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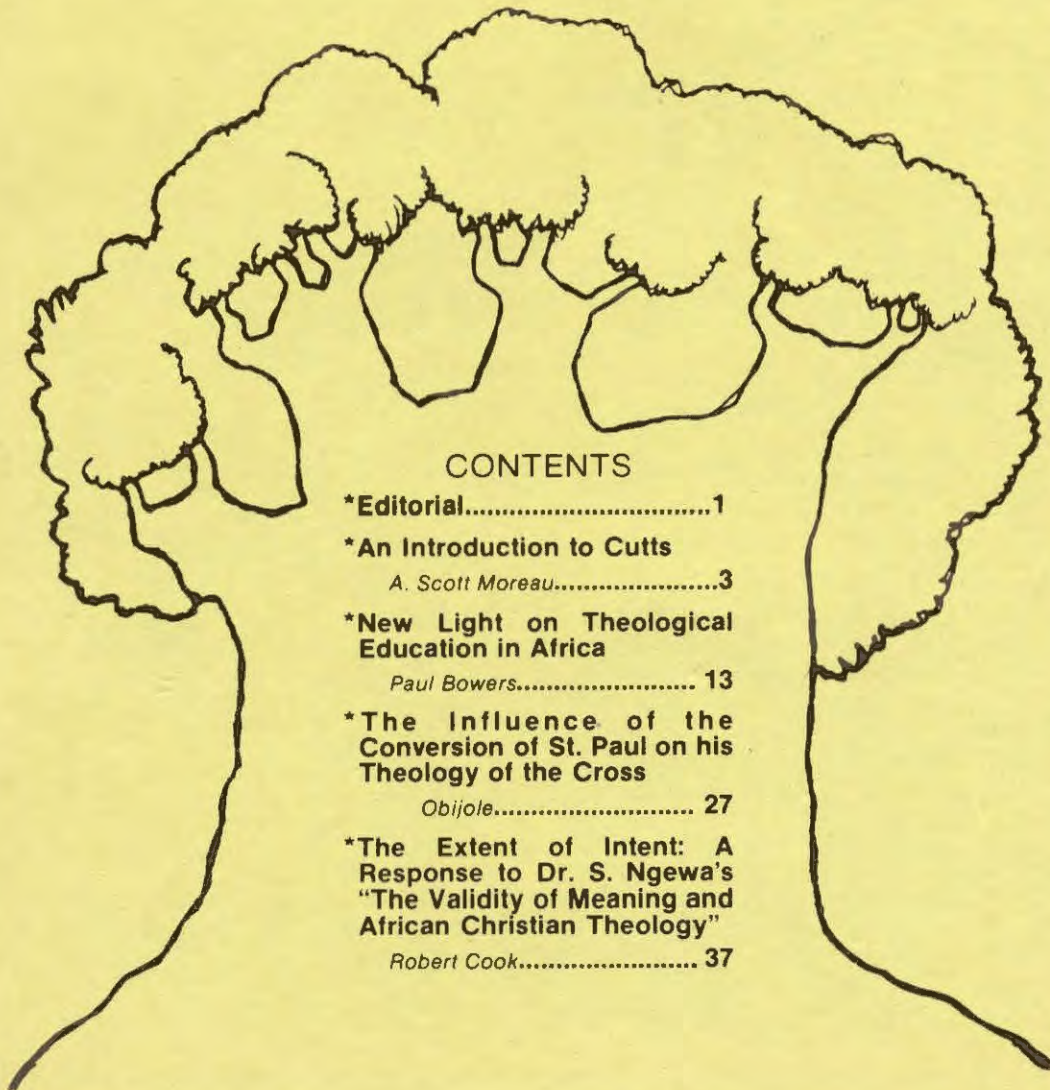
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THE EAST AFRICA JOURNAL OF EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY

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Purpose:

EAJET is published twice a year (in June and December) by the staff of Scott Theological College in order to provide African evangelical theological students with editorials, articles and book reviews on subjects related to theology and ministry.

Editorial Policy:

We welcome articles and book reviews from an evangelical perspective. Reviews and articles should be typed on one side only, double-spaced with end-notes, send to:

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The Baobab tree is the EAJET symbol for the gospel in Africa. The good news of Christ, like the baobab tree, is ageless, enduring and firmly rooted in African soil.

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Editorial

Dr. Byang Kato rightly saw theology as an area of battlefield in African Christianity for many years to come. The challenges to the orthodox faith would come not only from the camp of syncretism but also from that of the cults. In this journal, we have the first of six articles on cults to be published as a series by EAJET. In this first article, Dr. A. Scott Moreau, not only helps us to understand those who have fallen prey to those cults but also how to help them see the light.

The attacks against the orthodox faith can only be met as men and women become more and more grounded in the scriptures. It is a challenge that faces all theological trainers in Africa. Dr. Paul Bowers in his article "New Light on Theological Education in Africa" helps us to see where we are in preparing men and women to meet the challenges of the day.

It is of course our hope that the African Biblical Scholar will now just be an apologist against the attacks on sound doctrine but also a creative contributor to Biblical Scholarship in general. We realize our humble beginning but trust that more interest will be shown in this area. Dr. O. Obijole sets a good example for us in his article "The Influence of the Conversion of St. Paul on His Theology of the Cross."

Realizing the hindrances to the African Christian theologians' coming together for exchange of ideas on pressing theological matters, we encourage responses to the articles published in EAJET. That will serve as a means of interaction and keep our thinking on the move. Mr. Rob Cook makes the first step in this direction in his article responding to Dr. Samuel Ngewa's article "Valid Meaning and African Theology" in the previous volume (that is volume 6, No. 1).

It is with gratitude to all the article contributors and book reviewers that we publish this Journal. Articles, especially on African related issues, are always welcome.

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Book Reviews

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Robert E. Coleman, Evangelism on the Cutting Edge --- Gordon W. Dorey

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AN INTRODUCTION TO CULTS

A. Scott Moreau

Introduction

With this article, we begin a mini-series on selected Christian cults and non-Christian religions that are found in Kenya. In this series, we hope to introduce our readers to some of the major cults and non-Christian religions in Kenya and give biblical responses to some of the major teachings of these Christian cults and non-Christian religions. We begin the series with this brief introduction to cults in general as a foundation for the discussions to follow. In this introduction we will present the information in the form of answers to four questions, namely:

1. What is a cult?
2. What are typical characteristics of a cult?
3. What are some basic cultic techniques?
4. Why do people join cults?

What is a Cult?

There are two major ways in which a cult may be defined. The first is sociological, and the second theological. Though we give examples of both definitions here, for the purposes of our article the theological definition will be the focus.

Sociologically, a cult may be defined as any group that pulls members from general society and isolates them against that society, often through the use of coercive techniques. Note that, within this framework, Christianity has fallen under the term "cult" in certain places at certain times (e.g., in the first century in Israel).

Theologically, a "Christian" cult may be defined as a group which is characterized by major doctrinal differences with orthodox Christianity. More often than not, the primary differences will concern one or more of the four following areas:

1. The person of Christ (denying either His humanity or His deity).
2. The work of Christ (replacing free grace with a system of works and adherence to the cult leader[s]).

3. The teaching of the trinity (usually denying it).
4. The replacing of Christ with some person (often the founder of the cult) as the source of authority and salvation.

The teachings of a "Christian" cult may include any one or a combination of the above. The most crucial element typically seen is a denial of the deity of Christ. For the purposes of this article, the theological understanding of the term "Christian" cult is the one we will use for discussion.

What Are Typical Characteristics of a Cult?

Characteristics of Cults in General

As widely diversified as they may be in regard to teachings and practices, cults in general still have several commonalities that may be identified. Here we will discuss eleven typical characteristics that are useful "tags" in identifying a cult.

A Strong Charismatic Prophet-Founder

A cult will almost invariably have a strong charismatic prophet-founder. Often, but not always, this prophet will have some special writings on which he or she bases the authority they wield. Those writings, or at least portions of them, may not be available to the general public, making the "secret" teachings of the leader difficult to document. Often the writings are those of the leader himself, claimed to have been received in revelations in which the leader has a direct "pipeline" to the thoughts of God. The sermons of William Branham, for example, are now called the "spoken Word", implying that they carry the same authority as the Bible.

Society Seen as the Enemy

Members of cults are often taught that society is an enemy to be confronted and defeated. There is usually a very strong "we versus they" mentality in a cult, with society at large (including family of the cult members, if they have not also joined the cult) as the enemies of truth (or deceived people who need to be shown the "true" way). For example, members of the Unification Church (the "Moonies") are taught that marriages entered into before they joined the Moonies are not valid, and former spouses are to be ignored, especially if they do not also join the group.

Strong Hierarchical Authority Structure

Cults tend to have a very strong hierarchical authority structure with no room to challenge the authority or teaching of those higher up the "chain of command". In one sense, they may be thought of as an army in which the commander-in-chief's (i.e., the cult leader) orders are to be obeyed without question. The authority structure of the cult serves to prevent rebellion within the ranks and to keep the whole structure under rigid control. Any who dare to

question the authority of those above them may be dealt with quickly and severely.

Emphasis on Isolated Areas of Doctrine

Cults often place a strong emphasis on a few isolated areas of doctrine. Cult members become experts at disseminating the basic arguments for their particular teachings. Many Christians are completely unprepared for the strength and "logic" of the arguments, and do not know how to adequately refute them. For example, it is difficult to encounter a Branhamite without hearing their arguments against the teaching of the Trinity and for an immersion baptism in the name of Jesus *only*, which they feel is necessary for salvation.

Initiation Rites

Some form of initiation rite is usually required to join a cult. Such rites help solidify the new convert's identity with that of the group. This initiation, or parts of it, may be kept secret from the general public. For example, it is reported that in the early days of his cult Reverend Moon initiated all marriages within the group by having sex three times with the bride-to-be in form of "blood purification" (see James Bjornstad, *San Myung Moon and the Unification Church*, p. 11, and *Time*, 14 June, 1976).

Belonging Necessary for "Salvation"

Cults teach that it is crucial to bring a new convert into the body of "true believers" (for only as a part of that body will he/she be saved). Anyone not in the cult is seen as lost, and so the cult members will do whatever they can to bring members into the group. Women of the Children of God (headquartered in Europe), for example, are encouraged to practice "enticement" prostitution, which they call "flirty fishing" (e.g., "fishing" for men by "flirting" with them sexually, see Josh McDowell and Don Stewart's *Handbook of Today's Religions*, p. 97; and Dave Hunt's *The Cult Explosion*, p. 86). The Moonies allegedly practice a doctrine called "Heavenly Deception" which justifies lying to potential converts or donors. They say that because Satan lied to deceive men, we can use his tactics to try to save them.

Use of Fear and/or Threats

Cults may use fear and/or threats both to get people to join and to keep present members from leaving the group. Threats to potential deserters range from that of eternal punishment to physical harm (or even death) to the deserter or his family members.

Reliance on Emotionalism

A tendency to rely more on emotionalism than rational thought is found in many cults. Within this framework, only the leader(s) are allowed to do the "thinking" for the group, and their statements are the final word in doctrinal understanding. Though articles in official magazines which propagate cultic

teaching often appear to appeal to rational thought, there are usually strong emotional appeals (seen in the many references to the lostness of those outside the group, to the eternal rewards which await those who persevere, etc) and the actual scholarship in arguments used is completely lacking.

Sexual Distortion

There is often some form of sexual distortion in cults. This distortion may range from a teaching of free sex (at least for the leaders, the Children of God being a primary example) to complete abstention even for married couples. The teaching that sex is evil or must be limited to only the purpose of procreation is sometimes justified by trying to "prove" that the original sin was sex between the serpent and Eve (the Branhamites and the Moonies teach this).

Comprehensive Answers to All of Life's Questions

Cults usually provide a system of thought that serves as a complete guide with the authoritative answer to any problem seen in the world or to any objection the "unbeliever" may raise, though this is often far more shallow than the cult recognizes. While we all recognize the final authority of the Bible in answering questions in regard to faith, we also recognize that the Bible does not always provide easily discernable "pat" answers to every problem we face. The Moonies "Bible", *The Divine Principle*, explains why Jesus' mission "failed" and why a new "messiah" (the Lord of the Second Advent) had to come. It explains why the world is the way it is and claims to provide the answer to all the problems we face (and infers in not-so- veiled language that Moon himself is that answer).

Wealthy Leader(s)

Finally, while the loyal followers are often poor and destitute, the leaders may be enjoying the fruit of the group's work, including great wealth and a lavish lifestyle that is either hidden from the followers or justified to them in some "theologically" acceptable fashion. The Moonies, for example, are estimated to have an annual intake of a minimum of 2.5 billion shillings (150 million U.S. dollars; *Newsweek*, 2 September, 1985, p. 49)! In addition, Moon himself spent time in jail in 1985 after being convicted of income tax evasion in the United States.

Typical Characteristics of "Christian" Cults

How are we to identify a "Christian" cult? In addition to the theological definition and the general characteristics of cults given above, we may look for the following additional characteristics which are typical of "Christian" cults (adapted from *Handbook of Today's Religions*, pp. 20-25; see also Dave Breese, *Know the Marks of Cults*).

A New Interpretation (or Translation) of Scripture

"Christian" cults must substantiate in some way the new teachings that they claim to be truth. If they do not seek to substantiate a new revelation, then they

may justify their teachings by putting forth an "authoritative" guide to understanding the Bible or even new translation of the Bible. For example, Charles Taze Russell (the founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses) stated this concerning his commentaries on the Bible:

If the six volumes of "Scripture Studies" are practically the Bible, . . . we might not improperly name the volumes "The Bible in Arranged Form." That is to say, they are not mere comments on the Bible, but they are practically the Bible itself. Furthermore, . . . we see, also, that if anyone lays the "Scripture Studies" aside, even after he has used them, . . . for ten years—if he then lays them aside and ignores them and goes to the Bible alone, though he has understood his Bible for ten years, our experience shows that within two yeears he goes into darkness. On the other hand, if he had merely read the "Scripture Studies" . . . and had not read a page of the Bible as such, he would be in the light at the end of two years, because he would have the light of the Scriptures. (*The Watchtower*, September 15, 1910, p. 298; quoted in Walter Martin *The Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 41).

Thus, no Jehovah's Witness would dare to contradict the teachings of *The Watchtower* or *Awake!* or their official translation, The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures. We should also point out here the Branhamites reliance on the sermons of Branham as prophetic teaching. They have compiled recordings of over 200 of Branham's sermons and made them available on tape or in written form (generally labelled under the title "The Spoken Word").

An Extra-Biblical Source of Final Authority

Justification for the teachings of the cult may be found in the form of a "new revelation from God", which takes priority over the clear teachings of the Bible, as with the Moonies (*The Divine Principle*) and the Mormons (*The Book of Mormon*).

Distortion on the Humanity or Deity of Christ

Understanding Scriptural teaching on the person and nature of Christ is crucial in dealing with cults, most of which distort or deny His deity. Jehovah's Witnesses, for example, have built up elaborate arguments against the deity of Christ, and substantiate them with their own translation of the Bible. The Moonies teach that Christ failed in His mission to achieve both physical and spiritual salvation for mankind, and thus there is need for a new "Messiah" to come and complete the task that Christ left unfinished. The Branhamites teach that Jesus was the first man to become a god. All of these understandings are contrary to the Bible.

Rejection of Orthodox Christianity

Virtually all cults reject any "Church" other than their own. Jehovah's

Witnesses think of Christendom as the "whore of Babylon", a feeling echoed by many cults. Professing to despise "organized religion", they often become organized themselves in an intricate web of teachings and authority structures.

Verbal Double-Talk and Shifting of Standard Definitions

Often, cults will continue to use the same language as Christians, but they have changed many of the definitions to suit their own particular teachings. This is seen in some groups far more than others but is a point to note in talking with a cult member.

Changing Theology

Many cults slowly change their theology over the years without admitting it to outsiders or even their own members. Such changes in "revelation" are important to note in showing that the cult leader(s) are not as infallible as they generally claim to be. For examples of changes in Jehovah's Witnesses doctrine over the years, see Magnani's *The Watchtower Files*, a book loaded with photocopies of original Jehovah's Witnesses documents which substantiate the changes that have taken in place in their teachings.

Distorted Teaching on Salvation

All cults distort the biblical teaching on salvation by grace through faith. The distortion can take one of two directions. Either it will be taught that eventually everyone will be saved (universalism) or that only a few select people will be saved. The conditions of salvation for those that teach the latter are inevitably tied up in a system of works and adherence to the group. Jehovah's Witnesses, for example, teach that heaven is already fully booked (only 144,000 will be in the New Heaven), and all those left on earth can look forward to is living in the paradise on Earth. Entry to paradise is only secured by full loyalty to Jehovah's Witnesses teaching, and that loyalty is measured by the number of hours each Jehovah's Witness spends per month in calling on people. As a group, the Jehovah's Witnesses spent 590,540,205 hours calling on others in 1985!

False Prophecy and/or Pronouncements

This is one area in which the careful researcher may reap a goldmine in useful information in combating the teaching of a cult. Many make predictions (usually about the second coming of Christ or some impending disaster, which they use as an evangelistic tool) which do not come to pass. Excellent documentation can be found on the Jehovah's Witnesses predictions in Morey's *How to Answer a Jehovah's Witness*, including photocopies of the original sources of the predictions. Documentation on the Branhamites predictions of the return of Christ in July of 1977 is hard to come by, mainly because the materials in which Branham's prophecy was given are no longer loaned out to the public.

What are Some Basic Cultic Techniques

Cults utilize a number of techniques which build conformity and ensure loyalty of the cult members. It will be useful for the Christian to be aware of some of these techniques used in order to be better prepared to deal with them in helping a cult member leave the cult. At least thirteen of these techniques have been identified in *Larson's Book of Cults* (pp. 411-12), the most important of which we give here.

Demands for Absolute Loyalty

Cult leaders demand absolute and unswerving loyalty from every member. They place a high cost on commitment to the cult, emotionally chaining the members to themselves. Such demands also include the area of lifestyle. Members of the cult will often be required to conform in habits and appearance which are contrary to that of society as a whole. Their conformity within the group (and contrasting lack of conformity in regard to the rest of society) serves as a strong emotional weld binding them to the group. This conformity is maintained by a strong sense of peer pressure. Some groups even have members spying on one another to insure strict conformity, with the slightest violations being reported for discipline immediately. All of this builds incredibly strong emotional ties. For a person to leave a cult, he usually has to reject all that he has poured his life into while in the cult (including not only teachings, but also lifestyle, habits, dress, and friends), which often requires more emotional energy than he has in his own strength.

Chanting and Repetitive Phrases as a Way of Preventing Objective, Independent Thinking

Some groups use continuous repetitive phrases, chanting, and singing as a means of steeping the members in the thinking of the group. When confronted with a crisis or treacherous thoughts, the members are to repeat phrases or ideas as a means of combating those thoughts. Talks and writings of the cult leader will be liberally sprinkled with such phrases, whose design is to generate emotional momentum while maintaining rational submission. This prevents the members from thinking for themselves and builds more emotional loyalty to the teaching of the cult.

Financial Demands

Often members will have to give all they own as proof of their commitment to the group, which (as with the other techniques above) deepens their emotional investment in the cult. Some cults have even had members obtain their inheritance from their parents before the parents die so that they can give those proceeds to the group. One result of this is a total dependence of the members on the leadership to provide for their monetary needs (food, a place to stay, clothing, etc.)

Isolation from the Outside World

Cult members are usually isolated from society as a whole and kept closely within the reach of the cultic leadership. Such isolation can be seen in two forms:

isolation from *people* and isolation from *ideas*.

Isolation from People

Isolation from people includes not only old friends and acquaintances, but even relatives (parents, children, and spouse may be included in the "taboo" group, especially if they refuse to join the cult). For some cults this isolation even extends to not having time to yourself. No privacy may be allowed; a member may be required to have a partner for everything they do.

Isolation from Ideas

Isolation from ideas involves demanding a total rejection of the old way of thinking. "Worldly" values are strongly condemned, and anyone thinking in worldly terms is in danger of losing his "salvation". The old values which are rejected are then replaced with values which the cult leadership considers important.

Behaviour Modification by Means of Rewards and Punishments.

The final technique to be discussed here is that of modifying the behaviour of the members of the cult by means of rewards and punishments. Rewards may include high praise from the leader, special privileges, or rise in rank within the organization. Punishments may include group or self derision, extra duties, or threats of Hell. When the cult member's personal and emotional security is coming entirely from his understanding of the leader's and the group's approval, he will bend many traditional inhibitions and rules in seeking to gain that approval.

Why Do People Join Cults?

One sociologist notes five reasons why people join cults (Ronald Enroth, "Five Reasons to Join a Cult", HIS, May, 1984, pp. 1-4). Each of these reasons centre around a concept that is *appealing* to all of us because in some way it meets a need we have as a human being. All of these needs appear to be part of the God-given personalities which each person has. Whether knowingly or unknowingly, cults take advantage of these needs and use them to enlist people to join in their cause.

The Appeal of Authority

Many today are looking for an authoritative source to answer the questions they have about life and their purpose in living. Often this source will be a person to whom we give the power to wield authority over us. In the church the leaders serve the congregation by God's authority vested in them. In cults the leaders take the place of God and command complete authority. Many people to escape assuming responsibility are willing to put themselves under the complete authority of another and submit to his demands.

The Appeal of Community

In traditional Africa, the ultimate in punishment was ostracism or banishment from the tribe. Everyone needs to be associated in some way with a community. For Christians that community was intended by God to be found in the Church. For cults, it is the cult community. Community ties are extremely strong and provide a source of identity and security for the members.

The Appeal of Commitment

Cults require much of their members. Their emotions, minds, and bodies are given over in complete service to the cult. This type of commitment causes a person to invest so much of himself that he is often too frightened to consider reversing his investment. Christ Himself called for total and complete commitment to Him, and such commitment is a virtue in the Christian life. Cult leaders steer the desire to make that commitment to the Living Lord in the direction of themselves.

The Appeal of Idealism

Many of us (especially the youth) are easily swayed by causes that promise to "change the world". Indeed Christ *has* called us to be world-changers. We would all like to see the problems of our world solved, and many will listen to someone who claims to have the solution. Cult leaders often make this claim, appealing to those who are ready for solutions to the problems they face.

The Appeal of Experience

All too often people mistakenly equate good experiences with truth. Many non-Christian cults and religions offer good (even supernatural) experiences to their adherents and use testimonies of those who have had such experiences to draw people to join them. The Word of God specifically states that Satan is able to do many counterfeit miracles (2 Thess. 2:9-10), and nowhere is this more easily seen than in the miracles claimed by cults.

Conclusion

Cults are many and varied and are found universally. Generally, however, they follow certain patterns which make identification possible. As seen above members have invested heavily of themselves in that cult. It is highly unlikely that a mere doctrinal argument will cause them to leave, though that is certainly possible. If we seek to minister effectively in helping those in cults see the error of their ways, then we need to be willing to understand the emotional dynamics involved in their membership and potential defections. Generally if we do not provide emotional substitutes for a cult member, either he will not leave or he will eventually return to the cult.

Additionally, the cult member is convinced that we are the ones who are deceived. The vast majority of cults teach that they have the only hold on truth, and that the rest of the world is going to Hell. They want us to join them not

because they want to deceive or trick us, but because they want us to be "saved" as they are. We should respect them for their desire to help us, but lovingly and gently show them the truth (2 Tim. 2:24-26).

NEW LIGHT ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA

Paul Bowers

Programmes of theological education in Africa—like African Christianity itself—are lively, diverse, and proliferating. They are also 'poorly documented. The phenomenal growth of African Christianity has rightly focused attention on the role of theological education in Africa. As churches multiply, and multiply again, the provision of trained leadership for such rapidly expanding communities has become a matter of increasingly urgent interest. And yet the descriptive study of theological education on the continent remains in its infancy.

For example, a decade ago only two continental reference sources on theological schools were available. The 1974 edition of the Theological Education Fund's *Directory, covering theological schools throughout the non-western world, knew of 152 such schools in Africa (in 26 countries).*¹ The *Directory of Bible Training Institutions in Africa*, published in 1976 by the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar (AEAM), knew of 189 schools (in 34 countries).² Some regional listings also existed, such as that produced by the West Africa Association for Theological Institutions (WAATI) in 1974.

The inadequacy of these resources for representing the true dimensions of theological education in Africa only became apparent following the founding in 1976 of the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA). As ACTEA's continent-wide networking and support services for theological education became increasingly known, ACTEA found its own address lists of theological schools rapidly passing the 200 mark and then the 300 mark. It quickly became obvious that many more theological schools were in existence in Africa than anyone had ever documented. It also became apparent that the data necessary for a reasonably accurate description of theological education on the continent did not exist.

Today this situation has changed decisively. In 1979 ACTEA began its own systematic collection of information on theological education in Africa. As a considerable body of hitherto unavailable information accumulated, ACTEA realized an obligation to organize and publish it for wider use. The results were the publication of the *ACTEA DIRECTORY OF THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS IN AFRICA* the first edition in 1982, and the much-enhanced second edition in 1985.³

ACTEA's new *DIRECTORY* has been widely welcomed by librarians, researchers, and academic administrators as a handy reference tool in a

hitherto neglected field, and has quickly established itself as a standard. But the full significance of the ACTEA DIRECTORY lies, I wish to suggest, in more than its practical utility as a reference source. Equally important, it would seem, is that here for the first time has been offered a sufficiently sizable body of statistical data to permit some reasonable generalizations about theological education in Africa. Here are materials upon which may be laid the foundations of a more accurate and comprehensive representation of this key movement within modern African Christianity.

This potential contribution of the ACTEA DIRECTORY has yet in fact to be exploited. To date the DIRECTORY'S resources have not been utilized for obtaining the statistical generalisations about theological education in Africa now possible. The intent of this article, therefore, is to draw attention to this body of material, and to highlight some of the generalizations which it makes possible, in order to shed new light on theological education in Africa and thereby to stimulate further study of this important phenomenon.

The appearance of the ACTEA DIRECTORY in its first two editions may well come to be regarded as a landmark in the study of theological education in Africa in several respects. In the first place, the available information on theological education in Africa has been dramatically expanded and updated. In the 1982 edition some 435 schools were listed, in 38 countries, more than twice as many schools as in any previously published listing, and detailed information was provided for 320 of these schools. The 1985 edition in turn expanded the listing to 742 schools (nearly four times the documented number available before 1982), in 41 countries,⁴ with details offered on 524 schools.⁵ In addition, fully 88% of the data in the 1985 edition had been freshly gathered within the preceding five years.

The ACTEA DIRECTORY is noteworthy, secondly, for its pioneering attempt to approach the subject comprehensively, presenting schools from the entire continent, from all theological traditions, and from all academic levels. All earlier listings had been restricted in one or other of these dimensions. The TEF directory concentrated on upper-level programmes, the AEAM directory focused on evangelical institutions, and the WAATI directory (among others) limited consideration to one region. The scope of the new ACTEA DIRECTORY set a new standard.

Thirdly, the ACTEA DIRECTORY broke new ground by introducing for the first time a computer-based research and publishing programme, permitting frequent updating of materials. The significance of this will not be lost on anyone familiar with how quickly the data changes in Africa in this field of inquiry. The advantages of such a computer-based project were made immediately evident when ACTEA was able to bring out its second updated and much expanded edition shortly after publication of the first. This augurs well for the future.

The DIRECTORY generally includes any institution in Africa engaged in regular training for church-related leadership roles. This embraces catechist and

evangelist training centres, Bible schools and institutes, Bible colleges, theological colleges, seminaries, and university departments of religion. For the most part only residential institutions are listed, though occasionally a well-established correspondence or extension programme is included. Research, conference, and study centres were not included, unless there was evidence that leadership training courses were being offered on a regular basis. In doubtful cases the definitions were applied broadly rather than strictly.

Since the information on each school was provided by that school, the material is generally as reliable as the reports supplied (as the DIRECTORY carefully points out). Systematic onsite verification was not attempted, but where unscheduled verification has occurred it suggests a generally high degree of reliability.⁶ The DIRECTORY also states that not all known schools have been listed. Some schools functioning in hostile settings requested that their names not be published. Had these been included, the total number of institutions in the second edition of the DIRECTORY would have exceeded 800. Even so, it may be doubted that the DIRECTORY yet covers more than two-thirds of the number of theological institutions actually operating on the continent.⁷

Taking all such qualifications into account, it is evident that the material in the ACTEA DIRECTORY cannot entirely support detailed statistical analysis. But the quantity of data presented is such, and the degree of apparent reliability such, that reasonable generalizations are frequently possible, largely for the first time.

1. Distribution.

The ACTEA DIRECTORY lists schools in 41 African countries, more than half of these institutions cluster in only four countries, namely Nigeria (130), South Africa (111), Zaire (85), and Kenya (66). It is doubtless not by chance that these same countries represent the major centres of Christian population on the continent. Using Barrett's 1980 estimates on Africa's Christian population, the following table emerges.⁸

	% of Afr Chr pop	% of Afr theol schls
Nigeria	17.5%	17.5%
South Africa	11.2%	15.0%
Zaire	13.0%	11.5%
Kenya (7)	5.7	8.9%
Totals	47.4%	52.8%

The ratio of schools to Christian population is not uniform. The overall continental ratio would be 1 theological school for every 273,000 Christians. Nigeria matches this density almost exactly, whereas Zaire has one school for every 311,000 Christians, contrasting with Kenya at 1 school for every 174,000 Christians. Countries in turmoil or where Christianity has been under sustained pressure sometimes have strikingly lower densities. Thus Uganda has 1 school

per 690,000 Christians, Burundi 1 per 917,000 Christians, and Egypt 1 per 1,252,000 Christians.

Sorting the schools by major language areas emphasizes the preponderance of anglophone theological schools on the continent. Interestingly, the distribution of schools matches in percentage rather closely the distribution of the Christian population among the major language areas.

	% of Afr Chr pop	% of Afr theol schls
English	64.9%	69.9%
France	25.7%	26.5%
Portuguese	5.4%	2.4%
Arabic	4.0%	1.1%

Regarding academic levels, when schools are sorted according to the highest level programme offered at each school, with information available on 468 schools, 34% may be classified as post-secondary, 45% secondary, and 21% primary.⁹ Francophone schools differ noticeably from this pattern. With information on 128 schools in francophone Africa, only 16.7% are at post-secondary level, 61.1% are at secondary level, and 22.2% are at primary level.

2. Founding.

The statistics underline the common impression that the number of theological schools in Africa has mushroomed in recent years. With data on the year of founding available from 353 presently existing schools, fully 79% were begun since 1950, just under 63% since 1960, and nearly 40% since 1970. The following table, showing the number and percentage of presently existing schools sorted by the periods in which they were founded, accents the rapid growth pattern of recent decades.¹⁰

number of schools	% of total	number of schools	% of total
before 1900	12	1960s	82
1900-1939	30	1970s	104
1940s	32	1980-84	36
1950s	57		

In part of course the rapid increase in schools from 1950 onwards parallels the rapid growth of the Christian community in Africa. But the growth must also have been stimulated by the urgent leadership training needs which rapid Africanization has generated in the churches in recent decades, and perhaps also by the greater value which African church leadership seems to place on theological education. The number of schools reportedly begun between 1960 and 1984 merits special notice. Approximately 115 new schools would need to be founded in the 1980s to sustain the pattern of growth of the preceding three decades. However, the number actually recorded for 1980-84, when projected for the

entire decade, suggests only some 72 new schools during the 1980s (less than two-thirds of the figure necessary to maintain the pattern). If this projection should prove even partially accurate, it would of course mean a definite fall-off in the growth pattern of the preceding thirty years. Since the data from which the projection is made was being collected during the very years under analysis, it is almost certain that a number of the newest schools went undetected, and that the final figures for the decade will be higher than the 'projection. But, taking this into account, the figures nevertheless do seem to suggest that the growth curve may have peaked during the 1970s, and that the sharp rate of increase since the 1950s may now be giving way in the 1980s to a more modest pattern of growth.

The oldest theological college in Africa still in existence is apparently Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone, founded in 1827, for many years the seedbed of most West African Christian leadership, and now part of the University of Sierra Leone.¹¹ Among other still existing theological schools reportedly founded before 1900, two are in South Africa, three in Madagascar, and one each in Mauritius, Liberia, Nigeria, and Cameroon, all founded in the later half of the century.¹²

3. Libraries.

Nowhere are the development needs of Africa's theological schools perhaps more vividly on display than in their library statistics. With library data available from 271 schools, the average library size is 4,596 books. Had the DIRECTORY not chosen to omit library figures reported below 100, the actual average would have been definitely lower.¹³

The variations in library size are interesting. Post-secondary theological colleges average 7,391 books per library, while secondary-level schools average 2,233. Theological libraries in South Africa run much ahead of the continental pattern. With information from 35 schools of all levels in South Africa, the average library size was 8,970. With South Africa abstracted from calculations, the overall average for the rest of Africa comes to 3,947. As is well-known, theological libraries in francophone Africa have a more difficult time building their collections than do those in anglophone Africa. The average size of francophone theological libraries is 2,170 volumes, compared with an average of 5,668 for anglophone libraries.

Leaving aside the libraries of universities and university colleges, the largest theological library in Africa reported in the DIRECTORY is at the *Teologiese Skool van die Gereformeerde Kerk* at Noordbrug in South Africa, with 45,000 volumes. The largest reported in the remainder of Africa is that of the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary at Ogbomosho in Nigeria, with 27,000 volumes reported for 1983 in the DIRECTORY. (Ogbomosho reports 34,700 at the end of 1987; the new Jesuit theological school in Kenya, Hekima College, reports a collection of 37,900 in early 1988, up substantially from the 15,000 reported for 1985 in the DIRECTORY.) The largest recorded francophone theological library is at the

Faculte de Theologie Protestante in Cameroon, with 15,000.

Altogether, with library data available from 271 schools, only 15 schools throughout the continent have libraries of 15,000 volumes or more, and eight of these are in South Africa. Even when one has granted that libraries are not everything, and that the quality of use is even more important than the quantity, the figures for theological libraries in Africa remain hardly short of appalling.

4. Teaching Staff.

If the statistics for theological libraries in Africa are discouraging, the statistics on teaching staff at theological schools in Africa are distinctly encouraging. With staff data available from 438 schools, the average number of teachers per school, full-time and part-time, is 7.3 (the average number of full-time teachers is 4.8).¹⁴ This yields the truly remarkable teacher/student ratio for theological schools in Africa of 1 to 6.1 (or 1 to 9.3 for full-time staff), strikingly better than the accepted norms in comparable Western educational institutions.¹⁵ To the degree that low teacher/student ratios suggest enhanced learning opportunities, one may identify here a decisive strength in current African theological education.

Equally encouraging is the progress now documentable in the Africanization of teaching staff on the continent. Among 333 schools which distinguished between African and expatriate teaching staff in the data collected, Africans averaged 60.1% of the total staff (and 60.6% of the full-time staff).¹⁶ This means that there are better than 3 African teaching staff members for every 2 expatriate. These figures document a notable achievement in the ongoing development of theological education in Africa.¹⁷

Francophone schools (based on information from 117 schools) have an average 5.8 teaching staff per school (3.8 full-time staff), somewhat lower than the anglophone average of 7.9 staff per school (5.3 full-time). On the other hand, the teacher/student ratio for francophone schools works out at 1 to 5.4, versus 1 to 6.4 at anglophone schools. Likewise in francophone schools the staff is 65.6% African, versus 58.6% in anglophone schools.

If the figures for schools from which data on staff is available are taken as representative for all schools documented in the DIRECTORY, it suggests a total of 5,431 theological educators in Africa (3,576 full-time).¹⁸

5. Students.

Theological schools in Africa tend to be modest in size. With data available from 423 schools, the average enrolment is 44.7 students. Only 22.2% of the schools have an enrolment of 60 or more, contrasting with 31.7% with an enrolment of less than 20. Only 11 schools on the continent have 200 or more students, the majority of these being university departments of religion or theology (the largest enrolment anywhere reported is 353). Perhaps surprisingly,

post-secondary schools are statistically much larger, with an average of 64.8 students, versus an average of 36.3 students at secondary level.¹⁹ Likewise anglophone schools tend to be larger than francophone, averaging 50.7 students, versus 31.2 students at francophone schools.

While these low student enrolment figures permit the enviable teacher/student ratio present in theological schools in Africa, they perhaps also suggest excessive proliferation of theological schools on the continent. This in turn may imply that inefficient utilization of facilities and staff, and hence also of finances, is a significant overall pattern in theological education on the continent. One presumes that denominational sensitivities are a major factor in this situation,²⁰ but one must also recognize the entrepreneurial spirit so evident wherever African Christianity's own proliferation is currently most pronounced.

If the average enrolment given here for theological schools in Africa is applied to all schools listed in the DIRECTORY, it suggests a total of 33,182 theological students in Africa. One may compare this, for interest, with a recent calculation of 23,887 students in theological education by extension (TEE) courses in Africa.²¹ This gives an (admittedly very rough, but also conservative) calculation of 57,069 theological students on the continent---or 1 for every 3,548 Christians. Put like that, the leadership situation for the church in Africa is, at least statistically, perhaps a little more hopeful than might have been expected.

6. *Evangelical Schools.*

Finally, some statistical generalizations on evangelical theological schools in Africa might be of interest, especially in comparison with theological schools as a whole on the continent. It is of course difficult to differentiate "evangelicals" statistically in calculations of this sort. Nevertheless, if we take those schools listed in the DIRECTORY as affiliated with ACTEA, we secure a sufficiently large sampling of evangelical schools to permit some interesting generalizations. Altogether 93 schools in the DIRECTORY fall into this category.²²

As to the distribution of such evangelical schools geographically, the same countries predominate as do for African theological schools in general---Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, and Zaire (in descending order) contain 58% of the evangelical schools in the sample. The one significant difference is that Ghana and Zambia must also be included in this top group, since the number of evangelical schools in each equals or exceeds the count for Zaire. Adding them to the group, the six countries with the highest number of evangelical schools account for fully 71% of the total.

In language distribution, the percentage of francophone schools in the ACTEA sample is low (12.9%), and that of anglophone schools correspondingly higher (86%). This likely reflects some limitations in ACTEA's evolving contacts in

the early 1980s rather than any set geographical patterns in distribution of evangelical schools. It also means that further generalizations about evangelical francophone theological schools from this data are not likely to be reliable.

As to academic level, post-secondary schools account for 53.5% of the total ACTEA sample, and secondary 46.5%. (Affiliation with ACTEA is limited to secondary and post-secondary schools; primary-level schools are not included).

In founding dates evangelical schools follow closely the general pattern for all schools. For example, 18.9% were founded before 1950, and 81.1% since, compared with 21% and 79% respectively for all schools on which data was available. The oldest theological college in the ACTEA grouping is Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary in Nigeria, founded in 1899. This is followed by the Bible Institute of South Africa (1921), the Salvation Army Officers Training College in Nigeria (1925), Moffat College of Bible in Kenya (1929), and ECWA Bible College Kagoro in Nigeria (1930).

As to libraries, evangelical schools average 4,486 volumes per school (matching closely the figure of 4,596 for schools of all theological traditions).²³ The largest library in the ACTEA sampling is the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary with 27,000 volumes in 1983 (and 34,700 at the end of 1987).

In number of teaching staff, the evangelicals are slightly ahead of the general pattern overall, but slightly behind at the post-secondary level.

	evangelical ave	general ave
staff per school	8.5	7.3
full-time per school	5.4	4.8
post-sec staff per school	9.2	9.8
post-sec full-time per school	5.5	6.8

In Africanization of staff, however, the evangelicals are distinctly behind the general pattern, with Africans at ACTEA schools constituting 48.4% of the overall staff and 47.0% of the full-time staff (compared with 60.1% and 60.6% respectively for schools of all traditions).²⁴

In teacher/student ratios the evangelicals are modestly but consistently ahead of the general average.

	evangelical	all schools
teacher/student	1 to 5.1	1 to 6.1
full-time teacher/student	1 to 7.9	1 to 9.3
post-sec teacher/student	1 to 4.9	1 to 6.6
full-time post-sec teacher/student	1 to 8.1	1 to 9.6

In student enrolment the evangelical schools approximate the general pattern, with an average of 42.8 students, compared with 44.7 for all schools.²⁵

A careful, conservative count through the DIRECTORY suggests at least 298 schools which are identifiably evangelical in their sponsorship. If the average

enrolment per school in the ACTEA sample is multiplied by this number, the resulting figure for evangelical theological students in Africa is 12,763. Using Barrett's estimate of some 36,711,000 evangelicals in Africa in 1980, ²⁶this would mean 1 evangelical theological student for every 2,876 evangelical African Christians. ²⁷

Conclusion

Here then is new light on theological education in Africa, at least in its broader external outlines. There is more that can be derived from the data in the ACTEA DIRECTORY, and of course there is much more that one would like to know, beyond what may be calculated from that DIRECTORY. ²⁸ The descriptive study of theological education in Africa is still in its infancy. But here at least is a beginning, a preliminary profile.

Notes

¹Directory: *Theological Schools and Related Institutions in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America & South Pacific*. 8th ed. Bromley, Kent: TEF, 1974. Editions of the TEF directory were published biannually from 1958 to 1970, with the much enlarged final edition appearing in 1974.

²Nairobi: AEAM, 1976.

³2nd ed. Nairobi: ACTEA, 1985. This edition of the ACTEA DIRECTORY is nearly out of print at the time of writing. While stock lasts, it may be ordered from: ACTEA DIRECTORY, PO Box 60875, Nairobi, Kenya, at US\$9 a copy, surface posting included. The surcharge for airmail posting (mandatory within Africa) is: Africa--\$4; Europe, India--\$5.50; Americas, Far East, Aus/NZ-- \$7.25. Cheques should be made payable to "ACTEA". ACTEA has just issued an ACTEA DIRECTORY SUPPLEMENT 1988, containing more than a hundred changes, corrections, and additions to the second edition. The SUPPLEMENT may be ordered at US\$3 a copy (airmail posting included) from the address given above. A third edition of the DIRECTORY is projected. ACTEA is a network and support service for evangelical theological education in Africa, now linking 133 theological schools as well as 18 TEE programmes and associations on the continent. Approximately one-sixth of the schools are involved in ACTEA's accreditation service. ACTEA is a ministry of the Theological Commission of the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar (AEAM).

⁴For most (but not all) of the remaining countries in Africa no residential theological schools exist. This of course applies particularly to the North African nations from Libya to Mauritania.

⁵In addition to names and addresses of institutions, the ACTEA DIRECTORY offers data wherever possible under 11 categories: the year the information was received, affiliations, sponsorship, date of founding, library size, teaching staff (sorted in terms both of African/expatriate, and of full-time/part-time), the name of each certificate or programme offered, its length in years, the language of instruction, the entrance level, and the student enrolment.

Since information was gathered wherever it could be found, from a variety of sources and in whatever form it was available, the amount of information in the DIRECTORY for each school is not uniform. The absence of particular data for a school is usually owing to this factor and not to any deliberate failure by a school to report the data. Hence the absence in the DIRECTORY of particular data about a school is in general not statistically significant.

⁶The DIRECTORY expresses special reservations in two data categories; it suspects: (a) that the size of libraries is sometimes inflated, and (b) that stated entrance standards sometimes represent wish rather than practice.

⁷Altogether the DIRECTORY is probably most nearly complete regarding the well-established higher level theological schools in Africa. Notably, it did not attempt to canvass programmes of theological education by extension (TEE) on the continent, which recent calculations place in excess of 100. Among residential schools, the gaps which remain probably occur predominantly among lower-level programmes, especially those within the Roman Catholic constituency, those in countries with large and rapidly growing Christian populations, and those in countries where Christianity has been under pressure.

The DIRECTORY gained a sister publication between its first and second editions. The Lutheran World Federation's offices in Geneva in 1984 issued a *Directory of Theological Institutions in Africa*, listing approximately 434 theological schools or TEE programmes, in 34 countries, with data on some 316 of these. In scope it thus matched closely the figures for the first edition of the ACTEA DIRECTORY published two years earlier. Several features of the LWF publication, however, make it a useful complement to the ACTEA DIRECTORY. For example, it lists not only theological schools but also some 48 conference centres and lay programmes in Africa, and it offers a descriptive list of associations of theological schools in Africa. In addition, because of the free-form descriptive format of the entries, for a number of institutions the LWF publication is able to offer useful comment not possible within the ACTEA DIRECTORY. Yet just this less structured format also means that the LWF material cannot function conveniently as a data base for statistical generalizations. It is to the material of the considerably larger 1985 edition of the ACTEA DIRECTORY that one must turn for that possibility.

⁸Ethiopia has a larger percentage of Africa's Christian population than Kenya (8.9%), but only 1.8% of the listed schools. However, if all known schools had been listed (many asked not to be), Ethiopia's portion of Africa's theological schools would have been 7.9%, just below the figure for Kenya.

⁹It is essential to bear in mind that, since this classification is based on the highest academic level offered at each school, many schools here classified as post-secondary will also have secondary-level programmes. The DIRECTORY also suggests a tendency for academic levels claimed sometimes to be higher than academic levels actually attained. And in any case the variety of educational patterns throughout Africa sometimes makes classification uncertain. For all these reasons any statistic in this report which relates to academic levels must be considered no more than a rough estimate.

¹⁰Of course the limitation of these figures is that, as stated, they represent the founding dates only of schools which still exist. Schools no longer existing are not part of the available data. Hence for any given period there would normally have been more schools founded and more in existence than the chart shows. However, the available evidence on the demise of theological schools in Africa suggests a pattern of modest figures which would not substantially alter the larger generalizations implied in the chart. For example, of the 742 schools listed in the ACTEA DIRECTORY, the ACTEA DIRECTORY SUPPLEMENT 1988 is aware of only some half dozen (less than 1%) which have gone out of existence in the past five years.

¹¹The DIRECTORY records the founding date for Fourah Bay College as 1816, but the more commonly accepted date is 1827 (see e.g. S Neill, *Christian Missions* [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964] 306).

¹²Among schools in the DIRECTORY indicating foundings before 1900, it seems that in some cases the date reported relates by mistake not to the school's own founding but to the year when the sponsoring body first initiated work in Africa.

¹³The DIRECTORY also omitted figures for most university libraries, since these holdings encompass very much more than a regular theological library collection.

¹⁴The figures also indicate that full-time teaching staff in African theological colleges outnumber part-time staff by just short of 2 to 1.

¹⁵At post-secondary level the average number of teaching staff rises to 9.8 (6.8 full-time), while the teacher/student ratio remains at 1 to 6.6 (1 to 9.6 for full-time).

¹⁶Since "African" is interpreted to mean a citizen in a local African country, ethnically "white" Africans are also included in this category. However, when South Africa, for example, is abstracted from the calculations, the averages for the rest of Africa remain virtually unchanged (e.g. Africans constitute 59.6% of total staff, and 60.5% of the full-time staff).

¹⁷For the 152 African schools presented in the 1974 TEF Directory, African staff on average constituted 49.5% of total staff, and 48.9% of full-time staff (see page viii in the TEF DIRECTORY; this includes the data from Egypt and from Madagascar, which the TEF Directory treats separately from Africa). The AEAM directory of 1976 did not distinguish between African and expatriate staff.

¹⁸Applying the average number of expatriate staff per school to all 742 schools suggests a total of 2,217 expatriate theological educators in Africa.

Since the role of TEE leaders and staff does not entirely match that of teachers in residential schools, comparisons are problematic. Nevertheless, it is of interest that the most recent survey (J Hogarth, K Gatimu, and D Barrett, *Theological Education in Context: 100 Extension Programmes in Contemporary Africa* [Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1983] p 171) lists a total of 1,513 TEE leaders and staff in Africa, of which 85% are African. The resulting "teacher"/student ratio would be 1 to 15.8.

¹⁹The difference in enrolment between post-secondary and secondary is influenced in part by two factors. First, the post-secondary figures include the university departments of religion and theology, which tend to large enrolments. Of the 11 schools with 200+ students, 7 are university departments; of the 39 with 100+ students, 12 are university departments. Secondly, since schools have been classified in academic level by the highest level being offered, schools offering

programmes at both post-secondary and secondary levels are calculated as post-secondary. In consequence the enrolment figures here given for post-secondary schools are inflated, incorporating in some cases the enrolment figures for secondary-level programmes offered at such schools, and enrolment figures given for the secondary level are correspondingly underrated. At the same time schools classified here as secondary will sometimes include primary-level programmes as well, so that the enrolment figures for secondary level are thereby inflated. See note 9 above.

²⁰Transdenominational theological colleges have frequently been attempted in Africa, in the interests of efficient use of resources, but (with a few notable exceptions) their success has usually been problematic. Schools quickly find that constituency loyalties and support tend to be much more effectively sustained within, rather than across, ecclesiastical boundaries.

²¹See J Hogarth, K Gatimu, and D Barrett, *Theological Education in Context: 100 Extension Programmes in Contemporary Africa* (Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1983) p 170. This may be compared with the figure of 20,974 TEE students given in W Weld, *1980 Supplement to the World Directory of Theological Education by Extension* (Wheaton: CAMEO, 1980).

²²See note 3 above for current figures on ACTEA-related institutions.

²³If data for South African schools is removed, the average ACTEA library is 4,284 volumes, compared with an average of 3,947 volumes for schools of all traditions outside South Africa. Sorted by academic level, the library figure for post-secondary ACTEA schools is below the general average (6,159 vs 7,391), while for secondary-level schools it is above the general average (2,768 vs 2,233).

²⁴This is influenced marginally by the absence from the ACTEA sample of primary-level schools--where Africanization would presumably be more advanced. If for purposes of comparison the calculation for schools of all traditions is restricted to post primary levels (as is necessarily the case for the ACTEA calculations), then the figures for African staffing fall to 58.5% of total staff, and to 58.6% of full-time staff.

²⁵Post-secondary ACTEA schools average only 44.7 students, compared with 64.8 for all schools at this level. Conversely ACTEA schools at secondary level average 41.3 students, compared with 36.3 for all schools at this level. See note 19 above.

²⁶D Barrett, ed *World Christian Encyclopedia* (Oxford: OUP, 1982) p. 782. The figure used combines those given by Barrett for evangelicals under both the "Protestant" and "Anglican" categories.

²⁷Using the same method to calculate the total number of evangelical theological educators in Africa yields the figure 2,527 (of which 1,305 would be expatriate).

The calculations given for evangelical theological students do not include those in TEE programmes, for which no statistics are readily available. One presumes, however, that the proportion of evangelical students within the total

TEE enrolment in Africa would be much higher than for residential schools. If we use a conservative calculation of 66.7%, this yields an additional 15,933 evangelical students, and suggests (as a *very* rough estimate) one evangelical theological student, residential or extension, per every 1,279 evangelical Christians in Africa.

²⁸In its TOOLS AND STUDIES series, ACTEA in 1986 published an opinion survey of evangelical theological educators in Africa, with altogether 355 individuals in 66 schools responding to 48 questions. In 1987 ACTEA published, in the same series, a comparative survey of curricula in 36 evangelical theological schools in Africa, sorted by some 35 subject categories. An earlier number in the series surveyed textbooks used in theological colleges in Africa. These are available at US\$3 a copy (airmail posting included) from the address given in note 3 above.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL ON HIS THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS

O. Obijole

The information we have about Paul's conversion are from Luke's accounts and Paul's own letters. Paul's own experience of his first encounter with Christ at conversion can be discovered in his letters. Luke also recorded some of Paul's recapitulations in the Acts. It was while he was on his way to Damascus determined to wipe out the Christian community there, that the transforming vision of Christ came to him (Act 9:1ff). In his letter to the Galatians, Paul affirmed that he was once a persecutor of the Church before God called him (Gal. 1:15ff). Luke's picture of the conversion experience in Acts, however, appears to be contradicted by the Apostle's remark in his letter to the Galatians where he stated that he was personally unknown to the Judean Church. Gunther Bornkamm suggests that this implies that Paul was not present at the stoning of Stephen (Gal. 1:22, Acts 8:1). This implication is not necessarily true or contradictory. The fact that Paul was unknown to the Judean Church cannot imply Paul's total absence from Jerusalem at the episode of Stephen's martyrdom. They might not know Paul, but he definitely knew of the Judean Church (Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6).

Furthermore, the report in Acts that Paul went to Damascus with authority from the High Priest to drag Christians in bonds before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem seems anachronistic. This is because under Roman administration Judean's sphere of jurisdiction did not include Damascus. What might be true is that Paul was acting within the framework of the penal powers granted to Synagogues to deal with heretics. He was thus persecuting the Hellenistic Church as a pharisaic missionary to the diaspora. A comparison of the accounts of Paul's conversion in Acts 7:58-9:1, 22, 26, with Paul's claims in his own letters (Gal. 1:11-17) has also revealed startling differences. ¹ St. Luke speaks of Paul as persecuting the Jerusalem church, but Paul made only a general reference to this in his letter. A comparison of the three accounts of the conversion in Acts also reveals some differences. The dialogue between Christ and Paul has striking verbal agreement, but its narrative manifests many differences. Only the brief exchanges between Christ and Paul are given in exactly the same words, whereas Paul unequivocally declared in his letters that he saw Christ on the way to Damascus. We cannot say whether Luke believes that Paul saw Jesus, because Luke avoided saying so in his narrations. This has been a riddle for scholars, but whether or not we regard the appearance of Jesus as subjective or objective, it is clear from both accounts of Luke and Paul that Paul's conversion came in consequence of the belief that he had seen Jesus on the Damascus Road. ² The motive of his persecution of the Church is best

understood in the nature of his former life. Paul was a fervent Pharisee, isolationist, by the standard of the law unrepachable (Gal. 1:4; Phil. 3:6), and had pride in his membership of the elect race (II Cor. 11:22, Rom. 11:1). Before and after conversion, he held Israel as elect of God (Rom. 9:4-5, 11:28) not like the Gentiles and the children of wrath. These are the beliefs in which Paul was schooled. Among the elect he was a member of the elitist group with the most vigorous obedience to the law, a fanatic of the fanatics, more advanced than any of his contemporaries (Acts 22:3, 26:5, 23:6; Gal. 4:1; Phil. 3:6) hence a zealot who could lead the persecution of the Church (I Cor. 12:9, Gal. 1:23, Phil. 3:6, I Tim 1:13).

G. Bornkamm has suggested that as a Diaspora Jew and Jewish missionary to the Gentiles, Paul was probably not opposed to Jewish and Jerusalem Christianity which at that time was not very different from Judaism. His zeal was directed against the Christian Church of the Hellenistic Diaspora⁵ whose understanding of the law was revolutionary and in conflict with orthodox Jewish view of the law which Paul stood for. He feels that belief in Jesus as the Messiah was not itself a sufficient reason for persecution⁴ But Bornkamm cannot be right in this assertion as there can be no doubt that Paul's persecution of the Church was due to his Messianic beliefs. Paul had objected to an impostor, a leader of treason, and a person who died the worst criminal's death, being called the Messiah. His initial reaction to Christianity was similar to that of any Jew in Jerusalem, who saw Jesus Christ as an impostor who could not be the Messiah. To all Jews, including Paul, a crucified Messiah was a stumbling block and contradiction in terms. They expected a Messiah who would appear suddenly to end the present age and usher in God's rule. They never expected him to be a peasant, carpenter, homeless vagabond or vagrant, who instead of restoring the Kingdom to Israel was crucified by foreigners. In the Law, a crucified man is an accursed (Deut. 21:23). This is why the Jews including Paul revolted against the Christian propaganda that Jesus was the Messiah. Paul knew what Jews felt about the crucified Messiah, because he too felt the same way. A man condemned by the Sanhedrin, the highest judicial authority in Judaism, was hence condemned by God and allowed to suffer a shameful death on the cross, falling under the sentence of the law, could not be the Messiah (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:10-14; I Cor. 1:17-24). It was not that Paul did not share the Jewish Messianic expectations. These Jewish Messianic expectations were what Paul zealously cherished when he persecuted Christians. P. H. Menoud says Paul's persecution of the Christian Church was precisely because of his Messianic beliefs. Paul was furious at seeing an accursed man being proclaimed Messiah.⁶ His conversion was therefore not that of a faithless man finding way to God, but of one zealous for God. G. Bornkamm continued to see Paul after his conversion as an orthodox Pharisee, who for Christ's sake gave up the law as a means to salvation.⁶

Paul's conversion and call and its relevance to his theology have continued to generate much discussion among scholars. How has Paul's conversion affected his religious attitudes? How is it that the great protagonist of the law has now become the greatest preacher of the Cross that ever lived? How are we to account for the conversion influence on his theology of the Cross? How are we to account for the immense and cardinal contributions of St. Paul on the cross event when he

was probably no eye-witness to the event? Many scholars have attempted to propose different solutions to these questions.

J. B. Gager has attempted to analyse the call and conversion of Paul in the light of modern psychology. Like the psychology of any conversion experience, St. Paul's conversion had its antecedent which was his deep ambivalent attitude towards the law and some unconscious processes not now recoverable in Paul. According to Gager, in the process of conversion Paul had the stress experience which interfered with his normal rationality. This stress experience Paul expressed in anger and persecution of the Church. Thus, Christians were part of Paul's emotional commitment experience prior to conversion. The Damascus road experience was foremost a shock, and it caused a tranvaluation or reversal of values. The man had followed the law and rejected Christ, but now he followed Christ. The fundamental system of values and commitment is preserved intact in the conversion. Paul's religious goals are the same before and after conversion, righteousness and justification. The path to the goals had been the law and now it was Christ. Thus Paul who used to be a Diaspora Jewish missionary to Gentiles has now become an apostle of Christ to the same Gentiles.⁸

Deissmann also shared a similar opinion with Gager. He does not see Paul's conversion as any magical transformation. Paul had been psychologically prepared for it. Negatively, his soul hungers for righteousness through law. At conversion he discovers that no one can keep the law. Positively he is prepared for the conversion by his familiarity with genuine traditions about Jesus, and the effect of Jesus on the persons converted whom Paul persecuted. This does not mean that Paul was dissatisfied with his life as a Pharisee otherwise he would not be referring to it with pride (Phil. 3:8, Gal. 1:15ff). He did not break down under the pangs of conscience as some scholars have alleged. The 'I' in Rom. 7:7-25 is not a reference to Paul himself, but to mankind in general under the pangs of sin, flesh, law, and death. It was probably a reference to an insight into the nature of man, in the light of his conversion experience. It was not a recollection of his experience under Judaism. But the conversion put an end to Paul's zeal for the law. He surrendered his righteousness and got a new righteousness from God.⁹

Gunther Bornkamm, however, does not think that Paul's conversion had been prepared long in advance by his religious background as a Pharisee. Neither was it due to frustration and inability to comply with strict demands of the law, because he often referred to his past with pride. He agrees that Paul's conversion was not that of a lost man finding his way to God but of a devout man earnest for the truth which he eventually found through Christ who died on the Cross. His reference to his Jewish past is not with regret or frustration but with pride. After meeting with Christ all that he counted as gain he came to regard as loss (Phil. 3:4; Gal. 3:13ff). After conversion his former active life became passive. Old values changed for new knowledge of Jesus and gain in Christ; he then knew the power of the resurrection and got a share of Christ's sufferings. The experience made Paul discover the core of Christianity - the Cross. What he had earlier rejected, he now accepts.¹⁰

There can be no doubt that Paul's conversion not only changed his religious

attitude, it also partly formed the basis of his later theology. On the Damascus road he received the revelation that Jesus was the Messiah promised to Israel. Therefore, it is a truly Messianic revelation which led to his conversion. From the very experience itself, Paul heard the voice which said "*ego eimi Iesus*" (Acts 9:5). Paul immediately knew Jesus' identity. There and then Paul addressed as *Kurios*, He, whom he had earlier persecuted. He became convinced that, *Iesus* was the crucified and risen one who had now become the exalted Lord of all mankind. This was the beginning of the change of attitude for Paul in relation to the cross. Jesus' death came to have a soteriological significance for Paul and mankind. The rejected crucified and accursed one has at his conversion become the Messiah, God's anointed one. The Cross which was the centre of attack and persecution became the very centre and inspiration of Paul's religion. He thus saw the burden to reinterpret the shameful death of Jesus as the Christ, as bearing the curse which rested on sinners, and as a death for human redemption.¹¹

St. Paul's conversion did three things in his life. First, it impressed on Paul the unity of the divine action for salvation of all men. The Old and the New Testaments are thus complementary. Secondly, it taught Paul the soteriological value of the death and resurrection of Christ. Thirdly, it gave Paul a new vision of salvation history. The vision was the inauguration of his call and the beginning of his apostolic mission. The conversion showed him that Christianity was in line with the Old Testament and that Christ was the fulfilment. It was God's revelation of His Son to Paul. The Apostle felt himself seized by Christ in divine compulsion for his vocation. He was charged with a mission of a personal necessity.

By virtue of the conversion experience, Paul became a witness of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. In Gal. 1:12, Paul referred to the experience as the revelation and glorious manifestation of Christ to him. He now knew Christ and the power of his death and resurrection. The experience was Paul's own passion and Easter (cf I Cor. 15:8, I Cor. 9:1 and II Cor. 4:4-6). In the description of his heavenly vision of the risen Lord in I Cor. 15:8, Paul preferred to use *ophthe* instead of *eidon*. This implies that Paul took his vision as historical and synonymous to seeing Christ in the flesh as experienced by other Apostles. His experience in such manner, was the last of all *eischaton panton* of such post resurrection appearances¹² (I Cor. 15:8).

The conversion experience formed the basis of many aspects of St. Paul's theology of the Cross. It taught him that the crucified and accursed is God's anointed Son. The rejected Cross became significant for Paul's doctrine of salvation. After conversion Paul came to attribute the saving role to Jesus Christ. Christ became the principle of salvation and not the law. Christ and the law are incompatible as ways of salvation. The problem is a soteriological one, whether salvation came by Christ or law¹³. But justification was no longer by law but by the Cross event, because Christ has taken upon Himself the curse of the law to free men from its bondage (Gal. 3:13). The Cross became the criterion for salvation; he now knows that the Messianic age has begun. The death of Jesus on the Cross is the inauguration of the new age. All the religious values of Paul

changed by his conversion experience as the Cross became God's will.

Many elements of Pauline theology have been seen as aftermath intellectual products of his conversion experience. His doctrines are products of his conversion. The doctrine of justification by faith is not only a theological dictation of God's mode of dealing with humanity, but of Paul's own biography. God had called him and saved him on the basis of the earnestness of his faith. R. Bultmann and E. Kasemann assert that the doctrine of justification as the sole centre of Paul's theology issues out of the conversion experience¹⁴. J. D. Gager explains that the specific nature of Paul's conversion explains why he developed an affinity for the doctrine.¹⁵ His justification has been completed while he (Paul) was yet a sinner and persecutor of the Church (Romans 8:34). The revelation of Christ to Paul was to put an end to Paul's former zeal for the law and has made him to surrender his righteousness from works of the law, so that his life is given a new beginning and a new goal (Gal. 1:12ff, Phil. 3:5ff). The call has given him a gospel to proclaim, the message of justification. By the event of calvary for the Gentiles, Jesus' incarnation and death assume new meaning (Gal. 2:20, 3:1, 13, 8:14, 17) in that God's love is demonstrated, that He did not spare his son but gave him up for mankind (Romans 8:32). In the context of God's personal dealing with him Paul came to see the Cross not only as a saving event, but as God's justifying and reconciling act. This understanding of the message of the Cross is distinctively Pauline¹⁶.

On the road to Damascus Paul received the revelation that Jesus was indeed the Messiah promised to Israel. Paul then saw that it was needful to reinterpret the shameful death of Jesus. In his office as the Christ he bore the curse which rested on sinners; his death was the price for human redemption. He thus underwent at conversion a change of mind in regard to the Messiah. After he had passionately denied that a crucified man could be Messiah he came to learn that Jesus was indeed the Messiah and consequently rethought all his Messianic ideals¹⁷. Paul's soteriology underwent a transformation after his conversion. He came to see Jesus not only as Messiah but as one on whom the salvation of all men depends.¹⁸ Paul came to accept the scandal of the Cross as a substitute for the law and circumcision as a way of salvation. Righteousness and salvation depend no more on the law and circumcision but on the death of Jesus on the Cross. Paul thus attached redemptive meaning to the sacrifice of the Cross. Paul's motto became "*Sola Christo Sola fide*". It was a soteriology wholly suspended on Christ. Paul's soteriology before his conversion was pharisaic, based on the observance of the law, but after the experience he accepted the soteriology wholly centered on Christ and in the redemptive worth of his death on the Cross.

The question has been asked whether Paul's conversion caused a total break with his former pharisaic doctrines. It is currently being debated whether there can still be found some traces of pharisaic doctrines in Paul's writing. Paul's pharisaism did not leave him completely; evidences abound on this. He still circumcised Timothy after conversion even when it was not longer necessary.¹⁹

Some other doctrines have been explained as direct products of the conversion experience. Paul's concept of salvation resulting in new creation is due to his redefinition of humanity transformed in which the lower physical nature is

suplanted by a higher and spiritual nature. In the same vein Paul has a tendency to see life from two angles: body/spirit, law/grace, law/spirit, death/life, loss/gain, sin/love to correspond to and in conformity with the change he experienced at his conversion. At the Cross the whole of human history is divided into two phases. The above terms assume new meaning in light of Paul's message of the Cross.²⁰ Much of Paul's Theology is a universalization of that conversion experience in the light of his acceptance of the Cross as God's plan for man's salvation.

It was after his conversion that he accepted the scandal of the Cross. His Jewish and Hellenistic background came to play in his presentation of the gospel. The Jewish background of Paul accounts for his abundant use of the Old Testament, and his Rabbinic training enabled him to give new meaning to allegorised Old Testament passages resulting in interpretation which reveals a hidden deep sense of the mystery of the message of the Cross otherwise unknown. His Hellenistic background accounts for his interpretations of the Cross in a legal and juridical manner.²¹

The conversion made the message of the Cross assigned to Paul his personal concern.²² Nevertheless his theology is not merely a theology of conversion experience. It is rooted in the Apostolic Traditions.

Notes

¹These differences between Luke's account of Paul's conversion (7:58 - 9:1, 22, 26) in comparison with Paul's own accounts in his letters (Gal. 1:11-17; I Cor. 9:1-2, II Cor. 5:16; etc) has been the subject of much debate in recent times. The most glaring difference between Paul and Luke is whether or not Paul saw Jesus during his conversion. But as S. O. Abogunrin rightly pointed out there may be no real contradiction, since Paul did not give detail of what he saw but merely spoke of a light from above. There is agreement between the two in that Paul knew he met Jesus on Damascus road. He could not call "Who are you *Kurie?*" If he did not believe that it was Christ who was talking to him. Paul was probably reserved on giving information about his own religious life (cf II Cor. 12:1-10, I Cor. 14: 18-19). K. Lake opines that Luke had three accounts/traditions at his disposal which are Paul, Jerusalem Church tradition, and Antioch Church tradition. K. Lake was quoted by G. Bornkamm "The Damascus Experience and in *Reconciliation and Hope* (Essays on New Testament Concept of Atonement and Eschatology) (Eds.) R. J. Banks & Co., the Paternoster Press, Exeter, 1974, pp. 90-103. H. G. Wood suggests that these differences cannot be avoided; the accounts of Acts should be regarded as historical unless we want to rewrite the account which will amount to superogation. H. G. Wood was quoted by P. H. Menoud, in "The Damascus Road Experience and Paul's Doctrine of Justification by Faith in Galatians" in *Reconciliation and Hope, OP. Cit.*, pp. 90-103. Dupont has also cautioned us to remember that Paul was writing to the Galatians long after the events (20 years later) and that this has probably accounted for the differences to that of Acts. (cf Jacques Dupont "The Conversion of Paul, and its influence on his understanding of Salvation by Faith" in *Apostolic History and the Gospel, OP. Cit.*, pp. 177ff). Whatever our attitude to the historicity of the accounts in Acts, Paul's conversion and theology of the Cross came in consequence of the belief that he had seen Jesus on Damascus Road. See S. O. Abogunrin "The Theology of the Resurrection in the New Testament, with particular reference to Pauline Kerygma and Soteriology" Ibadan, Ph.D Thesis, 1978, pp. 279ff.

²P. H. MENOUD: "Revelation and Tradition - The Influence of Paul's Conversion on his Theology" in *Interpretation*, 7, 1973, pp. 131-141.

³G. BORNKAMM: *Paul*, Hodder Stoughton, 1971, pp. 15ff.

⁴*ibid.*, p. 16.

⁵P. H. MENOUD, *Op. Cit.*, p. 131.

⁶G. BORNKAMM, *Op. Cit.*, p. 23.

⁷The question of whether Paul knew Jesus personally in the flesh has been raised by scholars. J. W. Fraser examined Paul's knowledge of Jesus in light of the evidence of II Cor. 5:16. There are two views on this subject. John Weiss, H. Kennedy, C.A. Scott, J. Klausner, and Van Unnik among others held that Paul knew Jesus before His Passion, when He was teaching in Jerusalem. Paul couldn't be identifying Jesus at conversion if he hadn't met Him before. The second

group's view (by Bultmann, C. Findlay, Schoeps etc.) was that Paul did not know Jesus. This view denied Paul's possible acquaintance with Jesus at all, and that the historical Jesus had no importance in Paul's thought. II Cor. 5:16 gives a contrast of Paul's knowledge of Jesus. We do not know whether Paul's reference here is mainly spiritual or earthly, so we do not know if Paul physically knew him. See J. W. Fraser "Paul's knowledge of Jesus in II Cor. 5:6" *New Testament Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 3, April, 1971, pp. 293-313.

⁸J. D. GAGER: "Some Notes on St. Paul's Conversion" *New Testament Studies*, Vol. 27, October, 1981, pp. 697ff.

⁹G. BORNKAMM, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 23-24 and pp. 125ff. He made reference to Deissmann.

¹⁰*ibid.*, pp. 125ff.

¹¹U. Wilkens: "Die Bekehrung des Paulus als religions - geschichtliches Problem" *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, Vol. 56, 1959, pp. 273-293.

¹²Paul made many references in his letters to the resurrection appearance of Christ to him on the Damascus road. On this basis he authenticated his mission and Apostleship. In I Cor. 9:1ff, Paul asked, *ouchi lesoun ton kurion hemon coraka* (have I not seen our Lord?). In I Cor. 15:8, he said *eskaton de panton ophthe kamoi* (Last of all, he appeared to me). In these two passages, Paul preferred to use *coraka* and *ophthe* instead of *eidon*. The word *coraka* is the singular perfect aorist of *idein* or *orao* (to see). Similarly *ophthe* is first aorist passive of *orao*. From these words, Paul does regard his conversion experience and vision of Christ as an ordinary event. Godet says it is neither a reference to a mere earthly seeing of Jesus nor to a simple vision which God granted him. The words can only designate the positive historical fact of the appearing of Jesus to Paul on the way to Damascus. It is not a reference to ordinary vision of Christ (like that of Stephen.). Neither is it a reference to visions which Paul had after conversion (cf II Cor. 12). The conversion experience was regarded and equated by Paul to be as historical as the earthly testimony and experience of other apostles. See F. L. Godet, *Commentary on First Corinthians*. Kregel Publications 1977 Edition, pp. 766ff.

¹³U. WICKENS, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 273ff.

¹⁴J. D. GAGER, *Op. Cit.*, p. 698. He referred to Bultmann and Kasemann.

¹⁵*ibid.*, pp. 702-703.

¹⁶G. BORNKAMM: "The Damascus Experience, and Paul's Doctrine of Justification by Faith in Galatians" *Reconciliation and Hope. Essays on New Testament Concept of Atonement and Eschatology* (Eds.) R. J. Banks and Company, the Paternoster Press, Exeter, 1974, pp. 90-103.

P. H. MENOUD: "Revelation and Tradition: The Influence of Paul's Conversion

on his Theology", *Interpretation*, Vol. 7, 1953, pp. 131-141.

¹⁷U. WILCKENS, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 273-293.

¹⁸JACQUES DUPONT: "The Conversion of Paul, and Its Influence on his Understanding of Salvation by Faith", *Apostolic History and the Gospel, Op. Cit.*, pp. 177-194. See also G. BORNKAMM: "The Damascus Road Experience and Paul's Doctrine of Justification by Faith in Galatians", *Reconciliation and Hope, Op. Cit.*, pp. 90-103.

¹⁹SAMUEL BELKAN contended that despite the ultimate changes that the call and conversion of Paul might bring to his theological outlook, the fact remains that his pharisaic life has continued to influence his theology. He cited Paul's circumcision of Timothy, his observance of Jewish rites in the Jerusalem Temple (Acts: 21:26), his attitude to marriage (I Cor. 7), and his rabbinic style of arguments as evidences of pharisaism in Paul despite his Christian conversion. Belkin made this point in his article "The Problems of Paul's Background" *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. LIV, 1935, pp. 41-60.

²⁰J. D. GAGER has submitted that the Conversion of Paul has divided history into two parts for him, hence Paul tended to speak in contrasts of body/spirit, law/grace, death/life, loss/gain, sin/love etc. While the first part points to his former life as zealous Jew, the second part points to his new life as "a man in Christ" (II Cor. 5:17). Gager therefore concluded that much of Paul's theology was a universalization of that conversion experience. See J. D. Gager "Some Notes on St. Paul's conversion" *New Testament Studies*, Vol. 27, October, 1981, pp. 697ff.

²¹J. A. FITZMYER and C. G. MONTEFIORE have contended that it was after the conversion that Paul's double background came to influence and help in shaping Paul's Theology.

JOSEPH A. FITZMYER: "Pauline Theology", *Jerome Biblical Commentary* (ed.), R. E. Brown and Group, G. Chapman and Company, London, 1967, p. 802. See also C. G. Montefiore, "Judaism and St. Paul", *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 2, December, 1958, pp. 311ff.

Most scholars have tended to be one sided on the influence of Paul's background on his theology. While some held tenaciously to his Jewish background, others see the Hellenistic background as wholly responsible. Others capitalise mainly on his call/conversion as the only basis of his theology. J. A. Fitzmyer and C. G. Montefiore along with many others scholars have maintained a middle and balanced stand. P. C. Umhau Wolf gave a most reasonable conclusion on the matter when he wrote:

"The 'apostle to the Gentiles' has afforded many opportunities for study, research, and debate. Efforts to fit him into a pigeon-hole have obviously failed. Those who have emphasized the statement 'an Hebrew of the Hebrews' (Phil. 3:5) seek to explain his unique personality and his formative Christian theology entirely by the Old Testament and Palestinian Judaism. On the other hand, many (by far the

majority) have emphasized his roots in Tarsus; only a few individuals have managed to take a mediating position concerning the influences affecting Paul's theology. Curiously the non-Christian writers have probably been fairer to the man as a complex human being with manifold roots." See his article "Concerning the Vocabulary of Paul" in *Journal of Biblical Literature*. Vol. XVIII, 1948, pp. 331ff.

THE EXTENT OF INTENT: A RESPONSE TO DR. S. NGEWA'S "THE VALIDITY OF MEANING AND AFRICAN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY"

Robert Cook

Dr. Ngewa has done African Theology a service in drawing attention to the hermeneutical problem and demonstrating the danger of adopting (albeit unconsciously) a faulty interpretive methodology.¹ He outlines clearly the shortcomings of structuralism which focuses on the text as an autonomous artifact existing independently of author intentionality and the inadequacy of existentialism which simply encourages the subjective question, "what does this mean to me?" without regard to the objective teaching of the literary work. He seeks to remind us that the primary locus of meaning is to be found neither in reader response nor in the isolated text but in the intention of the author. In other words, all contextualized theology must emerge from sound, scholarly exegesis and the application of the grammatico-historical method of hermeneutics which seeks to determine what the original author meant to communicate to the original reader.² Dr. Ngewa is right to stress that we should be concerned about truth and accuracy in exegesis and not be content with interpretations which are merely "plausible", "reasonable", "defensible" or just "not impossible".³

Having dismissed structuralism and existentialism while admitting their healthy regard for the form of the written work and its challenge to one's own life, Dr. Ngewa proceeds to advocate a third option which might be termed "intentionalism". This is the view that every text has only one meaning but limitless significance and application, and the significance can only be safely determined once one has acquired a firm grasp of the meaning. Or, to put it another way, contextualization must emerge out of sound Biblical Theology. There is no short cut. Dr. Ngewa contends that this textual meaning is objective and changeless and is in fact identical with the author's intention when composing the text. Hirsch is quoted with approval: "Verbal meaning is whatever someone has willed to convey by a particular sequence of linguistic signs."⁴ The exegetes task, therefore, is simply to determine what exactly was in the mind of the human author.

Now while acknowledging a general sympathy with intentionalism, I nevertheless feel that it has its own limitations and inadequacies. Here are some of them:

- 1) A text may communicate less than the author intended simply because he is an

imperfect communicator. It has long been acknowledged by literary critics that one must beware of the "intentional fallacy",⁶ namely the assumption that the work is inevitably expressing what the author claims he was intending to say. At best the author's professed intention may be taken as *evidence* in determining the actual statement of the book. After all he may have failed to achieve his literary goal. If he is misunderstood it is not necessarily his reader's fault.

"But surely", the response is heard, "this objection to intentionalism is not applicable to Scripture where the human authors always achieved their goal." But how can we be sure? Take Paul for example. We know for certain that his contemporaries misunderstood his admonitions (e.g. 1 Cor 5:9ff) and his teachings were found obscure (II Pet. 3:15f). Do we have any grounds for assuming that his complex and nuanced attitude to, say, the status of women was any clearer to his original readers? I think not.

"Well then," the intentionalist may argue, "if there is a discrepancy between intention and expression, primacy should be given to the former. Meaning resides in what was in the author's mind, not in what he inadvertantly wrote." But this is all reminiscent of the disgruntled student who returns with his graded exam complaining that one marked what he wrote rather than what he meant to write. In any case this questionable principle cannot be applied to Scripture which clearly affirms that inspiration (God's meaning) resides in the *writings* rather than the human author (*pasa graphe theopneustos* - II Tim. 3:16).

2) A text may communicate more than the author intended and this for two reasons.

(a) The influence of the unconscious

Psychology has discovered that there can be dimensions of meaning in someone's words which, being generated by the unconscious, are unrealized by the conscious mind of that person. The so - called "Freudian slip" is a good example. If a woman inadvertantly refers to her father as her husband and then quickly corrects herself, a psychiatrist may discern that there is more to it than a slip of the tongue; she may have latent incestuous desires. To the discerning ear we may say more than we mean to say! This is also true of the discerning eye. It is not uncommon that a literary critic draws out an interpretation of a passage which the author had not previously realized yet acknowledges as a valid reading which helps him understand his own poem or play better.

Contrary to Freud's notion of the unconscious as only the repository of infantile instincts and base urges, a more balanced view emerges from the work of the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung who views the unconscious as not only the receptacle of mental debris, but also the region from which emerges the deep wisdom of humanity and even divinity. This is as much the arena of God's activity as the conscious mind. It seems to me not unreasonable to suppose that the Biblical authors sometimes wrote more than they consciously meant because of the shaping influence of their unconscious minds. This is probably especially true of poetic works like Canticles and the Apocalypse.

(b) The influence of the Holy Spirit

Although the concept of *sensus plenior* goes back to patristic and medieval times, it is still a subject of interest and debate. In spite of modern detractors⁷ it must still be acknowledged that Scripture can carry a deeper meaning than the literal sense and that God's Spirit may imbue a text with meaning beyond the intention of the author. This seems to be the case, for instance, in Psalm 22 where David describes his destitution in hyperbolic terms, it surely being anachronistic to suggest that he consciously described the crucifixion of the Messiah when such a form of execution had not yet been invented. And yet this psalm is certainly a Messianic prophecy.

At best we can conclude, then, that a text means *at least* what the author intended to say, assuming his communication skills are adequate. Knowledge of the author's intention is therefore a necessary but not sufficient determinant for correctly discerning the meaning of a text.

3) A text may have a degree of autonomy.

Dr. Ngewa's thesis best suits propositional statements which clearly have a cognitive meaning and only one meaning at that. Such passages would include historical narratives like Chronicles and didactic books like Leviticus. But not all literature is of this nature. Many of the psalms, for example, were not penned to teach doctrines or facts but to communicate and engender, say, joy (Ps. 150), or depression (Ps. 88), or faith (Ps. 121). They are emotive rather than cognitive utterances. What they propositionally mean, what information they communicate, has no clear answer. In fact, many an artist, be she poet or painter (surrealist or abstract perhaps) or musical composer, would be profoundly puzzled if asked what her work "meant". She might argue that the question makes as much sense as to ask what Mondays or Mount Kenya means. One poet wrote "A poem should not mean but be." If its meaning could be adequately expressed propositionally in prose there would be no point writing the poem in the first place! In fact, to return to Mount Kenya, it might be argued that, if anything, the "meaning" of that mountain *alters* from the home of God for the traditional Kikuyu to the symbol of challenge and endurance for the tourist mountaineer. Or rather, using Dr. Ngewa's distinction, should we say these connotations are examples of the significance of the mountain rather than its meaning? If so, the interesting question poses itself as to whether something can have a significance but no meaning.

Some of the greatest art is a puzzle which ever confronts its creator with the enigma of itself in its autonomy and strangeness. Listen, for instance, to the testimony of a modern novelist who finds his characters surprising him in their willful behaviour:

No novelist who has created a credible personage can ever be quite sure what the personage will do. Create your

characters, give them a time and place to exist in, and leave the plot to them; the imposing of action on them is very difficult since action must spring out of the temperament with which you have endowed them. At best there will be a compromise between the narrative line you have dreamed up and the course of action preferred by the characters.⁸

In a very real sense great literature acquires a life of its own independent of the author. The source of the ideas and imagery is often a profound mystery. The artist feels more like a medium than a maker. If all this sounds like quasi-mysticism it is only because the creation process is not susceptible to rational analysis. To be in God's image not only means that we have a degree of freedom and autonomy but that the artifacts we produce do too. We are the demi-creators of creation. I would not be surprised to learn that John was startled by some of the symbols that flowed from his pen as he wrote the Apocalypse or that the author of Job was amazed by the finished product. In short I am suggesting that structuralism has something to teach us with its focus on the independence of the work of literature.

Finally, let us return to Dr. Ngewa's trichotomous division of the communication process (author-book-reader) and the concomitant hermeneutical schools (intentionalism - structuralism - existentialism). My suggestion is that error enters when advocates of these three schools see their own particular approach as exclusively true, or even as alternatives to one another. In fact the existential question "what does this mean to me?" is valid and important but belongs in the area of application rather than meaning, and the existential answer is contingent upon the answer to the structuralist question "what are the internal dynamics of this work?"⁹ which, in turn, can only be answered safely once one has already answered the intentionalist question "what was the author intending to say?". The prime danger is when this order of enquiry is reversed or ignored.

Conclusion

As in so many areas of theology, an unfortunate polarization has occurred in hermeneutics between the left wing of Schleiermacher through Bultmann and the New Hermeneutic, and the evangelical right wing which finds its roots in seventeenth century protestant rationalism. The former wing stresses revelation as elusive and irrational, to be apprehended intuitively and the latter views revelation as propositional to be grasped rationally.¹⁰ But in this area also, truth is two-eyed. There is certainly no substitute for the intelligent examination of the text of Scripture using the tools of the linguist and the historian. Indeed the analysis of antique prose is a science. But if it is just a rational and logical process, a computer could be programmed to do it successfully and one wonders where room remains for another basic evangelical belief, namely the indispensability of the illumination of the Holy Spirit in the task of understanding Scripture. However, hermeneutics is also an art as one approaches the ancient book in all its strangeness. In fact the more poetic a statement it is, the more its secrets can

only be unlocked by an intuition that is patiently listening with an attentive regard and trusting receptivity. This requires the sensitizing of the whole personality which can only be achieved by the Holy Spirit himself for "the man without the spirit does not accept the things that come from the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14).

Notes

¹This paper is a response to Ngewa's article published in *EAJET* Vol. 6, No. 1, 1987.

²J. I. Packer helpfully enlarges on this crucial insight, "...the criterion whereby to test our own theological theories must be this: would the New Testament writers, were they here today, recognize these constructions as being in line with what they themselves said?". In *Is Christianity Credible?* by Peter Baelz et al. (Epworth Press, London, 1981) p. 71.

³Ngewa provides two examples of such exegetical abuses from the works of S. Nomenyo and Kofi Appiah-Kubi. The interested reader will find still more salutary examples by such eminent theologians as J. Moltmann in "Incidentalism" in theology -- or a theology for thirty year olds?" by D. F. Wright, *Themelios*, April 1986.

⁴This maxim now seems part of evangelical orthodoxy. It is unequivocally affirmed, for example, in Article VII of the Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics (*JETS*, Dec. 1982), p. 398.

⁵Ngewa, p. 19. He is quoting from *Validity in Interpretation* by E. D. Hirsch Jr. (Yale Univ. Press, 1967) p. 31.

⁶This notion can be traced back to *The Verbal Icon* (1954) by W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley.

⁷For a negative assessment see "A critical analysis of Sensus Plenior" by J. Muthengi (*EAJET*, Vol. 3, No. 2).

⁸*99 Novels: the Best of English since 1939* by A. Burgess (Summit Books, New York, 1984) p. 16. For an example of the characters rebelling against the author see the novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969) by J. Fowles.

⁹A fruitful development in this area as applied to narrative literature is "story analysis". For a useful introduction see "Story in the Old Testament" by R. W. L. Moberly in *Themelios*, April, 1986.

¹⁰The one-sided stress on the propositional in Article VI and the strong suggestion that hermeneutics is a science rather than an art in Article IX of the Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics (*op cit*) exemplifies this right wing tendency.

1, 2, 3, John
Word Biblical Commentary Vol. 51
Stephen S. Smalley
Word Books, Publisher, Waco, Texas, USA
pp. 420. U.S. \$19.95

The volumes of the Word Biblical Commentary that have been published so far maintain the high standard for which the editors are aiming. The book under review is no exception. The intention and format of the series have already been described (details in EAJET Vol. 3 No. 2 1984).

The series differs from most others in that the commentaries do not begin with many pages of introductory material; the interested reader is directed to those commentaries which survey the findings and opinions of other scholars on these matters. In his introduction the author covers what is essential and provides a "statement of the basic working hypotheses ... about the life setting of the letters of John"; the reasons for his position are found as he exegetes the text.

Smalley writes on the assumption that 1, 2 and 3 John were written after the Gospel, that the "presbyter" wrote 2 and 3 John, that the "presbyter" or someone very close to him wrote 1 John, and that we don't know who he is. Even allowing for the considerable difficulties in the apostle John's authorship of the Gospel and the Epistles, and in spite of the strong external evidence in its support, Smalley himself is unable to go further than to say "it is not unreasonable to suppose that the inspiration ... came from John the apostle".

Two thirds of the introduction deal with the situation behind the letters; this is very useful. The themes which are outlined here are referred to time and again throughout the commentary. Four groups are identified within the community: orthodox believers, two heretically inclined groups (Jewish and Hellenistic), and secessionists. The problems grew from the two groups of believers whose theology was unbalanced, particularly in the areas of christology and ethics. The Jewish Christians had a low christology which found it hard to accept Jesus as God, coupled with a legalistic over-emphasis on the Law. The Hellenistic Christians with their high christology had difficulty accepting the humanity of Jesus, coupled with an indifference to righteousness and love. John's purpose is twofold: to encourage the faithful and to counter these heretical tendencies by providing a balanced christology and refuting ethical error. A progressive deterioration in the Johannine community is traced as one moves from the Gospel to the third letter; the divisions deepen, and John's appeals seem to remain unheeded.

The letters are dated in the last decade of the first century. 2 and 3 John are clearly letters, while Smalley sees 1 John as having more the nature of a "paper", with an underlying unity for which he argues strongly. The sections headed "Notes", which deal with textual matters, give well argued reasons for the preferred readings. Though there is rarely a full discussion, the witnesses selected are adequately representative to support the chosen text.

The Form/Structure/Setting sections begin with a statement of the subject of the passage under discussion, together with an explanation of the point being made in relation to its place in the letter, the situation and problems facing the Johannine community. There is often a brief review of the ideas of one or two other scholars at the end of this section. It does not meet the editors' aim of giving information on the state of modern scholarship, however, there is continual interaction with other writers in the body of the commentary. The "explanation" sections are short summaries of the main points which draw out the application of the teaching for today's life.

The real value of the book lies in the detailed exegesis of the "comment" sections which is frequently related to the situation in the community. There is a helpful discussion of the Gnostic influence on the community, while recognising that at that time these were no more than pre-gnostic tendencies which were to develop later into full-blown Gnosticism. Even more interesting is the way in which he shows how the teaching of the letters is related to that of the Gospel (especially the farewell discourse of John 13-17) by correcting the less orthodox groups' distortion of that teaching.

Smalley digs deeply to draw out the meaning of the text. Although his exegesis is from the Greek, there is always an English translation when needed so that, even if a knowledge of Greek would enable a greater benefit to be gained, the points he makes are clear enough to allow the discussion to be followed. He gives a wealth of detail without losing the thread of the argument. However, he has the habit of putting his explanatory sub-comments, related ideas, scripture references, and references to other literature in brackets in the text. This avoids footnotes, but it does interrupt the flow, severely at times; on occasions I found myself rereading such a sentence, ignoring all the brackets, in order to pick out what he was saying.

He regularly draws attention to the significance of John's frequent use of the present tense which is helpful. Less helpful is his tendency to translate Greek aorists as English perfects, so blurring the distinction between the Greek aorist and perfect. As an example, the aorist (*exethon*) 2 John 7 is said to be literally "they have gone out" instead of "they went out"; this word and the perfect (*exeluthasin*) in 1 John 4:1 are both rendered "[they] have defected" in his translation.

John's oscillation between the singular and plural is noted and our attention drawn to the integration of individual and corporate aspects in John's thinking which reflects his Hebrew background. Another illustration of this is his love of chiasmus which occurs at all levels in phrase, sentence, and paragraph.

It is a characteristic of John's style to present his ideas and teaching in groups of three; these are pointed out as they are reached, though some that Smalley discovers are rather forced. So it is surprising to find the trilogy of 1 John 2:16 treated as a general point and two definitions that describe two of its possible aspects. Is he just seeking to be different from other commentators?

On controversial questions many commentators argue for one side against the other. Smalley presents both sides, and then often looks for a way to combine them into a new position either by synthesis or by an attempt to hold them in balance. His discussion of *hilasmos* (propitiation/expiation, pp. 38-40) is a good example of his method. When he looks at the phrase "the love of God" p. 49 he suggests that the three senses all belong (subjective and objective genitive, and genitive of quality). This may be good practise for a mediator, but one is sometimes left with the impression that somehow there is a way to make the text mean whatever one wants it to mean.

There are four short sections where he gives a brief note on sin, love, Christ, Son of God. Many similar topics are dealt with during the course of the "comments". In his note on "love" he agrees with L. Morris and others that no sharp distinction should be drawn between the two Greek words for love *agapan* and *philein* (a strong case for holding to a distinction is given by W. Hendriksen in his commentary on Ch. 21 of John's Gospel).

One of the strengths of this commentary is its continual relating of the teaching to the situation and problems in the Johannine community. Theology and ethics, right faith, in God and right behaviour are woven together throughout. The teaching, with its roots in the Gospel, is a powerful counter to the Jewish and Greek groups with heretical tendencies and a strong encouragement to the orthodox believers. Smalley draws out the significance for the original readers and goes on to make clear the implications of the underlying principles for Christian living today. This is why the "explanation" sections can be brief. Another theme which is picked up in this commentary is John's pastoral concern for his readers. This comes out in many ways not least in his concern that they love one another and that they be sure of their Christian confidence.

A few errors slipped by the proof-reading. *hoprao* for *horao* p. 8; *ekomen* for *echomen* p. 28; *huuin* for *huion* p. 116; the heading on p. 169 note on "Son of God" is repeated on p. 171 and 173; the aorist *edoken* p. 212 is called a perfect; "this is love.." fourth paragraph on p. 326 should read "this is the command..."; "and will not remain..." on p. 332 third paragraph, should read "the one who remains...".

Smalley ends with the reminder that these letters "contain the logical, ethical and practical truths which are fundamental to the Christian position in every age: that Jesus is one with God as well as one with us; that love and righteousness are indispensable...that unity, however flexible, is a demand laid upon the Church at all times".

Smalley has given us a fine commentary that wrestles clearly with the meaning and impact that these letters had on their first readers as well as giving valuable insights into their background. Strongly recommended for Bible college libraries, its price will put it out of reach of most African pastors.

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Hermeneutics, Authority and Canon
 edited by D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge
 (Inter-Varsity Press, 1986)
 pp. 468 + xii, 9.95

Carson and Woodbridge have already produced a valuable collection of essays on the subject of Biblical authority entitled "Scripture and Truth" and published by IVP in 1983. The volume presently under review is a continuation of that work and, like its predecessor, it deals with questions being raised by recent scholarship on the nature, authority, and interpretation of the Bible. Some of the nine contributions develop themes already raised in the previous work; others broach new issues. They are wide-ranging in both subject matter and approach, each self-contained and with little continuity between them. They are, however, united by a strong evangelical perspective on their subject, vigorously argued at a scholarly level and documented throughout by copious notes.

Carson's opening essay serves as something of an introduction to the whole volume. He reviews recent developments in the doctrine of Scripture under eight headings, and if one did not already know why such a book as this is necessary this survey would be most enlightening. Inevitably a lot of ground is covered in a very short space which results in compression and occasional lack of clarity, but in general it is a fine condensation and ample notes enable the reader to pursue particular areas further. The final section of the essay is especially timely, diverting attention from the academic debate over Biblical authority to the decline of that authority at the level of Church life.

Most essays in the collection cover well-worked areas of discussion but the second, by Vanhoozer, is an original contribution in which he considers the semantics of Biblical literature. His purpose is to respond to the "New Biblical Theology", represented particularly by James Barr, which denies the significance of the proposition as "the basic vehicle of religious truth" (p. 55) and insists that evangelicals do violence to the true nature of Scripture in using it as a source of propositions while neglecting the literary categories to which they belong and so attaching "the wrong kind of truth values" to biblical sentences (p. 56). Vanhoozer argues that propositions may legitimately be drawn from Scripture but accepts that to see it solely as a source of propositions is to impoverish it. Thus, drawing on the categories of linguistic philosophy he maintains that a "speech act" consists not only of a "locutionary act" (the sentence's meaning) but also of an "illocutionary act" (what we do in saying something p. 86). In other words in the Bible as in normal speech the goal is not only to affirm propositions but to *do* something with the words we use, whether commanding, promising, warning, or whatever. A

doctrine of Biblical authority must take account of both aspects of the "speech act". Vanhooser therefore proposes that Scripture be regarded as infallibly accomplishing its illocutionary purposes (i.e. God's commands and warnings do not fail) and as being inerrant in its propositions, for God is never wrong (p. 98). The essay is certainly hard work for the reader, more so than the rest of the book, and demands careful concentration. At times in the development of the argument more pointers are necessary to show the direction in which one is being led. It successfully demonstrates, however, that an evangelical approach to the Bible does not entail insensitivity to its diverse literary forms.

The next three essays discuss exegetical problem areas for the doctrine of inerrancy. Silva's brief contribution, based on two case studies, considers the problems involved in historical reconstruction of the events and background of the New Testament. First he considers the discrepancy between the NT view of pharisaism and the conclusions of modern scholarship and goes on to suggest solutions. Second he discusses Baur's view of first century Christianity and compares it with that of Lightfoot. The direction of the argument in this second part is not altogether clear and the discussion of historical objectivity thin. In conclusion Silva argues that unnecessary polarisation between evangelicals and liberals should be avoided but points out that the basic conflict will continue as long as the approach of the latter is shaped by Kantian presuppositions.

Blomberg's essay deals with the problem of alleged contradictions in the Biblical text. It is admirably lucid and helpful, one of the best in the collection. The approach adopted goes far beyond the often despised "additive" method of harmonisation; eight tools for tackling individual discrepancies being explained include the use of some higher critical methods which, according to the author, may be used "in the service of a high view of Scripture" (p. 174). Blomberg demonstrates the value of each of his tools by tackling some of the most problematic discrepancies of the NT and a few of the OT also. He also establishes their legitimacy by showing their use in resolving discrepancies in ancient secular historical literature. In the third of this group of essays, entitled "Sensus Plenior", Moo considers the way in which NT writers sometimes appear to misunderstand or misapply their quotations from the OT. Five possible approaches to such quotations are considered, none of which alone can explain every case. However, Moo concludes that in general the NT authors are legitimately drawing a fuller meaning out of an OT text in the light of the context of the whole revelation. Nevertheless, at times NT authors operate on a "revelatory" basis, finding meanings in the OT which, while not inconsistent with the original text, cannot be proved exegetically to be there, but derive from the inspiration of the Spirit.

Frame's essay, "The Spirit and the Scriptures" discusses briefly the Spirit's role in revelation but more fully his illumination of the reader of the Bible. He addresses himself to three points of controversy. First he gives a critique of Barth's view which according to Frame denies the objective inspiration of the words of scripture and locates inspiration in the Spirit's sovereign enlightenment of the hearer of Scripture thereby destroying the distinction between inspiration and illumination. Second he discusses Berkouwer's ideas concerning the objects of the Spirit's testimony attempting to draw out the precise difference between

Berkouwer's definitions and the traditional evangelical position. And finally he considers the relationship between the Spirit's testimony to Scripture and rational evidences. Important issues are raised in the essay, but the treatment is really too short to be satisfactory.

Woodbridge discusses "Misconceptions of the Impact of the 'Enlightenment' on Scripture" It is a fine review and critique of recent attempts to prove that an inerrant view of Biblical authority is a relatively recent development which does not belong to the central tradition of the Church. Woodbridge shows that such arguments are really attempts to rewrite history in the interests of modern scepticism. In fact the central tradition of the church has always been to affirm the truthfulness of Scripture in all matters on which it speaks including nature and history. Nor did the doctrine of "accommodation" as held by Augustine and the Reformers allow for the presence of errors in the Bible; it concerned simply God's condescension in the use of human words and concepts.

Bromiley surveys the views of Barth on the authority of Scripture considering his early statements, dogmatic, presentation, and practical consequences in preaching, dogmatics, and counselling. The survey underlines Barth's insistence on the primordial authority of Scripture, but in his conclusion Bromiley also points out certain features of his position which effectively undercut this authority as well as positive aspects of his thinking. Finally Dunbar contributes the longest study in the collection, a contribution to canonical studies which reviews the evidence on the formation of both OT and NT canons and considers theological issues that surround the question. Dunbar concludes that the evidence does not support the Warfield position whereby the church received the NT writings as inspired documents on the same level as the OT writings from the apostles. Rather he affirms the providential direction of the Spirit in guiding the Church to recognise but not to determine those writings which are authoritative.

Overall Carson and Woodbridge have edited a weighty academic contribution to the current debate on Scripture from an evangelical standpoint. As such it is to be warmly welcomed, especially as the evangelical position is often seen as obscurantist and hidebound. Nevertheless the scholarly nature of the work inevitably determines its readership: academics, theological teachers, and theological students looking for help with the problems they come across in the course of their studies. Some essays, for example those on harmonisation or *sensus plenior*, do address questions that will concern any alert and intelligent reader of the Bible and will thus be more widely useful. But at no point is this a popular book; throughout it demands intellectual effort and a reasonably high level of theological awareness. The style inevitably varies from one essay to another; some are very well and lucidly argued — Blomberg's and Woodbridge's for example. Others are heavier and sometimes lacking in clarity. While one does not expect a theological work to read like a novel some of the language employed is unnecessarily obscure and even ugly: for example "distanciation" and "asymptotically" p. 41, "assertorical" p. 67, "repristinative" p. 338. Nevertheless the book is well produced and structured. The list of contents gives a brief resume of the subject matter of each chapter; there are indices of persons, subjects, and scripture references. Eighty-four pages of notes provide thorough documentation and enable the reader

to pursue further the subjects under discussion, and there are helpful subheadings within each essay. The printing is clear and this reviewer found only two misprints. Finally, while not cheap, the price is not unreasonable for an academic work of this quality.

Keith Ferdinando, Aungba Bible School, Zaire

Evangelism on the Cutting Edge
by Dr. Robert E. Coleman
Fleming H. Revell Co., 1986
pp 156 \$8.95

"Something must be done to accelerate the evangelistic outreach of the Church." With this statement, made by Robert Coleman, most evangelicals would agree. There is little space for argument against it. The question, however, is "What is it that must be done?" without giving all the answers to this, the author/editor brings together some thought provoking words from nine of his colleagues at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and by adding his own essay he joins with them in focusing the attention of the readers on issues critical to evangelism today.

The design of the editor is stated well in his introduction: "to sharpen the reader's understanding and appreciation of the global task before us", and "to help someone (the reader) sort out the temporary fads from the permanent realities and get with the action of God's Spirit in the world." The challenge before the reader is to remember that "the ultimate triumph of the Gospel is never in doubt", and that "someday the Great Commission will be fulfilled, Jesus Christ will reign as Lord of all, and to Him every knee shall bow."

Coleman's book "is a collection of essays that confront the major issues that are hindering the work of the Great Commission," and the ten essays not only identify these issues, they give the Biblical answer to them as well.

Addressing the problem of religious pluralism Kenneth Kantzer in his chapter "The Claims of Christ and Religious Pluralism," shows how liberalism's acceptance of all religions as a means of bringing people into a proper relationship with God has been embraced by many within the World Council of Churches and has been influential in moulding the theology of Neo-orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism, and beyond this it has diluted the adherents of some evangelicals to the doctrine of man's lostness. Since individuals are saved through faith in the atoning work of Christ the challenge is for those who know Him as Saviour to bend every effort to share the biblical gospel with men and women everywhere.

Arthur Johnston writing on "Church Unity and the Mission of the Church"

states that "unity in truth and personal godliness are the solid foundations of world evangelisation." He indicates how churches in their quest for unity have experienced a compromise of truth and a lessening of biblical evangelism. Churches within the World Council of Churches are classic illustrations of this. Today even evangelicals are ravaged by explosive issues: the battle for the Bible, the mission of the Church, and the question of the Kingdom. Faulty conclusions on these matters could lead evangelicals to consider evangelism to be irrelevant.

The importance of believing and obeying the Word, made meaningful by the Holy Spirit, are brought into focus in Wayne Detsler's chapter "Biblical Integrity and Revival." History establishes the fact that when Christians disregard the Word and are insensitive to the Spirit their only hope is revival. It has come in the past; it is needed today. Its principles are spiritual relationship — the prayer of God's people, repentance — a turning from sin, restoration of the backslidden to rejuvenated fellowship, and a spontaneous reaching out to the lost. Revival and evangelism go hand in hand.

Because of years of ministry in Central America William Taylor is the logical one to write "The Cry for Justice and Liberation." This cry out of Marxism coming primarily from the two-thirds world is championed by Protestants and Catholics and even by some evangelicals. Though definitions of social justice and liberation vary and though the application of such lead to differing strategies, the author appeals to evangelicals of America to become aware of the crises related to these matters, to study the issues from a Biblical perspective, to give attention to our priorities, and to commit more of our resources to meet these needs always remembering, however, our mandate to preach the Gospel to every creature.

The frequently discussed issue of contextualization is treated by David Hesselgrave in the "Contextualization of the Gospel." Though coined by liberals the term has been defined by evangelicals to mean that careful adaptation of the message of Scripture that makes it meaningful to people who are being "mothered" in a culture that is different from that of the communicator. Warning of the dangers in this task, over simplification or a downgrading of the importance of culture and over-sophistication or an undercutting of the authority of the words of Scripture, he challenges Christian workers to preserve a Biblical contextualization that will make the Gospel clear and relevant including the invitation. Any contextualization must stand on two certainties: neither God's Word nor His plan will fail.

Christians today need to be prepared for spiritual warfare. Any efforts they make in the work of evangelism will bring them into conflict with Satan and his demonic forces. Such statements are made and illustrated in Timothy Warner's chapter, "Power Encounter with the Demonic." Whether the devil attacks the Christian or the Christian through his life and ministry invades the devil's territory, the Christian must demonstrate the appropriation of Christ's power through the use of God's armor and prayer. God's servants must resist the devil and become good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

"Self — Esteem and the Pursuit of Fulfillment," treating psychology as a

popular new religion is what Gary Collins pursues in this chapter. He shows modern psychology as the champion of self - esteem and self - fulfillment, but exposes its weakness in its de-emphasis of sin and its lack of emphasis on salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. He appeals to Christians to use the teachings of psychology as a tool to show people that though helpful they do not give the final answer. That answer is Christ. Collins concludes with this advice as a Christian's response to psychology: don't ignore it, try to understand it; don't squelch it, try to learn from it; don't be enamoured by it, keep it in perspective.

It is most fitting to find a segment of this volume on "Preaching for Decision" by none other than Lloyd Perry, the pastor's pastor. His thesis is that "evangelistic preaching will always be crucial in reaching souls for the Saviour." Such preaching to be effective must be empowered by the Holy Spirit and must be characterized by good style and by a clear call for decision.

The author/editor, Coleman, contributes to this collection of essays by writing on "The Great Commission Life-style." Emphasizing the task of making disciples, defining the disciple as a learner, he says that disciples must live by the rules which govern Christ's life, a Christian life-style produced by the Spirit. Such a life-style was exhibited by the early Church but disappeared until the time of the Protestant Reformation and the Evangelical Awakening. Today it may be seen in the Christianity coming out of China. It is the challenge facing Christians today, and when it is accepted it will heighten evangelistic endeavour.

The final chapter, "Leadership for Evangelism in Theological Education," is written by Walter Kaiser, and in it he affirms that the Great Commission must occupy the central focus of all evangelical theological education. He appeals to theological schools to provide training in evangelism and disciple-making for all students, even though there may be difficulties in so doing because of pluralism, universalism, separatism, passion for academic respectability, and peculiar emphasis upon the gift of evangelism that persists. The difficulties can be overcome through a genuine revival, through an emphasis on cross-cultural ministry, and a commitment to evangelism on the part of our theological leadership.

Any reader will discover that this is not a book on evangelism and discipling techniques; however, anyone committed to the fulfillment of the Great Commission will appreciate what is said in these essays and will want to reflect upon the significance of each one of them. To assist in this exercise each of the ten issues considered in this volume is followed by a series of questions to help the reader move into a full comprehension of the thrust of each chapter. Added to this the brief biographical sketch of each contributor which precedes the chapter he wrote serves to make each reader wish that he could sit down with each writer and do a little more picking of his brain. It is to be hoped that this book will build a framework from which to launch many more Christians into deeper involvement in the business of world evangelization.

Evangelization leaders and those training for ministry in evangelical contexts will want to read this book and then take time to read it again and again.

Gordon W. Dorey, Canadian Director, Africa Inland Mission

The Historical Reliability of the Gospels
 by Craig Blomberg
 (I.V.P., 1987)
 pp. 288 6.95

This is the book I have been waiting for. Up to now I have relied on Howard Marshall's excellent volume *I Believe in the Historical Jesus* to provide a non-New Testament specialist like myself with a sure evangelical guide through the tangled jungle of Gospel Criticism, hacking through the thick undergrowth of Source Criticism, Form Criticism, Redaction Criticism and all the rest. But I gradually became aware that the safari was not over. Beyond the clearing loomed the luxuriant foliage of Midrash Criticism, Structuralism and Post Structuralism. I was badly in need of a new guide book. And then along came Blomberg who has recapitulated and updated the subjects so ably discussed by Marshall, while adding useful summaries and critiques of more recent developments.

But I still had problems. There were the apparent contradictions among the Synoptics (well, were the disciples allowed to carry a staff? Matt. 10:10 c.f. Mk 6:8) and the highly distinctive character of the fourth Gospel where, for example, the very gradual perception of Jesus as Messiah found in the Synoptics seems to be replaced by a Gospel where men discern Jesus as both Messiah and Son of God before the end of the first chapter. Again Blomberg has come to the rescue with his in-depth study of these problem areas and the title of his book states his convincingly argued conclusion.

Perhaps your problems are different to mine. But if you are concerned about the apparent lack of sufficient corroboration for the Jesus tradition in other ancient writings both within and outside the New Testament, or the peculiar problems, both philosophical and scientific, associated with miracles, this is the book for you too.

In order to avoid the charge of question begging, Blomberg supports the reliability of the Gospels purely on historical grounds without recourse to appeals to inspiration or inerrancy. As an historian he reminds us that two of the canons of historiography are that an ancient record of an event is assumed to be reliable unless there are good grounds for doubting the veracity of the account, and secondly that the attempt to harmonize two slightly different reports of the same event is acceptable practise. It is astonishing, therefore, that so many New Testament scholars seem to assume that the Gospel stories are unhistoric unless there is overwhelming evidence to the contrary and that they dismissively deride such

tentative attempts at harmonization as the suggestion that Jesus could have cleansed the temple twice; once at the beginning of his ministry (Jn. 2) and once at the end (Mk. 11).

Although Dr. Blomberg is obviously an impressive scholar in his own right, his book pulls together the labours over ten years of an international team of scholars engaged in the Gospels Research Project at Tyndale House, Cambridge, England. For the specialist, the team published from 1980 to 1986 a series of six volumes entitled *Gospel Perspectives* (Sheffield, JSOT Press). We must be sincerely grateful to Blomberg for his digest of the exciting insights gained by this team which has entered into dialogue with critical scholarship at the highest level and concluded that the Gospel records are indeed historically reliable.

If, before buying the book, you want a sample of what awaits you, have a look at Blomberg's article "Synoptic studies; Some Recent Methodological Developments and Debates" in *Themelios*, January 1987.

Robert Cook, Scott Theological College, Kenya

The Bible and Islam
by Rev. Bassam M. Madany
Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education 1987

This 80 page paperback comes from the pen of a pioneer radio missionary. He writes out of a context of 23 years experience preaching the gospel in the Arabic tongue to the Arab world. Madany's theme is how to share God's Word with a Muslim. The first section is an exposition of Romans chapters 1-8, Matthew, and Isaiah showing how to use these key books in reaching the Muslim mind and heart. The second section gives an historical explanation of the Church's failure to reach the Arab world, a synopsis of the 20th century Arab's worldview and ends with samples of Muslim response to the gospel broadcasts.

The Gospel according to Paul (Romans 1-8) follows Reformed theological interpretation and contrasts this with Islam's high view of man's ability to find salvation through good works and seeking the will of God. There is no doubt but that the argument of Romans 1-8 is the clearest presentation of the work of the Cross, and Madany shows how to use this crucial portion of God's Word without offending a Muslim audience. Abraham's faith—righteousness is the connecting link with the next chapter, the gospel according to Matthew.

Madany details how to use the genealogy, birth narrative, baptism, temptation, sermon on the mount, last supper, and the crucifixion accounts to dispel Muslim misconceptions about the person and work of Christ. Then follows a

chapter on the gospel in the Old Testament with a sketchy treatment of Isaiah chapters 1, 6, and 53. Islam's hatred of idolatry, their low view of sin, and misunderstanding of the cross are points argued from Isaiah.

Lessons from Church history are pressed home stressing the fact that although ancient versions in Itala (Old Latin), Syriac, Coptic, Gothic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Gregorian, and even Nubian were made by the sixth century, yet the Arabic critique of Islam written in a popular style by a Marxian from Damascus forshadows the degree of secularization reaching into the Arab section of the Muslim world.

The heart of the matter is that Islam is the only major religion which is definitely anti-Christian at its core. Since its rise in the 7th century Islam has spread mostly at the expense of Christian lands starting with Africa. It is a post-Christian religion, and the Quran has many references to biblical personalities from both Old and New Testaments. Therefore we are thrust into apologetics and polemics, and we cannot avoid theology or doctrine. We believe the bible to be the Word of God; they believe the Quran to be the eternal and uncreated Word of God. We believe in one God who is triune; their doctrine of God is unitarian. The Quranic Messiah is not the Biblical Messiah. They say "Christ was not crucified". Islam teaches that man's sin is ignorance of the divine will.

Since there are 800,000,000 Muslims in the world today and Islam has immense political and economic power, this challenge to Christianity is greater than ever. While lacking documentation and a bibliography, this book will instruct your mind and challenge your heart to the task of reaching out to the Muslim world around us with the glorious gospel of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

Paul Wagner, Scott Theological College

Spirits and Power: An analysis of Shona Cosmology
by Hubert Bucher
(Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1980)
pp. 231

Leader	"Jesus!"	Group	"Power!"
	"Jesus!"		"Power!"
	"Jesus!"		"Power!"
	"Power!"		"Jesus!"

This chant which I heard at an evangelistic meeting in a friend's house is a reminder of the importance of spiritual power for the people of Africa. The words which I saw recently on a poster pinned to a tree are another reminder:

"THE GREAT GOSPEL MIRACLE FESTIVAL"

The Lame walk, The Blind See, The Deaf Hear, The Dumb Speak, and the sick are receiving their healing."

That is certainly one form of "Christian" power being offered to the people of Africa today - "signs and wonders" evangelism. Another form of power is the so-called "prosperity gospel": "God will use his power to give you the things you want in life, health, wealth, and happiness." Both these forms have come to Africa from the West. But there is a third form of "Christian" power, indigenous to Africa, which is more important for the church in Africa than these other forms. That is, the "Christian" adaptation of traditional African beliefs about power. Hubert Bucher talks about this adaptation in his book *Spirits and Power*.

In this article I want to summarise the argument of Bucher's book, and then to develop his conclusion and apply it for the church in Africa.

The Shona World View

In the first part of the book Bucher analyses the traditional religion of the Shona peoples of Zimbabwe. He sees their beliefs as the integration of two sets of symbols which fit together to make one worldview. These sets of symbols are, firstly, symbols of the social order, and secondly, symbols which deal with the perennial problems of human existence¹

These two sets of symbols though are more than merely symbols. Those who make up the social order are real people: chiefs, spirit/mediums, diviner/healers, people accused of witchcraft activities. The problems of human existence - death, illness, misfortune, illwill from one's neighbours - are facts of life which people really experience.

For each problem area of life for the Shona there is an explanation in terms of personal spirits: spirits of the land, ancestral spirits, avenging spirits, "strangers spirits" and witches. There is also someone whose role it is to supervise this area and use spiritual power to help overcome the problem. So, for example, the chief is the "owner of the land", the living representative of the territorial spirits who are the original owners of the land. He is responsible to act against the problem areas of lack of rain, lack of fertility, pests, and disease.

Another problem area is the unpredictability of life. Death, illness, or misfortune may strike at any time. This is believed to be the work of ancestral spirits or avenging spirits concerned about their authority or their property. These spirits must be appeased or "kept away" in order for a person

to avoid misfortune.

Some other problem areas are: frustration with one's own unimportance in society, envy of the skills or gifts of other people, the strange behaviour of underprivileged people in the community, outbreaks of discord in a community. In each case the spirits are symbolic representations of the powers involved, and there are mediums and diviner-healers to help people deal with the spirits and the problems they bring.

Bucher draws two main conclusions from his analysis:

- i) Concern about power is the main feature of the Shona world view. Power is all-pervasive. "The world is an enormous field of power." He quotes the Shona proverb: "Every power is subject to another power".
- ii) This power is *ambiguous*. The same power can be used as power to harm or power to protect. The thief and the policeman use the same power, but only the policeman has legitimate authority to do so. This is why the diviner-healer has an ambiguous status for the Shona. He is the policeman of the community, but he uses the same power as the witch does.

The 'Churches of the Spirit'

In the second part of his book Bucher turns his attention to the Shona "Churches of the Spirit". These are the most popular of the two major types of Independent Churches in Shonaland, originating in the 1920s. Bucher looks particularly at the Zion Christian Church of Samuel Mutendi and the African Apostolic Church of Johane Maranke. He devoted one chapter to their doctrine and ritual and one to their healing practices.

As he looks at these "Churches of the Spirit" he concludes that they have an identical view of spiritual power to that held by traditional Shona society. The founder of the church is the equivalent of the founder-ancestor, and he owns the church. In theory all the power in the church comes from the Holy Spirit, but in practice the power belongs to the founder of the church in his own person. It is stored in him like "grain in a farmer's cooperative". As in traditional society, this power is ambiguous; it can be used for good or evil. For example a Zionist witch is believed to use the "spirit of Mutendi" to do his work. Mutendi himself has no ultimate control over how his power is used.

Prophetic activities in these churches are a "Christian" substitute for diviner-healer practices. The prophet "sees" through the Spirit the spiritual causes of his client's troubles. He deals with spiritual powers in the same way as traditional specialists dealt with them in the past.

In these churches a complete alternative community has been set up.

Converts are taken out of their natural family and brought into a new all-embracing family. The congregation takes over from the next of kin. In this new community converts find a complete substitute for the forces which protected them in their traditional past.

This explains the appeal of these churches: they focus on those aspects of the Christian Gospel which meet the Shona people's traditional preoccupation with spirits. Converts have transferred their allegiance from traditional to new sources of power, but they have not changed their views about how these powers work.

From this Bucher comes to his main conclusion that these "Churches of the Spirit" are not faithful to the Gospel. God comes to the Shona (and to us all) from *outside* a people's own worldview. He makes a total claim upon people that they leave their old ways and follow Him, that is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But the "Churches of the Spirit" do not confront the Shona people in this way. They evade the claim of the Gospel and remain within the Shona worldview. They "Shona-ise" the Gospel to meet people's needs. They are like Simon Magus in Acts ch. 8, happy to use Christian spiritual power for their own benefit but far away from a true understanding of the Gospel and the salvation which it brings.

Power Encounter

Now I believe that this conclusion is very important for Christians in Africa. It should make us think very carefully about power in the Church of Jesus Christ. When a person leaves traditional religion to follow Jesus Christ we often talk about the need for them to experience a "power encounter". In this "power encounter" they discover that Jesus Christ is more powerful than all the powers which previously troubled them².

But what do we mean by a "power encounter"? Is it a "straight fight" between powers, like two boxers stalking each other round the ring? One will overcome the other because he has greater strength and skill, and the winner is the one who is left standing at the end. Is that what we mean?

It seems to me that "signs and wonders" evangelism does see the fight between the power of Christ and other powers in this way: "Because Jesus is Sovereign Lord, people will be physically healed as lesser powers are defeated". So does the "prosperity gospel". "It is God's will for every Christian to be rich and healthy; only your sin or lack of faith can prevent this. African Independent Churches like the Shona "Churches of the Spirit" try to assemble enough prophets and powers to be able to defeat hostile powers.

On a cosmic scale when God in Christ disarmed the powers triumphing over them, He did so *by the cross* (Col. 2:15). The powers opposed to God were defeated by the *death* of the Victor! And at the level of personal experience the Lord Jesus Christ said to the apostle Paul, "My power is made perfect *in weakness*". To which Paul replied, "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly

about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me" (2 Corinthians 12:10).

The Gospel tells us that God's power is known in our weakness. Victory takes place in the midst of apparent defeat. We need to understand why this is so.

The Use of Power versus the Presence of Christ

The "Churches of the Spirit" have to see the struggle between different powers as a "straight fight" because for them *the essence of life is the successful use of power*. They look at the work of the Holy Spirit in a man-centred way. The Holy Spirit makes God's power available for them to "switch on" and use. Their view of power is the same as that of traditional Shona society. If you can't use power successfully and come out on top then you are defeated; and that is that.

But to think of the Holy Spirit in this way is not true to the Gospel. J. I. Packer explains this very helpfully. He writes about "the distinction between manipulating divine power at one's own will (which is magic, exemplified by Simon Magus [Acts 8:18-24]), and experiencing it as one obeys God's will (which is religion, exemplified by Paul [2 Corinthians 12:9, 10])."³

In contrast to this, for the Christian *the essence of life is the presence of Christ*. And the work of the Holy Spirit is to make known the risen reigning Lord Jesus Christ in and with the Christian and the church. As the Holy Spirit does this three things happen in the lives of Christians. They experience personal fellowship with Jesus. Their characters are transformed into the likeness of Jesus. (This is where power fits in says Dr. Packer - by the power of the Holy Spirit we "move beyond our natural selfishness into the Christlike path of righteousness, service and conquest of evil".)⁴ And they have a Spirit-given assurance of being children of God.

Every Christian in Africa must surely long to see more of God's power at work in the church, in society, in his own life. But the power we need is not the power of instant success or triumph in every situation. Such guarantees about the successful use of power are not true to life as it really is. Poverty, illness, war, and famine are a major part of the experience of many, perhaps most, Christians in Africa. And we all wrestle with the fact of sin, our own sin and the sin of other people.

Rather we need the power of the Holy Spirit of Christ who keeps us close to Christ, who makes us holy like Christ, and who assures us that we belong to Christ whatever our outward circumstances may be. The Christian who is chronically ill, crippled, or mentally disturbed will know that the power of Christ is at work in him as he becomes more like Him even in his sickness. The husband and wife who are unable to have children do experience Christ's power as they get to know Him better even in their childlessness. Christians caught up in the violence of civil war are kept safe by the power of Christ, whether in life or in

death.

May God grant the Church in Africa to truly know much of this power.

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Notes

¹p. 17, 188 Bucher here draws upon the work of the social anthropologist, Abner Cohen.

²See, for example, Lausanne Occasional Papers, *Christian Witness to People of African Traditional Religions* (Wheaton: Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation, 1980) p. 17.

³Packer, J.I., *Keep in step with the Spirit* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984) p. 26. Dr. Packer discusses the whole question of the relationship of power and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit on pages 21-27.

⁴Ibid. p. 49.

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