship at Jerusalem.

Even the New Testament is not entirely free from this centripetal movement of mission. Revelation 15:1-4 speaks about a great eschatological vision of the nations coming to the New Jerusalem to worship God (also Rev. 21:22-26). The pilgrimage of the nations will end before the throne of the King (Matt. 25:32). The Greeks also came to see Jesus.

The centripetal movement of God's mission among the nations is a sign that mission is also concerned with the end, the eschaton, with the final judgment and salvation. The new aeon envisaged in the Old Testament has come in the New, it is the beginning of the end. The great event of Christ has already ransomed men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. Christ shall be enthroned and rule the nations with a rod of iron.

Not only is this centripetal, inward movement of mission evident in the New Testament, but also the inward "sending" motif finds considerable emphasis. Jesus himself is sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 15:24). He came to his own people. According to Paul, Christ became a servant to the circumcised (Rom. 15:8). He sent the twelve disciples to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. 10:6).

Even this aspect of mission is not really "missionary" in the narrow sense of the term. The "sending" is directed inwardly to Israel to whom the Gospel must be preached first. Jesus' rejection in Israel does not mean that he will go to the Gentiles. In spite of this rejection, Jesus steadfastly continues to set his face toward the center of the Jews, Jerusalem.

Thus the conviction that Israel shall become the center of the world to which all nations shall "gather" is an important biblical aspect of mission, both Old Testament and New Testament. The Bible calls the people of God to be this people among the nations. God even sends "missionaries" to this people, especially if this people loses the vision of its universal significance, as a light to the nations, so that God's salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.

*Ordination of Han Vandenberg in Taiwan with local pastors and Olin Krehbiel participating.*

This centripetal movement of mission has no place for particularism or nationalism. If this people is the people of God, it is so for the sake of others. Nations still come, simply because there is a church in the midst of them. The "gathered church" still appropriately describes the result of the existence of the church in a certain place.

III

Besides the centripetal movement of the nations to the people of God, there is also the reverse movement, the centrifugal force of the people of God among the nations. Behind the apparent particular choice of one man Abraham, lay the great world purpose of God: "By you all the nations of the earth will bless themselves" (Gen. 12:13). Israel's faith is something to be shared by all nations. The people of God becomes the instrument of God's purpose. But not merely a tool in the hands of God which he can manipulate mechanically. No doubt God's mission would run more smoothly if this were the case! Because this people is not merely a tool, it is constantly challenged to obedience and fidelity to the will and purpose of God.

If we believe that the will of God is to save men of all nations, that all men shall "know" him, then the least we can do is to fulfill man's condition of obedience and fidelity to God. The purpose of election is to mediate God's revelation to other men. A faith worth holding is a faith worth sharing.

But Israel herself, although chosen by God to form the nucleus of all nations blessing themsleves, was forced to engage in mission among the nations as a result of the exile. She was "scattered" as the nations of Genesis 11 were scattered. Although this event was interpreted negatively as judgment upon Israel for her sins, it was significantly reinterpreted in the second part of Isaiah as Israel being a missionary community among the nations. Her scattering will be a witness as well as confession of her abomination.

Especially significant for this interpretation are the so-called Servant Songs of Isaiah (42:1-7; 49:1-7; 50:4-9; 53:1-12). In spite of Israel's scattering, she is still the elect people of God. Israel was to be a mediator of the "light of the Gentiles" (Isaiah 42:6f.).

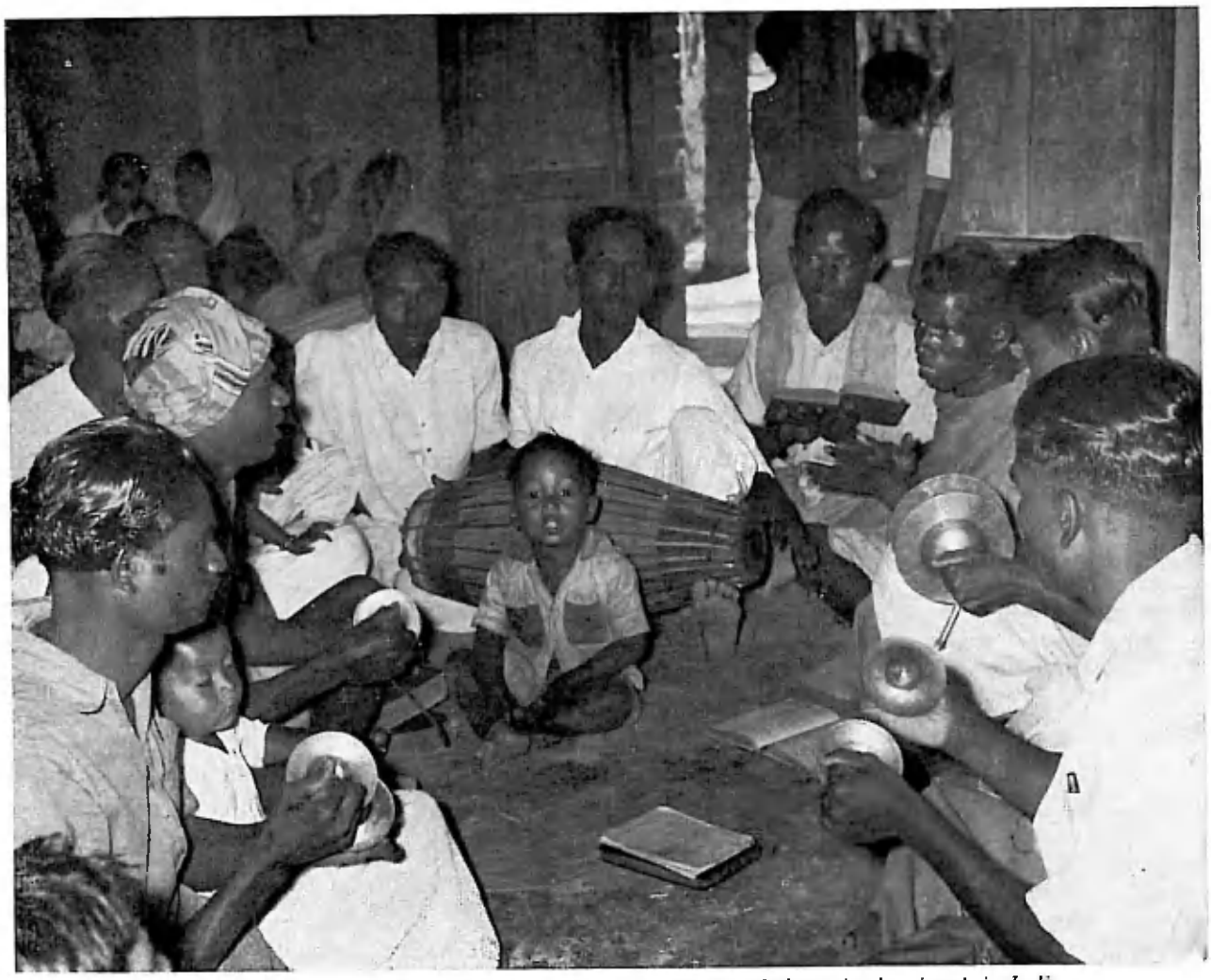
The servant, as Israel, is the missionary community, the instrument of blessing, providing release for the captives and opening of the eyes for the blind. Israel is the bearer of this mission to the world of nations. However clearly this mission is pronounced, it is still an eschatological mission and thus messianic. The servant is the one who is to come and thus the climax of all mission. Although sent to Israel, his mission is for the world. His mission is also his method of mission, substitutionary, innocent suffering for Israel and for the world. The suffering does not redeem the innocent sufferer, or only Israel. He bears the sins of the world.

Christ in his crucifixion fulfilled the role of the servant. Thus the cross of Christ becomes the demand for mission, not only its possibility. In the cross, God has judged the whole world and is a clear activity of God indicating his universal intent. The cross forms the basis of the commission of the risen Lord for his disciples to go out and proclaim the inbreaking of a new time, the fulfillment of the promises of the old covenant. This mission is not contrary to what was earlier expected. Nor does it wholly supersede the old covenant. It is continuity with uniqueness. Abraham, Sinai, the prophets and the nations still have relevance for the new.

With the "already" of the inbreaking of God's Kingdom into the world, the centrifugal aspect of God's mission becomes all the more urgent. The risen Lord "scatters" (sends) for the purpose of "gathering." The One who ignominiously suffered has been enthroned as Lord of all nations. This is no longer eschatology. This is history and must be proclaimed as such to the nations. The universality of God's mission has been realized.

The proclamation of this Gospel is not carried on in the strength of the witnesses themselves. Nor is it a frabrication of those who go out. It is God's mission. The Holy Spirit is the divine power which enables the witnesses to be this mission. Christ's presence among his people, through the Holy Spirit, is the assurance of God's continued activity among his people and the nations of the world. To go to the world on any other grounds than on the constraining love of God as revealed in Christ Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit, is contrary to the meaning and intent of the phrase, "to be God's mission."

Saying that the church is God's mission means that the church and mission are inseparable. But God's



*Orchestra and singing at Pulsabhari, which illustrates the use of cultural techniques in the church in India.*

mission is not the mission of the church, much less of mission boards or societies. The church's mission cannot even be based on the church. Rather, as the International Missionary Council stated at Ghana in 1958: "Mission is Christ's mission, not our own." From this follows that we cannot have part in Christ's mission unless we have part in Christ. Mission as Christ's mission is not an elective for the church. It is a matter of life and death.

Since the church's mission is not based on the church, the purpose of the church is not to establish and plant "daughter churches" and thus to justify and absolutize the existence of the church or the existence of individual denominations or missionary societies who are engaged in "missionary work." The church is not called to reproduce the same of its kind. We cannot expect people to respond in the same way to the Gospel anywhere in the world.

Nor is it accurate to say that the church is engaged in the "expansion of Christianity." The church is never an absolute or a final end in itself. Thus the terms "younger churches" and "older churches" are purely arbitrary and hardly describe any aspect of what it means for the church to be God's mission in the world. Church is church and must advance as such beyond all regional, national, international, historical, and temporal differences to a place where she confronts the nations of the world with the Gospel, where she becomes relevant to the purpose of God.

The church must also be aware of what she actually does by engaging in inter-church activity of various kinds, such as Inter-Church Aid, Church World Service, or Mennonite Central Committee. Purely engaging in foreign lands is in and of itself no guarantee that the church does actually engage in the mission of Christ. Such activity may build bridges between the churches. But if this activity is not tied to the universal purpose of God acting in history, she has lost her relationship to God's mission in confronting the nations with the Gospel. Mission is witnessing

to the world about her (the world's) own condition of darkness and separation form God, and calling men to the light of the crucified and risen Lord, Jesus Christ. The purpose of the church is not to better the world, whether it be through relief, medicine or agriculture, but to call the world to a completely new existence in Christ. The church is mission if she together as the people of God scattered among the nations, advances beyond inter-church aid programs to the man who is lost and without Christ, whether or not this man is one who has "never yet believed" or one "who no longer believes." Both have need of the Gospel.

It has already been stated that God's mission is not a mission of mission boards, or societies, or the church. It is God scattering his people among the nations of the world for the purpose of gathering. Mission is not only one of the many activities of the church. Mission is her nature and not an elective which she may choose to carry out or not and still be the church. Her mission then becomes also her method, of actually being the church wherever she is. Her method is obedience. She is obedient to her Lord and becomes what she is when she realizes that she does not exist for herself, but for her Lord who sends her into the world.

*Pastor ringing the church bell at Kharradarhd, Sarhuja, India.*

Furthermore, from the basic premise that the church is for the world, for those who actually do not belong to her, follows the corollary that the members comprising the people of God, if obedient, must be characterized by mobility. To become co-workers with God in his mission, presupposes faith in God that man can become the "living point of contact" (H. Kraemer) between Jesus Christ and the man without Christ. The lone missionary amidst the world of unbelief is the church challenging the nations to belief in Christ. Hence the necessity of the church to be able to move in order to become living points of contact.

Thus also from the view-point of her method, obedience, it makes little "missionary" sense to divide the church into "East" and "West," into "younger" and "older." Or to dichotomize mission to become "foreign" and "home" mission. If we believe that the church is the "other" element in the world, then mission always becomes foreign mission, and the national missionary is as foreign as the foreign one. Many problems with regard to the relationship of the foreign missionary to the national missionary will resolve themselves if we realize that the whole church is mission.

Mission is as broad as the universal intent of God to save. Since God has chosen to save men on the plane of history, mission is accomplished in the historical process and thus is not eternal or unchangeable since the historical process itself is characterized by change. The people of God must therefore seek to be the church in new and ever changing circumstances. She must be courageous not to canonize traditional ways of expressing her mission in regard to both the centripetal and the centrifugal aspect of mission. Although the church must study present circumstances in which she is called to be God's mission, the church dare not make these findings the basis of her mission. The moorings of the people of God is always the Bible.

One of the basic revisions that the church in the "West" will have to make is to recognize the truth of the statement of Hendrik Kraemer in his book, *The Christian Message in the Non-Christian World*:

"Nothing can demonstrate more clearly that the Christian Church, religiously speaking, in the West as well as the East, is standing in a pagan, non-Christian world, and has again to consider the whole world its mission field, not in the rhetorical but in the literal sense of the word."

The field is broad and the harvest is truly plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore the lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest (Matt. 9:37, 38).

# The Theology of the Church's Mission

*By John H. Yoder*

In the days of William Carey the appropriate way to discuss the mandate for the church's missionary enterprise was to inquire whether the Great Commission given to the twelve apostles by Christ still applies as a command to the church in later generations. Most churchmen and theologians said it did not apply, either because the original apostles had already preached in every part of the world, or because as a legal document it was binding only upon them; the modern missionary movement owes its beginnings to the contrary conviction that this is a command applying to the whole church throughout the ages.

The Great Commission had a somewhat similar importance in the sixteenth century. Then the Anabaptists, taking its words as the formal "inspiration" of the ordinance of baptism by Christ, read in it the sequence: "Make disciples, then baptize, then teach," and saw therein the final proof that baptism must be preceded by a confession of discipleship.

Yet when we look more deeply into the life of the early church or into the missionary message of the sixteenth century or the nineteenth, we find that the Great Commission, when interpreted simply as a command which Christians have simply to obey, provides very little help toward understanding just how the church is to go about the business of making disciples. Nor is there any indication that the New Testament church ever, in a simple and wooden way, simply set about making disciples because they had orders to do so. As recent studies like Harry Boer's *Pentecost and Missions* have shown, literal obedience to the Great Commission had very little to do with the missionary impetus of the New Testament church.

If then we are to understand why the true church is and has been missionary, it will not suffice to say simply, "because it is commanded by Christ." Even if the Christian life were a matter of simply literally obeying orders without knowing the how or the wherefore, such a command as this would prescribe no specific action and would hardly make of those who would be trying to obey the most effective witnesses.

*Ye Shall Receive Power*

What then was the motor behind the vitality of the New Testament church? The answer arising from the documents seems clearly to be that a power was at work beyond human reckoning. In spite of the predictions of Jesus, there is every indication that what happened at Pentecost was as much a surprise to the disciples as it was to the surrounding crowds. The disciples made no effort to provide a "witness situation;" the most they did was to let something happen "over their heads" and to discern what it had meant.

Their interpretation of what needed to be done was similarly of very limited intent when, as we find it reported in Acts chapter 6, the young Jerusalem community tried to resolve an internal leadership problem by giving more of a voice in the management of the church's affairs to the "Hellenists"—to those Christians who, although fully Jewish, had been living in "the dispersion" and thereby had a more confident relationship to Greco-Roman culture. From the first report there is no indication that anyone expected these seven Hellenistic leaders to do anything but "wait on tables"; yet two of them, Stephen and Philip, made major contributions to the development of the church's mission. Stephen, speaking from the perspective of that independence of temple worship which was characteristic of the Hellenistic Jews, who had been living with synagogue and without the temple, first interpreted true faith as independent of the temple and therefore, intrinsically, capable of being propagated by missionary initiative. It was the persecution of the followers of Stephen; i.e., of the Hellenists, which first drove Christians outside of Jerusa-

lem and into Samaria, thus moving the first step along the sequence of broadening circles predicted in Acts 1:8; it was Philip who first baptized Samaritans and the proselyte from Ethiopia. Hellenists arriving at Damascus and then in Antioch, were the first to preach their message to outright Gentiles, and the first to be sufficiently distinct from the surrounding Jewish community to be given the name "Christians" by the outside society.

The entire process reported in Acts chapters 2-12, which we would certainly need to describe with our name "mission," including the opening of the church to Gentiles, the conversion of the Apostle Paul, and the development of the theology and a piety and a practice of church life which could survive without the temple, took place without any sign that any human strategist was consciously trying to follow through on the Great Commission, or for that matter, to obey any particular orders. This was simply the work of the Holy Spirit in the congregation, making of the church, in spite of herself, an interracial, Jewish-Gentile community. Not until the identity of this Hellenistic Christianity was well established in Antioch did the Holy Spirit proceed to the actual formal sending of someone; and then it was Saul and Barnabas, both of whom represented in their own persons a perfect mingling of the Jewish and Gentile heritages.

## *The Hidden Mystery for Ages*

What had happened unexplained, in the church's growth from the pouring out of the spirit at Pentecost to the sending out by the spirit at Antioch, it remained to the missionary apostle to explain. Writing later to the Ephesians, this apostle actually claims a special revelation by God to himself (Ephesians 3:3-5), explaining the creation of the fellowship between Jews and Gentiles as the ultimate fulfillment of the divine purpose ("mystery") of all the ages, now finally made clear through Paul and his contemporaries. He does not say that individual Jews can be saved by believing on Jesus and that individual Gentiles can be saved by believing, with the result that both categories of people have a right to belong in the organization in which believers gather for education and fellowship. The logical order is rather the other way around. The gospel itself, the "plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things," the "eternal purpose which he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord" *is* the creation of one new humanity where before there had been racial, religious, moral, and class differences.

A different vocabulary is used to say the same thing in 2 Corinthians 5. "The love of Christ leaves us no choice, when once we have reached the conclusion that one man died for all and therefore all mankind has died." Once again the Apostle's logic is far broader than what we usually say about the death of Christ. Jesus' taking the place of sinners is truly part of the picture; but it comes only at the end of the chapter. What the Apostle says first is that because in Christ all men have died, and because for the believer in Christ the whole world is new, we "henceforth regard no one from the human point of view." That means that the abolition of distinction between Jew and Greek, bond and free, even male and female in the Christian fellowship is not simply a deduction from the reconciling work of Christ, but in fact the very substance of that work.

## *We Have No Choice*

The first basic reorientation of our thinking about mission which must follow from a clear grasp of the Biblical data we have reviewed above is that the church has no option in this matter. Traditional theological definitions have identified the church as being present where the sacraments are administered and the word of God is preached to the faithful; requirements which can be met by a community with no missionary character. Then, after the requirements have been met, it remains possible for special organizations, not identical with the church, to be set up for missionary purposes. It is this distinction between church and mission—even on the part of those who believe in both—which is inadmissible. A human community which is not constantly both experiencing and proclaiming the transformation of the human situation by the coming of God among men will immediately degenerate into Judaism or paganism; into defensive moralism or the superstitious practice of "religion."

Whenever a church does thus fail to live the experience of "if anyone is in Christ the whole world is new," the sign of this is a settling back to "regard men from a human point of view"; this means to assume that our kind of people are "in," including our children of course, and that other kinds of people, because of the same kind of biological determination, remain "out." No amount of willingness to accept exceptional individuals from the other group can change the wrongness of this attitude. To regard men from a human point of view is, Paul says, to deny that one man died for all.

## *Method and Message*

It is logically quite possible to distinguish between a broadcasting station and the message it sends over the air waves, or between a school and its curriculum or between a publishing house and the contents of its newspaper. But if what we have been reading in the New Testament is true, this is an impossible distinction when we come to think of the Christian church. There is no difference between the message and the vehicle of that message. There can be no distinction between the reconciling of men to one another and God in Christ as a truth and as an instrument for the

communication of that truth.

But if it is impossible to distinguish between the church and her mission, this is not simply an affirmative statement about the church; it is also a radical questioning of her missionary methods. How often Christians have attempted to have someone propagate a message without themselves being present as a community! Within the organized missionary endeavor of the Western churches in the last two centuries, it has generally been the case that the beginning efforts to propagate the gospel were carried in any one place by a lone missionary rather than a congregation, and then later by a medical or educational institution rather than through the immediate formation of circles of men and women in whom differences of color and class were visibly overcome. One need not pick out the few extreme cases where a missionary was actually racially or politically prejudiced against the "natives" among whom he worked; even when his vision and motivation were the most redemptive, the patterns of missionary sending and management tended in those early years *not* to assume that the church is present as a spiritual reality at the start, not to presuppose that the existence of the Christian congregations is itself the major missionary message. "The national church" was rather thought of as the ultimate product of patient missionary efforts through which individuals would be won one by one, and then finally gathered and educated into a group which could manage itself.

The New Testament gives us little basis for conceiving of the evangelistic message of the Christian church as primarily a call to specific individuals to pass through a series of emotional states leading to an awareness first of guilt and then of forgiveness and commitment. When the first exposition of justification of faith, the teaching from which this experience-centered view of the gospel is drawn, was written by the Apostle Paul it was already a corrective measure within the church and not a playback of Paul's preaching to Gentiles; but even here the faith which justifies was not thought of primarily as a sequence of radically individual experiences. In later European Christendom when the medieval mystics and then Martin Luther and then the Pietists focused attention on the spiritual pilgrimage of the individual soul, this was again a corrective where the springs of commitment had run dry because it was no longer clear how a gospel was reconciling tribes and tongues and peoples and nations with one another. Similarly, the individualism of popular American religion is a consequence of acquiescence in denominational division, following which reconciliation will have to take place primarily on the vertical man-God axis because the reconciling of man and man has been abandoned.

It may therefore be not only a potential corrective to our inadequate missionary methods, but also a potential source of both judgment and salvation in our ethnically and economically segregated "home churches," if we can let ourselves be told that reconciled fellowship is not only the result but also the purpose and the tool of the working of God. It was "to purify for himself a people who should be his own, zealous for good works," that "our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ gave Himself for us to purchase our freedom from all iniquity. . . ." (Titus 2). That we who "once were not a people . . . now are the people of God," a "chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation . . ." identifies already "the perfections of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light" which we are called to make known (1 Peter 2).

Let us therefore no longer try to conceive separately of:

A. A message about what it means for a listener that Jesus died, carried by:

B. An organization established to propagate the message, out of which might ultimately arise

C. A fellowship of the fruits of the missionary laborers.

The message, the method, and the result are indistinguishable.

Currently a wave of enthusiastic debate is sweeping aside old approaches to the nature and function of the church in a discussion which its ecumenical organizers entitled, "the missionary structure of the congregation." In these circles great emphasis is falling on the necessity to translate or to transmute the gospel into terms which modern man can grasp, because he will see Christians bringing to bear upon the structures of society and the needs of men an impact which will truly be "good news." This "new look in evangelism" is questionable if it be thought that a message calling for personal repentant commitment to the Lordship of Christ can now be replaced by an effort to make institutions behave redemptively. It is also questionable if it is approached as simply an effort to "translate" a message which would have been adequate in another social context so that modern men can understand it. It is questionable if it assumes, as has so often been done before, that the visible social institutions really do finally determine what kind of life men will live. Yet beyond these menacing inadequacies, the struggle for a new vision of what kind of missionary fellowship a Christian congregation should be is struggling with the right problem; and if around new social needs or institutions it can be discovered in a new way that men are reconciled repentantly in the name of Jesus Christ, then this overcoming of concentration on specifically "evangelistic agencies" might be the sign of genuine spiritual revival.

It has been argued that the only hope for restored

missionary vigor will be a new reality of personal religious experience to give the witness something to witness about. Others ask for more liturgical worship, to train our spirits in the attitudes and vocabulary of worship, maintaining our sense of the reality of the realm of the Spirit. Both of these are needed, in many places in fact desperately so. But what Paul suggests will speak to unbelievers (1 Corinthians 14: 24f.) is neither ecstasy nor formality, but the simple observation of a local congregation mutually engaged in "prophecy"—"talking to men for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation." "Look how they love one another!" was the best statement of the early church's credentials. The church is the mission, not in the sense currently popular among organizational streamlines, that mission boards and denominational hierarchies should be merged, but in the deep sense that the experiencing of fellowship and the commending or proclaiming of it are the same act.

# The Christian and Non-Christian Religions

*By V. E. Devadutt*

THE RELATIONSHIP of Christianity to other major religions of the world needs desperately to be rethought. The need arises not because the momentum of the missionary expansion of Christianity has been slowed down considerably in recent decades by the resurgence of other major religions. The need arises not because Christians are uncertain of the present and future prospects of Christian missionary work in non-Christian lands. The need arises because Christian thinkers and scholars have come to appreciate two facts in a way that they did not before.

The first fact of appreciation is that many of the major non-Christian religions have had all along not only many values of an enduring character but that they also have the capacity to restate some of their central tenets of belief and to reformulate their institutional expression to meet the demands of a changing intellectual climate of their adherents and even a more rapidly changing social order everywhere. The optimism of the nineteenth century that Christianity can shake these religions to their very foundations is no longer there. As a matter of fact it is no longer felt that this need be the job of Christianity.

The second fact or appreciation arises from what is revealed through a study of religions from their phenomenological angle. By the phenomenology of religion, we mean those empirically observable features of religion, such as the institutional forms it takes, its ritual, its worship, the relationship between its dogmas and doctrines to the culture and social behavior of its adherents etc., without passing any judgment on whatever transcendent references it may have. One result of the study of religions from their phenomenological angle is that all religions, including the Christian, reveal many parallels among themselves. They show many resemblances not only in their institutional expression but even in some of their doctrines and dogmas which are taken to give them their identity. In regard to the former, for instance, most *religious communities* consider themselves in some sense 'sacred' as distinct from 'secular.' In regard to the latter, some schools of Hindu and Buddhist thought believe that man is saved not by righteousness but by the grace of the deity. A second result of the study of the phenomenology of religion is the historical relativism manifested in the growth of many religions. No major religion has remained static. Every one of them, including the Christian, despite outward unity harbors a diversity of belief, sometimes these beliefs contradicting each other. The emergence of such diversity is often due to historical and cultural conditions. The history of religions shows that there have been internal

struggles and conflicts in each of the major religions equal to the struggle and conflict as between any two separate religions. So to identify any single religion by a single feature is almost impossible and the mutual rejection of any two religions on the basis of such a single feature is often based on mutual ignorance. A third result of the study of the phenomenology of religion is the humility with which we now accept the disparity between profession and practice in all religions. We do not have to go outside the Christian religion to confirm this disparity.

The cumulative result of all this is that some modern Christian scholars draw a sharp distinction between religion qua religion where many features are often molded by human culture and the redemptive and self-disclosing movement of God toward men and human history which must be discerned independently of what any religion says concerning itself. A further distinction is to be drawn and that is between religion and faith, for that which discerns this movement is the latter and not the former. Christianity *as a religion* is on a par in many respects though having some unique elements of its own, with many other major religions of the world and it must forever surrender its claim to superiority over other religions and it is as much under the judgment of God as any other religion for all the inevitable elements of human culture embodied in it. By faith the Christian however does not mean some sort of a peculiar subjective organ of religious vision but his commitment and adherence to that to which the Bible witnesses and therefore to something objective. And the biblical witness is not to the development of the Hebrew-Christian religion. Similarly the witness of the Christian is not to the Christian religion as such. The biblical witness is to a God who as the creator of all existence moves toward His creatures in judgment and redemption. "God so loved the world" says the Fourth Evangelist and therefore the giving of his only begotten Son is of cosmic significance.

The Christ-event is also definitive and as an event of cosmic significance and as definitive in nature, its proclamation is both that God's sovereignty as the creator is a redemptive sovereignty and that he not only involves himself in freedom redemptively in all of human history but that he does so in the manner in which the Christ-event reveals. The Christian message is then not of the exclusive character of the particular event but it is that the particular event alone tells us how God is acting everywhere. Wherever God acts he acts as in Christ. The Christian is not the owner of the Christ-event. He is not the custodian of it to release or lock up its power by his activity or inactivity. The Christian cannot delimit the saving activity of God but discerning this saving activity from the perspective of his faith, he is constrained to be wherever it is taking place to witness to it. The mis-

*Singing and dancing with drums in parade style when meeting visiting ministers, Kharradarhd, India.*

sionary task is not to take Christ to peoples of other faiths or to confront other religions with the Christian religion. Christ is already there working and the missionary obeys the summons to be where Christ is working, whether it be in Selma in Alabama or in the great revolutionary movements of our time where God is breaking through history to set the captive free—the captive to hunger, superstitution, to idolatrous racism and nationalism and to diverse other forces, principalities and powers that dehumanize man. When the Christian sees his task as obedience to a Sovereign God who loves the whole world and who works redemptively as seen in Christ and to be with him to witness to such work and to participate actively in such work at whatever cost, he is freed from an unnecessary sense of self-importance, paternalism that has vitiated missionary work of some past generations and from paralyzing anxieties. He is freed from an unnecessary sense of self-importance for it is not for him to cause God's presence anywhere or to release his saving activity. He is merely the servant of that presence and activity. He is freed from paternalism, for he now directs people's response to the amazing

*Eunice Hong, editor of* Ma-Na *(Manna), Mennonite magazine in Taiwan.*

power of the love of God that takes in the whole universe and allows them to free themselves from dependence on mere human instruments. He is freed from two anxieties. One anxiety arises from the failures of Christianity or the church to be an instrument of God's redemption. The failures of the church are not God's failures. God is not a slave to Christianity or the church. He is not that dependent on the church that he stands immobilized with its immobility. This is not to repudiate the church for the church as the servant of God's revelation is necessary but to proclaim the radical freedom of God which is his transcendence above all the frailties of the created order and therefore his ability to save despite these frailties.

Secondly it frees us from the anxiety that arises from the false notion that the missionary task is to make Christianity radically displace all other religions. In some cases it may be, as in the case of the so-called animistic religions but perhaps not in other cases. When the major religions of the world have encountered Christianity, they have often undergone internal reform. This process will go on and the Christian should rejoice in this and enter into a meaningful dialogue with the adherents of these religions. What in the end will happen it is not for us to speculate. The God of Christ will bring to harvest everything in his own way and time. The Christian faith remains essentially eschatological. Eschatological hope however is not the hope of 'a pie in the sky bye and bye'—eschatological hope is rooted in the sovereign power and freedom of God to bring to a consummation those ends he wills for history and the Christian mission and ministry are in relation to God who is even now at work in history that man may be truly the child of God in his historical existence, enjoying the freedom from all those dehumanizing powers, whether arising out of want or affluence, out of a lack of security or misuse of power and in obedience to the creator to be the grateful recipient of his providence and grace along with the whole human family.

# "The New Missionary"

In a recent issue of the *Christian Century* (December 8, 1965) John W. Egerton presents "The New Missionary" at work in Africa. He points out that the "New Missionary" is in many instances far ahead of the constituency he represents, for example, in his attitude toward the race question. The "New Missionary" is possibly not ordained and works and witnesses as a teacher, doctor, social worker, agriculturist, and engineer.

The ecumenical spirit of the "New Missionary" is illustrated in the following paragraph:

"Louvanium University, a Catholic institution in Leopoldville, welcomed the Congo's only Protestant university in a two-year merger of students and faculty after the Protestants were driven from their Stanleyville campus by last year's Simba rebellion. This, the only ecumenical university in the world, is now operating under the guidance of a Catholic physicist and a Mennonite political scientist (Melvin Loewen), both laymen. Also in the Congo, Protestants and Catholics are working together to prepare a new Bible translation."

# Was It Fate?

*By Christena Duerksen*

THE DAY WAS torrid. Heat waves shimmered on the horizon. India was in the grip of the hot season. As far as possible, all living creatures had sought for refuge from the rays of the mid-summer sun. A lone man was pedaling his bicycle along the dusty road. There was more than weariness in the lines of his face. There was despair. What was his need? Where was he going?

Two miles of traveling brought him to the brick-walled compound or yard where there were a number of buildings. Two of these buildings were the foreign peoples' homes. The other buildings were a part of the school unit. The cyclist came to a halt in front of the larger house where a blind woman was pulling systematically on a rope that passed through a hole in the wall above the door by means of which the air in the room was put into motion and the heat in the room made more bearable. She turned her head at the sound of wheel on the gravel by the veranda steps. The man asked her how best to get in touch with the foreign sahib living there.

She replied, "Knock on the door. It is the way they do." A discreet cough or the clearing of the throat, which was the Indian way, might go unheeded. So he knocked and heard the sound of someone moving about inside the house. The door opened and the sahib stood there. "What is wished?" he asked.

Holding his hands together in the attitude of supplication, the man made his plea. "Sir, I would not come to trouble you at this inopportune time of day if I knew what else to do. There is great concern in my house. My wife is in labor but cannot give birth to the child. The women who are caring for her say she must get to the hospital on the other side of the river. There is no motor vehicle in our village and the train will not come until late tonight. Too late to help us. Will you take us there in your jeep?"

Although it was rest time for the foreigner, the sahib made no objection. Because his jeep boasted an addition in the back, it was possible, by moving the seat, to spread out bedding for a full length bed. After a moment's thought the foreigner said, "Yes, I will take you to Champa. You hurry home and get your wife ready for the trip. I will come."

Astonishment and relief chased the look of despair from the man's face. Back on his bicycle and pedaling furiously, he set off for home. His friends had told him it would be useless to ask the white man to do anything in the heat of the day. They had not known. The sahib had asked no troublesome questions and had given his word almost at once. This was truly a marvel.

Just as he turned the corner toward his house, he glanced back. Judging by the cloud of dust in the distance, he was sure the sahib was on his way. Hurrying to his house he shouted, "Get her ready quickly. The jeep is almost here and we go to the hospital at Champa."

For a little while there was confusion with everyone giving advice at the same time. But when the sahib brought the jeep to a halt before the door, someone hurried out with bedding to place on the floor of the vehicle and soon the patient was brought out and made as comfortable as possible for the trip. In a surprisingly short time the jeep was on its way.

Fortunately, the road was a fairly good one where a speed of 25 miles an hour could be attained at times. Ordinary country roads allowed for 10 to 15 miles per hour in the better sections. For the patient, attended by her women, and the husband sitting by the driver, it was a hard trip. Providentially, the temporary bridge spanning the river was in order and the hospital was only a mile beyond the crossing. There the doctor and nurses took over.

Before long, someone came out to where the husband waited. There was good news. "The child is here. You have a son."

The father was almost beside himself with joy. To think that now at this late day in life they should have the joy of watching a little son grow up. There had been other little ones in the past but they had not lived.

In due time he was able to bring both mother and

(Continued on page 48)

*Tilling the virgin soil by an Indian of the Yalva-Sanga settlement, Chaco, Paraguay.*

# Society and Personal Decision

*By Calvin Redekop*

"THE WORLD BY professing Christianity is so far from being a less dangerous enemy than it was before, that it has by its favors destroyed more Christians than ever it did by the most violent persecutions."[1] This statement, by William Law, some 230 years ago, sounds remarkably modern. It makes several important points which few people would deny apply today: 1) the world has become to a large extent a "Christian" society; 2) because of this, society has destroyed or maimed many Christians.

Even though we may not agree with William Law that a Christian society kills Christians, he does state well the problem: What effect does society have on the decision of the individual Christian? What can the individual do about it?

## *The Individual and Society*

How does society influence the individual's decisions? It may be instructive and relevant to look at some contemporary examples of the influence of society on the individual and his decisions.

Since 1899, when Ed. Starbuck concluded his well-known study of the religious experience of college students, numerous researches have intermittently followed, including a rather sizable spate of recent surveys. Last fall, an article in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (Fall, 1963, Vol. III, No. 1) summarized the findings related to college students and religious experience. Here are some selected excerpts from the various researches:

1) Nearly two-thirds of students in all classes had changed their religious beliefs during college. Though the number of students in the agnostic or atheistic category did not increase from freshman to senior year, there was considerable movement from belief in a personal creator to more impersonal concepts of God. (p. 54, Havens)
2) They found that 58% reported religious changes during college, that fully half had turned against the faith of their fathers and that 32% were either agnostic or atheistic. (*ibid.* p. 54)
3) At the time of entrance into college, 88% of the men and 91% of the women (all National Merit Scholarship winners) answered affirmatively to the question, 'Do you personally feel that you need to believe in some sort of religious faith?' By the end of the junior year, this percentage had dropped to 51% and 69% respectively. (p. 57, Havens)
4) Approximately the same percentage (about 38%) considered themselves agnostic or atheistic, and the same strong trend toward a liberalizing or watered-down theistic belief was clearly evident. About 37% considered God a 'vaguely sensed mighty spiritual Presence' or 'a vast impersonal order or principle.' (Havens, p. 55)

The tenor of the quotes should make the following things clear: 1) A large proportion of students reject or fail to have a religious experience of the kind normally associated with Christian life; 2) The experience in college has a rather significant role to play in decreasing the vitality of the experience or commitment the student once had; 3) The loss of Christian experience can be to some extent related to the scientific mind that rules on the campus, but is to some extent at least due to the social fabric in a college community.

The results are general. A student in a graduate course last term did a survey of the religious experiences of the students on the Earlham campus, using several nationally known testing devices. One of the questions asked was: "Since coming to college, have your views: stayed about the same, become more conservative or orthodox, become more liberal, become perplexed and confused, become indifferent to religion? Exactly 50% said they had become more liberal, perplexed and confused, or indifferent. (More liberal, 24%, perplexed and confused, 20%, indifferent, 14%.)

It must be said in defense of the college and students that 1) colleges should influence students; 2) perplexity is not necessarily a sign of apostasy; 3) a certain kind of agonizing appraisal is normal in late adolescence. It makes, of course, all the difference whether the loss of Christian experience is due to social pressure or a loss of the meaning of Christian life. The point to be made here is simply that: Society does influence the individual's beliefs. This is a truism. Everybody knows this and acts upon this fact. But a further disconcerting statement must be made: Not only are we influenced by society, but our very human nature and self has been created by the society around us.

There is complete agreement among the students of human society, that the individual is largely molded by his society. Therefore we can say that society resides within us, in the very marrow of our bones. The values, beliefs, and behavior patterns that have made us who we are continue to mold and form us.

## *Society and We*

How does society affect and influence us? A closer look at the society around us may help us to answer

this question. There is an infinitely wide range of ways of looking at our society. The ones that will be discussed seem relevant to our discussion but are by no means the whole picture.

1) *The Pluralistic Nature of Our Society.* At one time in history all members of a society believed much the same thing, and had a similar "world-view." But those days are gone. This is true in several ways: a) modern governments protect differing groups including competing religious groups; b) religious groups themselves have accepted the fact that there are "many ways to heaven."[2]

2) *The Scientific Orientation of Meaning.* Religion is no longer the sub-strata upon which the beliefs and behavior of a society is built; it is rather an institution alongside others which it still tolerated. This is illustrated in the following quotations:

> Of eight factors listed by agnostic or atheistic students as contributory to their present lack of religious faith, the belief that contemporary science accounts for all natural phenomena was indicated more frequently than any other (44%) (Havens, op. cit. p. 55).
>
> Where a former age would have judged persuasive oratory largely on its origins in God or Devil, i.e., in the right or wrong camp, we profess to judge it on the merit of alleged facts, and fall to the party that can muster the most spectacular cases . . . As for the children of the present age, they know no other measure, for fact-finding has become their common sense. Their unconscious orientation is empirical, circumstantial, and historical. (Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*, 1942, pp. 232-233).

Langer suggests that the new key of our age is the scientific mind, which thinks objectively and empirically.

3) *Gratification Orientation (Secularism).* From a religious perspective, not all societies are secular or pagan. Worshiping the created rather than the creator is Paul's definition of secularism. In Paul's own words, ". . . and *changed* the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image or corruptible man . . ." (Romans 1:23).

A nation that has not professed Christianity can not be secular. But the West, and especially the United States, has proclaimed a belief in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The West is secular because in so many areas of our lives, God is not important or determinative. The amount of money that goes into the church treasuries as over against the amount spent for self-indulgence (in spite of the fact that the inscription on money itself professes our faith in God) indicates the degree to which self-indulgence has become dominant. This is secularism: professing God, but living like the devil.

## *What Can We Do?*

We have established that society influences us, is in fact a part of us. We have established further that the nature of our society includes pluralism, scientism, and secularism. The question now remains: What can we do about it? If the above propositions are true, then are we not sunk? What hope is there?

With the Apostle Paul, we can say that sometimes "evil" things can turn for the good of the Gospel. The traits of society mentioned above can be used by the Christian in his decision making if he is aware of the following things:

Because of pluralism, it is now possible to make a conscious choice of belief which was not the case in many earlier eras. Thus an individual can choose his faith and can choose a group that espouses his principles. It is now "respectable" to disagree and belong to a group that disagrees! There is even a movement which publishes a paper called "The Minority of One." It is rare to be persecuted because of a bizarre belief or practice (the Hutterites excepted, but that is because of a connection with the east-west ideological struggle).

Scientism as a religion may be a help to the religious person, because it now becomes clear what the "devil" of unbelief is and with whom the Christian is fighting. Contrary to the Apostle Paul, we are not now wrestling with spiritual kingdoms, but with a belief in the scientific mind which is quite explicit in what it believes.

The secularism of our age is also not necessarily a pure handicap. Secularism or self-worship is self-defeating and this then leaves the way open for the meaningfulness of the Gospel to penetrate. The recent article on sex in the *Time* magazine concludes with a significant statement: "In spite of the need for each generation to become emancipated from the regulations regarding sex morals, each generation sooner or later discovers that they have to invent morality in order to survive."

## *Involvement in Society*

How can the individual make decisions when the basic facts of his involvement in a society, and the nature of the society are accepted?

Knowing that society influences him, and that he is in fact a part of a society, he can choose the "sub-society" that he wants to be influenced by. This is the only real solution that an individual faces. He can never go it alone. But there are several objections or problems with this option: a) he is usually born into a certain sub-society and is not free to choose any other society; b) he is hopelessly emotionally and theologically biased so he can never objectively view other sub-societies.

2) If he rejects his own tradition or sub-society, he has the alternative of deciding which of other options he will choose. This may be the solution, but again close analysis will indicate the difficulties

with this position. a) if he has rejected one tradition for another, he usually is so emotionally twisted, that he will never be able to overcome his emotional "reaction formations" in order to really live in the other tradition. (Something like a girl who marries a certain man out of spite because she could not marry whom she wanted.) b) if he is fortunate enough to be free of emotional feelings, then he faces the problem of choosing a tradition on the basis of biblical standards. He needs to be objective about what the Bible says, but everyone knows that the Bible is not interpreted in a vacuum, but rather from certain perspectives and experiences. This is why the churches in the South can say that the Bible teaches racism.

Thus we are back where we started. Rejecting one sub-society in favor of another is not the solution, because the basis of the individual decision originates in the group's orientation.

A third alternative is one which most people adopt, but which poses as many problems as others. In this option, the individual belongs to a group which he hopes will help him make decisions, but this group gives him little help. Then what does he do?

There is no real solution to the problem, and sadly enough, it is probably the prevalent situation. Most Christians have a "home base" but the home base does not function as it should. The only hope of course is for the sub-society (the church) to give the individual the help he needs in making decisions that square with the Gospel.

## *Decisions in Daily Life*

In this section, a few comments will be made about decision making and the individual Christian assuming that he gets some help from his church. A few of the problems the Christian faces in his daily life will be described briefly, with no concrete solutions offered, because each situation is unique and individual, and must be decided in context.

What is the relation between the "business world" and the Christian life? Many Christians have held the idea that "economic activity was considered above all a field for the development and encouragement of personal character."[3] This is still held by many people, including a few Christians.

Certainly as pernicious is the contemporary view that "business is business" and the church has no right nosing around in it. There is a growing belief that the world of business can not be reached or understood by the church:

> I am not suggesting that businessmen are an isolated group in a possibly hostile world. But the circumstances of business life and the problems—moral as well as technical—faced by businessmen are in many ways unique, difficult to comprehend from the outside, hard for others to communicate about. (James C. Worthy, "The Church and the Businessman," *Christian Century*, October 9, 1963).

What shall the businessman do assuming he is a Christian? Is a sub-sub-contract for missiles really bad?

2) What is the relation between the world of social status and the Christian? Every society has a status system, in which some live better than others, some are able to subordinate others, and some intimidate others. What should the Christian do? Research shows that the Christian church is no different from other institutions in catering to class distinctions. One study indicates that membership on church boards is clearly biased toward the more wealthy and community power figures. How necessary is it to live in "decent" homes so that we can "communicate" with those who are not Christians? Must we live in austere conditions in order to witness to the community? Clearly the view seems to be spreading that the Christian should not believe that by living simply he will be able to witness.

3) What does the Christian do in the political power structure? It is clear that the political institutions of our society are not evil in themselves. They are merely the way wishes, desires, and values are exchanged. Since political power is by definition that process whereby each tries to get what he wants, why should it not involve "horse trading"? How much "horse trading" can the Christian become involved in? What is his stake in the trading that reaches international levels? Is the Christian's interest limited to local and interpersonal factors? Shall he vote for a person who seems a little less "unChristian" than the other one? Who decides what is unChristian?

These three areas point out the complexity of the decisions that the individual faces. Can he disentangle what is evil, amoral, or Christian? He can, but maybe no one else will agree with him. Is this ethics? Ethics is doing what is moral. Doing what is moral is doing the Christian deed toward your neighbor. Only the Christian Gospel, as interpreted in a social context, can help the individual to make ethical decisions. The social context that every individual needs to help him interpret the world must be the church. Without the church, the individual is lost in the morass of subjectivism, public mass persuasion, and self-gratification.

Everyone is influenced by society. Man is made by society. The only hope for an individual is to choose the sub-group which he wants to be influenced by. If he finds no stable group, he is lost. There are vast areas where the individual is faced with most complex decisions. The Bible, interpreted in a fellowship that submits itself to the discipline of Christ and the discipline of the Holy Spirit through each other, is our only guide. (1 Cor. 1:4-8).

[1]William Law, *Serious Call*, 1893, *Collected Works*, chapter xvii, p. 178.
[2]Arthur Cohen, *Religion and the Free Society*, The Fund for the Republic, 1958, p. 42ff.
[3]Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought*, Beacon Press, 1944, p. 10.

# Index 1961-1965

## FIVE YEARS OF MENNONITE LIFE

INDEX FOR THE first ten years is found in the January, 1956, issue, pp. 33-48, and the index for the years 1956-1960 is found in the January, 1961, issue, pp. 39-48.

This is a cumulative index which includes all authors of articles and major subjects treated in *Mennonite Life* during the last five years of its publication (1961-1965). Such topics as countries, places, leaders, various cultural and religious aspects, etc., are listed.

Authors are listed by last name. Articles are given by issue, year, and page. The following abbreviations were used: Ja—January, Apr—April, Ju—July, Oc—October.

## WAS IT FATE?

(Continued from page 36)

son home by train. The train stopped at the station just about a block from his home.

Already as a sign of gratitude the father had sent a large platter with all the necessary ingredients for a meal to the one who had been willing to go out into the heat for his family. Whenever this friend came by, the merchant hailed him to come to sit a bit and hear a report on the progress of the little son.

The shop was a drab place with its nails, hinges, screws and bolts and other things of iron and steel, often a bit rusty, needed by village farmers and carpenters. As soon as the little one could sit erect, he spent many hours in the shop with his father. In the shadows in the rear of the store one could always see a young servant girl waiting to take the baby should there be customers. For the father, there was now real incentive to tend the shop well and to accummulate wealth bit by bit, for he had an heir. The thought gave him great pleasure.

Often he and the sahib had a chat. But religiously they were not of the same mind. "If you had not been willing to go out that hot day we would have no son. You are god to me." Remonstrating, the sahib would reply. "If it had not been for God and His help there would not have been your son." To which the shopkeeper would reply, "Perhaps, but to me you are god." He turned a deaf ear to further witness on the part of his guest. The months passed and the merchant's face continued to radiate joy.

Then one day there was a change. The little shop was open for business. But the shopkeeper's face looked drawn and gray. It was as though the light had gone out.

To the query, "What has happened?" he replied, "He's gone. We did not know he was so ill."

"And what had been the nature of his illness?" He answered in a dull voice, "It was typhoid. We did not realize he had it. Before this whenever there seemed to be something wrong with him we took the morning train to Champa and got the right medicine. During this year we had him, we took him often and he was doing so nicely. But this time we did not realize that he was so very sick. And now he is gone!"

The little shop continued to be open for trade. Farmers and carpenters still needed nails and screws and tips for their plowshares. Life still goes on in spite of broken hearts. Had they offended the gods or was it just fate that they must go without a son to administer the last rites when it came their turn to die? Who could answer his heart cry?

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