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# Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology

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Volume 10, No. 1



1991

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## AFRICA JOURNAL OF EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY

### General Editor:

Rev Isaac Simbiri, General Secretary, Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya

### Consulting Editors:

Dr Tokunboh Adeyemo, AEAM General Secretary, Nairobi, Kenya

Dr Titus Kivunzi, Principal, Scott Theological College, Machakos, Kenya

Rev Yemi Ladipo, Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society, London, England

Dr Josephat Yego, Deputy Principal (Administration), Jomo Kenyatta University College of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya

### Editorial Staff:

Jacob Kibor, Titus Kivunzi, Julie Zimmerman, Evelyn Bowers, Christine Mumo

### Purpose:

AJET is published twice a year by the staff of Scott Theological College, Machakos, Kenya, on behalf of the ACTEA Consortium of Theological Colleges, in order to provide African evangelical theological educators and students with articles and book reviews related to theology and ministry.

### Editorial Policy:

We welcome articles and book reviews from an evangelical perspective. Material should be typed, with endnotes, and submitted to: The Editor, AJET, PO Box 49, Machakos, Kenya.

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Kenya (surface):	Ksh 100/
Africa (airmail):	US\$10
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## BOOK REVIEWS

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# **SACRIFICE IN AFRICAN TRADITION AND IN BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE<sup>1</sup>**

Cornelius Olowola

Comparing the concepts of sacrifice manifest in African tradition and in the Bible can be an instructive exercise. Whereas the sacrificial system of African traditional religion is similar in some ways to that practised by Israel in the Old Testament, there are also important differences. And the approach of the New Testament to sacrifice stands in sharp contrast to the approach of African tradition, and supersedes that of the Old Testament.

## **Comparisons between African and Israelite Sacrifice**

In comparing attitudes towards sacrifice evident in ancient Israel and in traditional Africa, we may first notice that both Israelites and Africans could look upon sacrifices as a means of obtaining favour. If engaging upon some enterprise such as a war or a hunting expedition, it was felt wise to sacrifice before the undertaking in order to secure assistance, and to sacrifice after the undertaking in order to express thanks. Among both peoples could be found a hope that by giving gifts the deity could be induced to render in return more than they had given.

Nevertheless, whatever some Israelites may have thought about sacrifice, the prophets of the Old Testament consistently pointed out that Israel did not receive blessings because of multitudinous sacrifices. According to Old Testament teaching, those who substituted sacrifice for genuine obedience to God were odious to Him. Only as the people obeyed the laws of God, so that their sacrifices became an outgrowth of their obedience, would God abundantly bless them (Mal 3:10).

Both Israelites and traditional Africans also looked upon sacrifice as a means of fellowship and communion. As Idowu has stated: "the offerings are means of communion between the orisa [traditional divinity of the Yoruba] and the worshippers who are his children, and consequently a means of fellowship among the children themselves."<sup>2</sup> The African meal and drink offering has similarities with Israel's Passover, which was a meal of communion and fellowship between God and Israel. Oesterley notes that "both in original and later times the Passover was a communion-sacrifice."<sup>3</sup>

Many Africans believe that the spirit of the departed continues to abide for a certain period either in or near the body it has just left. Food and drink are offered to the departed spirit either for the purpose of communion or to prevent harm from the powerful spirit of the departed. It appears that some Israelites may have had a similar notion. Deuteronomy 26:14 gives the response of a godly Israelite to Yahweh, "I have not eaten any of the sacred portion while I was in mourning, nor have I removed any of it while I was unclean, nor have I offered any of it to the dead." The statement implies that there were some Israelites who sacrificed to the dead, but that the true follower of Yahweh certainly did not, for the statement continues, "I have obeyed the Lord my God; I have done everything you commanded me."

Blood sacrifice has two distinct features in African tradition. It creates a new bond among those who participate in the rite and, where deities or ancestors are worshipped, it is believed that the blood revitalises the ones to whom the offering is made. Sawyerr writes, "Since blood is a gift, which is a vehicle of the life offered to another, it not only revives the life of the recipients, but it also gives new life to the donors."<sup>4</sup> This must be seen as an important difference between African and Old Testament sacrifices. Biblical sacrifices were never a means of revitalising God or man. Yahweh forbade the Israelites to drink blood (e.g. Lev 3:17), whereas African priests and people participate in drinking blood. It could be that some Israelites had the idea, taken from surrounding religion, that Yahweh drank the blood of the sacrifice, but the Psalmist directly repudiates this idea about God. "Do I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?" (Psalm 50:13). To this rhetorical question the implicit answer is that such a thing is unthinkable. The act of pouring out the blood at the foot of the altar or sprinkling the altar with it symbolised rather than the victim's life was given to Yahweh.

As to the material content of the sacrifice, both ancient Israelites and traditional Africans utilised animals and food in their sacrificial offerings. But whereas Africans sometimes engaged in human sacrifice, and this was widely practised in the ancient world, Israelites were forbidden to do so (Lev 18:21; 20:2-5; Deut 12:31; 18:10).

The major distinction between African and Old Testament sacrifice, of course, concerns the one to whom the sacrifice is offered. Unlike African sacrifices, Old Testament sacrifices were offered directly to Yahweh and only to Yahweh. The Bible is very clear that any other practice has always stood under God's condemnation.

You shall have no other gods besides me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them (Exodus 20:3-4).



### **Sacrifice in the New Testament**

The New Testament takes the whole matter of sacrifice much further. The New Testament teaching on sacrifice is that Christ, the Son of God, has been made the final sacrifice for sin, once for all. Any further sacrifice, whether to spirits or even to God himself, is therefore to be eliminated.

The New Testament clearly teaches that the Old Testament sacrificial system was only a foreshadow of the complete and perfect sacrifice which Christ made on the cross once for all. The Old Testament sacrifices pointed toward the true Sacrifice, but they were inadequate in themselves.

The law is only a shadow of good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshippers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins (Heb 10:1-4).

African traditional sacrifices as well are inadequate and done away with, and have no place in the new times that God has given us in Christ.

It is true that many professing Christians in Africa still offer sacrifices of different kinds to the spirits and ancestors. The simple explanation for this is that they are not deeply converted to Christianity, that they have neither understood nor appropriated what Christ has done on their behalf in his sacrificial death. They have yet to realise the full implications of this for their lives. Let us therefore take time to review these great implications of the sacrifice of Christ.

*(1) Christ's sacrifice atones for sin.*

African sacrifices might be able to remove ceremonial pollution, like the breaking of taboos, but they are unable to remove the guilt of sin. They cannot provide inward cleansing. But according to the Bible, the blood of Christ powerfully atones for sin.

The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God (Heb 9:13,14).

Why should Christ's blood have such power? First of all because, as the passage states, Christ offered himself. He chose to sacrifice himself. His sacrifice was rational, voluntary and spontaneous. "It is not the slaughter of an unconscious, reluctant victim but an intelligent act of the highest spiritual obedience towards God (Phil 2:8)" states Hewitt.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, his blood was powerful because, as the passage states, Christ's offering was an unblemished offering. Both the African and the Levitical offerings may have been spotless outwardly, without external deformity. But only the offering of Christ was spotless throughout, not only outwardly but also inwardly. Christ can atone for sin because he himself was without sin.

(2) *Christ's sacrifice is substitutionary.*

One purpose of African sacrifice is to offer an animal (or sometimes a human being) to take the place of another individual or a community. Hence, when a child is sick, a chicken or goat is killed, dressed with oil, and buried. The idea is that the victim has taken the place of the child, so that the child will not be killed by the disease. But in the sacrifice of Christ, the African is offered the perfect, complete substitution for those evils in his life far deeper than any physical disease. Christ takes those evils on Himself in our place, for us, and on our behalf. "For the Son of Man came not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt 20:28; Mark 10:45).

(3) *Christ's sacrifice made Him mediator of a new covenant.*

The idea of a covenant is not foreign to traditional Africa. Covenants were made between two ethnic groups that they would not wage war against each other. This covenant was usually ratified with shedding of blood. There were covenants between individuals by which the thumb of each party was cut and each sucked the blood of the other. These acts established strong covenants in African religion and society. The Bible teaches that Christ's sacrificial death made him the Mediator of a new covenant, a new agreement between God and man, including the African.

For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. . . . For a covenant is in force only when somebody has died (Heb 9:15-17).

As the passage states, the new covenant in Christ brings two benefits to those who accept Christ as their mediator with God. On the one hand they receive release and redemption from their sins, and on the other hand they receive the eternal inheritance which God has promised. Why then should African Christians continue with traditional sacrifices? These sacrifices involved covenants repeatedly made and broken, between man and man, and between

men and spirits. But through the mediatorial death of Christ the African Christian has been granted once for all through an eternal covenant both complete redemption and also God's promised inheritance.

*(4) Christ's sacrifice destroys the power of the evil one.*

It should be admitted that evil powers do exist, and that it is often through fear that Africans offer sacrifices to appease such powers. But Christ in his death on the cross has not only atoned for sin, but he has also destroyed the power of the evil one over us.

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death (Heb 2:14-15).

Since Christ in his sacrificial death has overcome evil spiritual powers, the follower of Christ is delivered from the present tyranny of such powers. There is no need for African Christians to sacrifice anything to appease evil spirits; they need only to appropriate for themselves the sacrifice of Christ in order to experience freedom from the evil one.

*(5) Christ's sacrifice reconciles man to God.*

African sacrifices are offered in part to appease the anger of the spirits. For example, if lightning strikes a house, a sacrifice is offered to the god of thunder to appease him. But man's problem is much deeper than such difficulties. Through his disobedience to God, man has become sinful. He has much more to be troubled about than appeasing mere spirits. Though he has known about God, he has not worshipped Him, but instead has worshipped created beings. This is as true of the African traditionalist as of any other peoples in the world. They have broken fellowship with their Creator. Instead of serving Him, they have chosen to serve spirits which are creatures, thus making themselves the enemies of God.

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God made it plain to them. . . , so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him. . . . They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator (Rom 1:18-20, 25).

Sacrifice to the spirits will not relieve man of God's just wrath. It is God with whom the African traditionalist and the African Christian must be reconciled, and for that problem traditional sacrifices will avail nothing.

But the good news of the gospel is that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8). God himself, through the sacrifice of Christ, has opened the way for reconciliation with Himself:

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:18-21).

That indeed is the challenge of the Bible both to African traditionalists, and to any African Christians who have yet to take to themselves all that God has offered to them in the sacrifice of Christ. Christ's sacrifice is more than enough for all their needs.

Let me conclude with an abbreviated transcription of the early Yoruba Christian hymn, "Jesu Olugbala mo f'ori fun". The hymn is based on the Yoruba saying: "I give my head to—", indicating the particular deity worshipped by the speaker. The hymn refers by name to the various traditional deities of the Yoruba. These early Yoruba Christians obviously understood something vital concerning the significance of Christ within their African context. This hymn is in fact their prayer—and a prayer still very relevant for those in the African context today who likewise wish to appropriate the sacrifice of Christ for themselves.

Jesus Saviour, I give my head to you.  
Oh let me not perish, I pray

He was very kind to me.  
He came to earth for my sake.  
He suffered for my sake.  
He died for my sake.  
He made propitiation for me.  
He is interceding for me.

Jesus Saviour, I give my head to you.  
Oh let me not perish, I pray.

Shango, Shango cannot save us.  
Oya, Oya has no power.

Obatala did not create us.  
Yemaja cannot give birth.  
Every orisa is deaf.  
Irunmale cannot save us.

God is ever kind.  
He created us and He saves us.  
Come let us serve God.  
Cast away your orisas.

Jesus Saviour, I give my head to you,  
Oh let me not perish, I pray.<sup>6</sup>

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Taken from the book by Dr Cornelius Olowola, *African Traditional Religion and the Christian Faith*, to be published shortly.

<sup>2</sup>E. Bolaji Idowu, *Olodumare: God in Yoruba Belief* (London: Longmans, 1962) 121.

<sup>3</sup>W. O. E. Oesterley, *Sacrifice in Ancient Israel* (London: Hodder, 1937) 106.

<sup>4</sup>H. Sawyerr, "Sacrifice," in *Biblical Revelation and African Beliefs*, ed. by K. Dickson and P. Ellingworth (London: Lutterworth, 1969) 77.

<sup>5</sup>T. Hewitt, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960) 148.

<sup>6</sup>Adapted from *IWE ORIN MIMO FUN IJO ENIA OLORUN NI ILE YORUBA* (CSS Bookshops, 1978) 545-547.

# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LEGIO MARIA

Scott Moreau and James Kombo  
(with Francis Juma Ogeke)

## Introduction

The Legio Maria movement is the largest African-initiated church to have broken from Catholicism in Africa. It is an offshoot of the Legion of Mary, a Catholic lay organisation from Ireland, established in Kenya in 1936. The movement's leaders use the name "Maria Legio" rather than the actual name "Legio Maria" (Dirven, "Protest", p. 127 n. 1). In terms of composition, Barrett notes:

A survey in 1969 showed that 10% of the members had formerly been Roman Catholics in good standing, 10% former Protestants, about 40% lapsed, nominal or would-be Catholics, and about 40% were pagans before joining. Ondeto is recognised as the spiritual head, Baba Mtakatifu, the special representative of Jesus Christ, with Pope Atila as second-in-command. . . . The church combines Luo tradition and culture with conservative Roman Catholicism including retention of Latin in the mass. (Barrett, *Handbook*, pp. 246-7).

The Legio Maria are widespread in the regions of Eastern Africa, though mainly among the Luo or people which have affinity with the Luo. Because of the predominance of Luo leadership, culture, and customs, it seems unlikely that they will gain significant numbers of non-Luo members in the future (Dirven, "Maria", p. 200). In 1980, there were an estimated 150,000 members (Barrett, *Encyclopedia*, p. 436).

The members of the Legio Maria claim to be the followers of the African Messiah who has come to help his people, and to deliver them from oppression, suffering, and the white man's domination. They also believe that Jesus Christ came to the white people in the first place, but in these last days He has chosen to appear in the form of a Black African to save the Africans also. There are three major figures in this cult: Simeon Ondeto (Silvius Maussius Ondeto—popularly called "Savior Messiah Holy Father"); Mama Regina Owitch, and Gaudencia Aoko. Their headquarters are situated in the South Nyanza Province of Kenya, at a place they call Got Kwer ("The Mount of Atonement").



### The Birth of the Legio Maria

#### *Important Contextual Factors*

Four important factors which led to the rise and development of Legio Maria must be noted (Dirven, "Maria", pp. 107-35):

1. The Catholic Church grew too fast to ensure adequate pastoral supervision. Probably as a result of easy baptisms, and typical of many early missions, a traditional "core" remained under a newly-acquired Catholic veneer. Surface allegiance had changed, but the core worldview remained the same. Compounding this, the area in which the Legio Maria arose is very rural, less densely populated, and poorly developed.
2. Among many Kenyan Catholic adherents there was a particular attraction to devotion to Mary. Further, the local Legion of Mary, a recognised lay apostolate movement, had significant deviations from its established order, including inappropriate terminology, the wearing of colorful clothing as a distinctive "uniform", and excessive visitation of the sick to pray for healing.
3. There was a great fascination with the concept of Uhuru (Swahili for "freedom"). Kenya was in process of realizing and enjoying its independence, and many suspected that even the white missionaries were racist. In addition, two small separatist movements may have provided models for Legio Maria to follow, though they are not actually linked to the rise of the Legio Maria. Further, there were several local Protestant breakaway groups in Nyanza province which provided models for independence. These groups were not real threats to the Catholic adherents, because Catholics tend towards an aversion of joining a group that looks too "Protestant". Thus, though they provided models of independence, they were not the type of group towards which a typical Catholic would gravitate.
4. Finally, in the midst of all of this, two charismatic Catholic leaders, Ondeto and the key female figure, were able to join forces and ideas.

#### *A Confusion of Identity*

Establishing the identity of the chief female founder of the movement is not as easy as one would hope. Peter Dirven wrote his doctoral thesis on the movement in 1969. In it he extensively examined the historical factors and early characters. He gives significant coverage to the role Gaudencia Aoko played in founding the movement. Today's adherents, however, assign that role to Regina Owitch, referring to her as "Virgin Mary" (Bikra Maria) and the mother of Ondeto. In the literature, Barrett, writing in the early 1970s, is the first to give the place of prominence to Owitch. To our knowledge, he does not even mention Aoko. Dirven, as noted, gives Aoko the primary female role, and does not mention Owitch, thus leaving confusion in the literature on Legio

**Maria regarding the identity of the primary female founder. How did this discrepancy arise, and what is its solution? We need to examine each person in turn in order to propose an answer.**

*Simeon Ondeto*

Stories and legends surrounding the birth and early life of Simeon Ondeto abound. For example, Francis Joseph Jannes Ojimo, a deacon of Legio Maria, Kadem Mission South Nyanza, says,

Around 1960, 'Baba Messias' was going round in the African countries, to help the people of Africa who were in many problems, including political oppression by the colonist whites. He appeared to different people at different places in different forms. Nobody could recognize him as the *one* (Ojimo interview).

Another follower of Legio Maria in Nairobi, Teresa Aoko, relates:

In fact, in Kenya he appeared as Dedan Kimathi. [Dedan Kimathi was a Kikuyu freedom fighter in Kenya who was caught and hung by the colonial government]. Nobody knows where he was buried. When the whites caught him, they were not able to kill him. He disappeared from them. He is the very one. The pictures of the two resemble (Aoko interview).

Finally, Ondeto himself is said to have claimed:

I was born on the first day, and first date of the first month of the first year at the first hour. I want to pray for the sick. That is why I came, others are suffering in their homes but have no money to go to hospital; they die because of Satan who has bound them. I have come so that people may be saved from the bondage of Satan (Ojimo interview).

The story goes that 'Ondeto' had appeared as a small boy in the home of an elder Obimbo Joseph Musumba, in Agoro Kisumu District. The boy grew up in the home of Obimbo Musumba. He became a shepherd boy. It is claimed that Obimbo testified to the police: "This man came to me as a small boy. He was just scratching his feet (in Luo "ndeto") so I called him 'Ondeto', but I am not his father" (Ojimo interview). It is further claimed that Ondeto performed miracles even when he was a shepherd boy. Francis Ojimo tells Obimbo's story:

As a shepherd boy, he moulded clay into small animals and the clay animals became live animals before the other children, and destroyed the clay animals of the other children. The children reported to Obimbo who hid himself to find out the truth. Obimbo saw and

believed. In fact the boy did other miracles; he could hide himself and start to conduct a service with heavenly angels descending for worship. Obimbo discovered him again. He saw him in changed clothes, a big table, candles lit brightly, and many beautiful angels worshipping. Then the candles, clothes, angels, and table disappeared. And I asked him "Are you really human? Why are your actions different from ours?" Then he answered, "Where I came from you know not, whence I go you will not know" (Ojimo interview).

Simeon Ondeto joined the local Legion of Mary and began preaching. He was a good preacher who held his audience captive. Eventually, however, in his sermons he began to relate visions he had experienced:

In one of his sermons on the sufferings of Christ he claimed that he had died twice and had seen heaven: there were no members of other religions in heaven, only Catholics; nor were there any priests, with the exception of Bishop Brandsma and Father Bouma; yet Jacob, David and Abraham were there, enjoying polygamy in heaven as they had done on earth and telling Simeon that polygamists should be baptised.

Simeon did not limit himself to preaching. Whereas at first he had gone around the villages with the Legionnaires to exorcise evil spirits and to pray for the sick, asking for food in return for his favours, he now began to baptise, and called himself a 'Jahulo' (the one who announces, the prophet) (Dirven, "Maria", p. 124).

Ondeto is said to have performed other miracles too, after he became the leader of Legio Maria (he reportedly raised Gaudencia Aoko from the dead, was able to change his appearance, escaped from locked prison doors, etc.).

Ondeto moved from Agoro, in Kisumu District and went to Suna, in South Nyanza. He climbed a small hill, now called Got Kwer, though sometimes referred to as 'Got Kalvary'. There he made his headquarters. The whole village, including the Got Kwer, is called "Jerusalem". It is here that he and a lady met in 1963 to found the Legio Maria. As to who the lady was, there are two proposals (as already noted). According to present adherents (and, apparently, Barrett), Silvius Maussius Ondeto (the "Son") met with Bikra Maria Regina Owitch, or Mary. According to Dirven, Ondeto met Gaudencia Aoko. A review of the evidence indicates that the latter is most certainly the correct historical account.

#### *Gaudencia Aoko*

The regard people have for Gaudencia Aoko depends on which part of Nyanza province they come from. Some claim that she alone was the actual founder of the group, while others give her only prominence as a successful prophetess

and claim that she was brought back to life after she had died for a few days by Ondeto, though Aoko herself denies that she was ever resurrected (Dirven, "Maria", p. 126 n. 37). Her own visions rivaled those of Ondeto, as Dirven reports:

According to her own account Jesus and Mary appeared to her one night at 2.00 a.m., instructing her to start a religion and to call it Legio Maria. More visions followed: in one of them she was told to go outside and she saw Christ standing on a stone pointing his hands upwards to heaven; in another vision Christ told her that he would give her six books. Two days later Our Lady asked her to teach the people, and she even gave a sign; she told Gaudencia to touch the wounded leg of a man so that it would be healed; Gaudencia did, and the leg was healed. (Dirven, "Maria", p. 125).

Aoko's visions scratched a cultural "itch" and won many to the movement. Aoko, as the recipient of the visions, was held in unparalleled admiration among the Luo (Dirven, "Protest", p. 129). In fact, the actions of Aoko had such tremendous cultural and personal appeal that many of the early Legio Maria adherents unashamedly called themselves Aoko's followers (Kaufmann, p. 2).

Officially, by the middle of 1964, Aoko was recognized as the second in command after Ondeto. The *Reporter* of 17 July 1964 states:

A few days . . . [after the imprisonment of Ondeto], Kenya's nationwide ban on public meetings was lifted, and Simeon's second-in-command and the sect's biggest crowd puller is now operating unhampered. She is an impish 21 year old, beautiful Luo girl named Gaudencia Aoko (p. 17).

Interestingly enough, Aoko's husband, Simeo Owiti, was then the number three in the Legio Maria hierarchy (*Ibid.*, p. 18). One important clue to solving the puzzle of who co-founded the movement is the fact that Regina Owitch is not mentioned anywhere in the *Reporter* article or in any other pre-1969 account of the movement that we have been able to locate.

Another clue is the official position she occupied early in the movement's history. The general practice of African-initiated church movements is that those who played key roles in the founding of the group are given the top positions in its hierarchy. With the husband and wife team occupying the number two and three positions, it is obvious that they were recognized by Ondeto as instrumental in the founding of the Legio Maria. Thus, Aoko's role in the early history of the Legio Maria is well-established. What, then are we to do with the claims of present adherents (and Barrett) that it was Owitch who was the prominent female in the founding of the group?

*Regina Owitch (Bikra Maria)*

Regina Owitch, like Gaudencia Aoko, is something of a household name among the Legio Maria faithful. The idea that she co-founded the movement with Ondeto, however, needs careful consideration, especially since Dirven does not mention Owitch at all in his dissertation. In any event, Owitch served as a prophetess until she died in 1966. We will say more about her current status in the movement after examining the historical birth of the Legio Maria.

*Ondeto Meets Aoko*

Again, there are two differing accounts of the actual founding of the Legio Maria. According to many current adherents, "Holy Father" Ondeto met "Mary" Owitch in 1963 and this was the time of the actual founding of the movement. Theresa Aoko explains this version:

Mother and son met at 'Got Kalvari' in Suna, Migori; and when they greeted one another, the power of God fell on all the people who had been recruited by Ondeto. All people fell down. The people heard the voices of angels singing wonderful songs. When they got up, they were speaking in tongues of Latin. From that time people were given different powers, gifts and works of the Holy Spirit. Many Catholic Fathers know that Baba [Ondeto] is the one; but if they publicize it, they will be excommunicated and their support from abroad will be cut. The Catholics had God's power indeed, but had hidden it from Africans; but when Baba Messiah came, he poured the power to the Africans and even the Pope is not happy (Aoko interview).

In the *Kenya Churches Handbook*, Barrett appears to confirm that Maria and Ondeto were the co-founders of the movement:

From 1930-60, an unmarried Luo Roman Catholic mystic named Maria (born circa 1876, died 1966) saw visions calling her to initiate an African Catholic church. After several abortive attempts, a mass exodus of Luo and Kisii Catholics took place from the RC Diocese of Kisii in 1960-62, and with her spiritual son Simeo Ondeto, Maria founded the Legion of Mary Church, initially with some 90,000 adherents. After a period of turbulence during which Ondeto was briefly imprisoned, the church was granted registration and organised itself throughout Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania (North Mara District) (Barrett, *Handbook*, p. 246).

Dirven however, basing himself on extensive interviews and working closer to the time of the founding of the movement, states that it was Gaudencia Aoko (not Regina Owitch) who visited Simeon and stayed with him for one month (in April of 1963). This he confirmed through personal interviews of Aoko

herself. Her own account is that she went to test his claims of dying twice and coming back to life. Dirven notes:

It is difficult to ascertain what took place during the month that Gaudencia spent at Simeon's home. At any rate, the importance of this meeting of somewhat kindred spirits is that it heralded the birth of the Legio Maria which soon afterwards began to spread among the Luo of Nyanza (Dirven, "Maria", p. 127).

#### *Solving the Puzzle*

Today, the Legio Maria adherents assume without question that the "Maria" named by Barrett is the mother of Ondeto and the co-founder of the movement. In seeking a solution to this puzzle, we must note that Barrett wrote his material in the early 1970s. In late 1968 however, just before Dirven wrote his dissertation, a sharp disagreement arose between Ondeto and Aoko. This disagreement was so sharp that eventually Aoko's role was reduced from "Holy Mother" and "Auxiliary Spiritual Leader" to that of "Sister General", whose exclusive role was evangelism (Dirven, "Maria", p. 207). It seems likely that by the time Barrett was doing his research, Aoko's role in the founding of Legio Maria was no longer acknowledged, possibly to prevent her gaining prominence over Ondeto. The stories had changed so that it was no longer she who met Ondeto, but Regina Owitch—the grand old lady upon whom the title (which is a title rather than her actual name) of "Bikra Maria" had been conferred—even though she was already dead.

But why this switch? While alive, Owitch had achieved the status of prophetess for the movement. Theresa Aoko relates the current view, "When she was asked 'Where are you from?'; she replied, 'I came in this world a long time ago. I am looking for my son who got lost.'" (Aoko interview). It is also said that she was helped by Michael the angel while she ministered on earth (Aoko interview). Among the Luo, the rise of an elderly prophetess to herald glad tidings or an imminent cataclysm employing this very formula has cultural precedents. Two Luo narratives illustrate this point.

The first narrative concerns Nyamgondho wuod Ombare, a poor fisherman who became rich overnight because he heeded Nyar Nam, a very old prophetess. The moment he dismissed Nyar Nam, he lost all his wealth (Odaga, "Fisherman", pp. 7-11). The second narrative is about Simbi, the legendary village which was swept away by floods. Everyone drowned except one village woman and her children. The land, we are told, flooded because the inhabitants disregarded the prophecy of a strange old woman (Odaga, "Simbi", pp. 133-36).

Historically, then, it appears that Owitch was an elderly Luo prophetess who prophesied sometime between the founding of the Legio Maria and 1966 when she died. She heralded a message which contributed greatly to the popularity



of the Legio Maria, though she did not play as prominent a role as Aoko did. Nevertheless, as many did not want to fail to heed the lesson of the traditional stories, they listened to her. However, there is no historical evidence that she played the crucial role now attributed to her in the founding of the Legio Maria.

After the falling out between Aoko and Ondeto, there arose a cultural vacuum. Further, about this time Ondeto elevated his own status from Pope to that of African Messiah (or Christ). For continuing cultural (Luo) legitimization of the movement, and confirmation of Ondeto's new status, an elderly prophetess was needed. She would need to be seen as having played a significant role in the founding of the movement, and her prophecies would have to confirm Ondeto's claims. In the oral history of the Legio Maria, then, Owitch was elevated to this role, apparently sometime between Dirven's dissertation and Barrett's writing. Not only was she an elderly woman and a prophetess, but (perhaps just as important) she was also dead, and therefore posed no rivalry to Ondeto's position as the head of the church. This appears to explain satisfactorily the discrepancy between the earlier accounts (including Dirven) and the ones given today by the adherents (and Barrett).

#### Teachings of the Legio Maria

As with many of the African independent churches, the Legio Maria do not possess an official written doctrinal statement. Much of the doctrine is to be found in the sermons and lives of the adherents. Dirven explains:

The Maria Legio does not possess an explicitly formulated creed or a systematic treatise of doctrine. It may in fact be asserted that in a vague and implicit way the movement accepts whatever Catholics hold with the exception of the Pope in Rome, who has been replaced by founder Simeon Ondeto ("Maria", pp. 220-1).

In this section, we will give an overview of the teachings of the Legio Maria as noted from interviews and written sources. The Protestant reader is advised to bear in mind the Catholic nature of the group, especially concerning the doctrine of Mary.

#### *Ondeto*

Ondeto claims that he is the Messiah of the Whites but now has come to the Blacks. He has even gone as far as claiming himself to be Christ, and his adherents have accepted this as authoritative. Dirven feels that in calling himself Christ, he is more likely expressing that he is a saviour and embodies the saving power of Christ, not that he is a replacement for Christ:

To Simeon and his followers it may mean probably nothing more than that he symbolises in a visible way the invisible Christ, somewhat

similar to the Pope being the 'Vicar of Christ' and the priest being called an alter Christus (Dirven, "Maria", p. 222).

Even if Dirven is right about Ondeto's self-perception, the fact that he claims to be Christ has no biblical foundation or precedent and can only lead to confusion in the minds of the followers. As Wagner points out:

[Archbishop Herbert] Aloo and others even call Baba Simeon "Jesus" because through him they were saved, not only from disease, but from drunkenness, fighting, and a degraded life. They have no apparent theological problem with an overidentification of their leader with the Messiah (Wagner, p. 11).

In reality, the Legio Maria, in a way, serve Ondeto. They put on the cheapest clothes and are expected to send money in to their headquarters at "Jerusalem" to help promote God's work. Ondeto himself, however, drives in a Mercedes Benz and enjoys the benefits of the toil of his servant-followers.

### *Salvation*

Among the Legio Maria, salvation is usually linked more to life in the here and now than to the afterlife in heaven or hell (Dirven, "Maria", p. 222). Relating to being "saved", a term used widely in the East African revival movement, Theresa Aoko states:

We Legios do not claim that we are saved, because no one can be saved here on earth. A person who is saved has a heart like that of a small child; which is impossible for a mature person to have. Adults are apt to make mistakes all the time. We are sinners all the time, and we need forgiveness every time which we can get as we pray (Aoko interview).

She also explains that a Legio overcomes sin "only through prayers, more rosaries, and more fasting". She also notes, "It is better to pass through the cross while still alive [a religious function carried out by the Legios at their shrines]. This then sets the believer free from the offenses he committed. When he dies he will be looked upon favorably" (Aoko interview).

### *Mary*

At the time of Dirven's dissertation, and from his perspective, the movement appeared proper and in order in its allegiance to Mary. He notes with approval:

Loyal to its name and origin the Maria Legio fosters a great devotion to Our Lady, as is externally manifested by the display of numerous multi-coloured rosaries of all sizes and shapes and by the pictures in

chapels and homes. When the visitor enters a Maria Legio shrine, he is first led—after taking off his shoes, depositing his cigarettes, and genuflecting before a large cross—to the prayer chapel where he is invited to join in saying the Hail Mary (Dirven, “Maria”, p. 226).

Since Dirven has written, however, Regina Owitch has been elevated to the status of Bikra Maria, which would no longer fit the Catholic framework. In any event, the prominence given to the person of Mary and to the teachings about Mary does not accord with a biblical pattern.

### *Eschatology*

As with soteriology, the eschatology of the Legio Maria is primarily focused on this world (salvation from disease, fear, insecurity, and poverty). They do have apocalyptic ideas, however. These seem to some extent to be influenced by Seventh Day Adventists, who are also prominent in the area. Among their ideas is the concept of a heaven which holds promise of human pleasures, seen for example in Simeon’s vision of the OT leaders enjoying polygamy in heaven (Dirven, “Maria”, pp. 230-1). As with many such groups, there have been predictions of the end to come which have failed to materialise:

In December 1964 Maria Legio followers in Central Nyanza expected the imminent end of the world, and when the rumour was spread that the date of the cataclysm was going to be December 12—the first anniversary of Kenya’s independence—Mr. Odinga had to reassure them that nothing of the sort would happen (Dirven, “Maria”, p. 231).

### *Prayer*

Probably the best known emphasis of the movement is its prayer. Followers will travel hours to pray for hours. Dirven notes:

Prayer, public and private, is one of the outstanding features of the movement. The hours spent in prayer or in travelling to the sick and to prayer-meetings, and the reliance on prayer almost to the exclusion of natural means such as work, medicine and education have been a matter of grave concern for Administration officials, anxious as they are to have their development plans implemented by the participation and cooperation of all in the hard work required (Dirven, “Maria”, p. 252).

The Legio Maria also incorporate some of the Roman Catholic teachings in their faith and pray through the help of saints and angels. As Teresa Aoko says,

Every old saint in heaven and angel has a special role and task; so that when a Legio Maria follower calls any by name, in prayer, that saint

or angel responds to help in time of need. For example Michael the angel of war will respond to help fight demons attacking any Legio follower who calls (Aoko interview).

This prayer often is for the sick or demonised. The Legio Maria generally feel that all who are sick are so because of demons (who may be ancestral spirits). This is little more than a revival of Luo "Mumboism", a belief that spirit possessions are always preceded by illnesses which come from a spirit named Mumbo (see Kombo, p. 1, and Ogot, pp. 78-9). While not necessarily "orthodox" in Luo traditional terms, this opens the doors for the anti-witchdoctor stance of the Legio Maria.

How do they confront the demonic forces which bring sickness? Donald Jacobs explains their attitude and ritual for exorcism:

The Legion of Mary... is rather typical of the confrontationists. They exorcise in the following manner. The community gathers around the person who is possessed and who is now the object of the exorcism. They require that the person bring all medicines, amulets and other objects which he used in occult practices. These are then burned in the presence of the one to be exorcised while the community of faith kneel and recite the rosary and the Catena. While in prayer, the priests pass a rosary over various parts of the body of the possessed. The possessed then goes into convulsions and begins to speak in tongues. The officials rebuke the spirit and order it out of the person. Dialogue with the spirit or spirits ensues until as a result of communal prayer the spirit announces its departure. If a spectator also trembles and begins to speak in tongues during the rite, he, too, is exorcised. If the spirit returns to someone already exorcised, the person, in order to maintain a resistance to the threatening spirit, is required to join the healers and the exorcists and help others who are sick and possessed. If possession persists, it could indicate that a sick person is living in a demon-infested situation. The solution is to move away (Jacobs, p. 182).

Kombo points out some important details of exorcism missed by Jacobs:

They do not do any preparation prior to exorcism. No steps are taken to ascertain the actual possession by demons; it is simply assumed that all non-Legios are possessed. In the process, the name of Jesus is mysteriously omitted and where it is mentioned it almost always refers to Baba Messias. No confession of sin is required, and no prayer is made for God to fill the person with the power and the protection of the Holy Spirit (Kombo, p. 4).

### *Clothing*

Another well known distinctive of the Legio Maria is their colorful clothing. Every Legio adherent wears clothing of a particular colour (or colours) to identify himself or herself with certain saints and/or angels. The colours indicate a function in the church and/or that a particular "angel" has appeared to the adherent and offers protection. This angel's or saint's protection is invoked and acknowledged publicly by the actual wearing of the colour. For example, a Legio Maria in a red cloak is an exorcist of the order of Michael or Gabriel, and a woman in purple clothing is the Legio Maria equivalent of a Catholic nun.

### *Death*

The Legio adherents have a peculiar mix of Catholic and syncretistic teachings about death and the afterlife. Aoko states:

Abraham our grandfather is in charge of all inspections of the dead. Whosoever dies all over the world, must pass through "Got Kalvari" in South Nyanza Kenya to be inspected by Abraham. Each soul is checked and assigned its respective place according to the kind of life the person led on earth. Others go to purgatory, others to hell, and others to heaven. We the Legio Maria can pray to God until we are told where our person has gone. If he has gone to hell or purgatory, we then can pray for his/her restoration into heaven (Aoko interview)

### **The Attractions of the Legio Maria**

What attractions does the Legio Maria offer to its adherents? First, the movement is attuned to traditional fears, needs and aspirations. For example, it wages a fierce anti witchcraft campaign, as the fear of magic plays a large part in the thinking of the Luo, even of the Christians. Gaudencia Aoko was particularly strong in this area, as the *Reporter* issue of 17 July 1964 points out:

Gaudencia refuses to recognize that the witchdoctors . . . have supernatural powers. But ever since she went about preaching, converting thousands, and rising to become the unofficial leader of the sect, the main plank of her social message has been that witchdoctors are evil, and that for too long they have extorted money from simple Africans.

The message has had significant results. Audiences of thousands have had their fears of witchdoctors broken, scores of witchdoctors have been dragged to her meetings where she has publicly smashed their magic gourds, fed their magic bones to the dogs, scattered their cowrie shells to the winds (p. 17).

Further, as Dirven notes of the Legio Maria faith:

It also promises healing from physical and mental diseases—and the Luo suffer greatly from real or imagined diseases—not by means of native medicine or rituals, nor through western medical facilities, but by prayer, communal rituals, hypnotic trance and exorcism by which devils or evil spirits, the causes of sickness, are expelled (Dirven, "Protest", p. 131).

Second, important in the attractiveness of the group is the fact that, though it claims to be open to all, it is largely composed of Nilotic Luo (Turner, p. 48). Thus, the Luo who join are joining a group that is both new and old. The newness adds an enticing freshness, while there is enough ethnic "oldness" to avoid a major dislocation. As a further factor in unifying the adherents, the movement is organised into smaller local groups where love, brotherhood and mutual aid reign; where personal and meaningful spiritual ministrations can take place; where even the half-educated can obtain positions of leadership; where social misfits may gain acceptance and prestige by tongue-speaking or other signs of 'Spirit'-possession; where spontaneous prayer, full participation and mutually agreed policies make one's membership significant. (Dirven, "Maria", p. 131).

Third, the group claims to be both African and Catholic. It is reported that Gaudencia Aoko said:

We got the key to heaven from Jesus not Rome. Foreign missionaries just cannot understand the heart of the African people. We differ from them in that we believe that we all pray direct to God even though we are Africans. We get the key to heaven from Jesus, not from Rome (Aoko, cited by Kimulu, p. 16).

One bishop, Tobias Ayieta, said, "We are still Catholics although we don't have anything to do with the Roman Catholics for we are Catholics in Africa and not Catholics in Rome. There is a big difference between Africa and Italy" (Kimulu, p. 16).

Though there can be no doubt of the Catholic leanings of the group, its preoccupation with deliverance from witchcraft, its healing services, its trances, prophecies and spirit possession, its avoidance of pork, smoking, drinking and dancing, its acceptance of polygamists, all suggest that its essential character is far from being decisively dependent on its Catholic origins (Shorter, pp. 177-8).

James Kombo concurs with this, writing that the "Catholicity" of the Legio Maria is really only a surface veneer covering of a very traditional mindset:



A casual view of this "dini" lets an observer compliment the way it is attuned to the traditional Luo. A careful examination through the glasses of the Bible on the other hand sees it as merely employing the Catholic forms of worship to resuscitate the religious past of the Luo (Kombo, p. 1).

Generally, the group offers the most to lapsed or marginal Catholics who have ethnic affinities with the Luo, though it has moved in a more Protestant direction since its founding (Barrett, *Schism*, p. 259).

#### Questionable Practices of Legio Maria

There are several practices of the Legio Maria which are questionable at best for the committed Christian. As with many cult leaders, Ondeto maintains a lavish lifestyle while exhorting his followers to live in all simplicity. Throughout the history of the group, there have been incidents, allegations, and actual judicial proceedings against some of the excesses practiced by the adherents. First, the Legio Maria early on ran into trouble with the newly independent Kenyan government. These problems came because the movement generally assumed a spirituality that tended towards ignoring governmental directives to work for the development of the nation, and tended towards ignoring or disobeying rules and regulations, including defying a ban on public meetings, not seeking official registration, avoiding tax payments, etc. (Dirven, "Maria", pp. 153, 181-96). Dirven points out:

They attributed a great value to prayer, but their time consuming journeys to prayer-meetings led to a serious neglect of family obligations and economic participation. Moreover their excessive reliance on the efficacy of prayer caused them to disregard ordinary human prudence in the fields of education, medical care and material preoccupations. In their view God would provide for everything as long as they kept praying (Dirven, "Maria", p. 187).

Second, there was trouble over adherents writing threats to people who disagreed with them. Even Ondeto himself indulged in this, allegedly informing one African priest "that an angel would kill him if he said Mass. In fact, Simeon was once taken to court for sending a threatening letter to a sub-Chief" (Dirven, "Maria", pp. 152-3).

Third, there were constant problems with allegations of sexual misconduct against both the leaders and the followers. Though many of the allegations cannot be ultimately proven true, there were definite cases of abuse. For example, one prominent leader was imprisoned for three years for defiling two young girls (ages nine and ten) (Dirven, "Maria", pp. 153, 189).

Fourth, several attempted and failed miracles may be noted (Dirven, "Maria", pp. 229-30). In one, a boy was told to climb to the top of a ladder and take off to heaven like an angel; he obeyed, fell down and broke a leg. In another, a bishop in his robes allowed himself to be buried alive, as Simeon Ondeto was going to raise him up again after four days; when dug up, he was dead, his robes torn, his face scratched. A third involves a member being told to walk across the Nzoia river on a tree trunk and fly off like an angel; he drowned.

Fifth, and finally, it has been alleged from the beginning that the priests and exorcists use fraud to obtain possessions and food for themselves. They do so by telling people that spirits are hiding in a particular item (goat, chicken, calabash, maize meal, etc.), and that the only way to deal with the spirit is to remove its hiding place. They then cart off the item to "protect" the person who is plagued by the spirits living in it (see the *Reporter*, 17 July 1964, p. 18), feeding themselves in the process.

### Ministering to Adherents of Legio Maria

#### *Important Considerations*

As with most cults, the movement is as much a way of life as anything else (Dirven, "Maria", p. 287). Therefore, straight doctrinal argument will not of itself win a Legio Maria to Christ. The Legio Maria adherent presents three particularly challenging problems, each of which raises significant difficulties in ministering successfully to followers of Legio Maria.

First, the Legio Maria adherent has a strong sense of his ethnic identity tied up with the group. This is not just any religious multi-ethnic group, it is a religious Luo group. As Dirven notes:

The Luo society possessed a number of religious features that form a striking parallel with some characteristics of Revivalism and Pentecostalism: religious song and dance, the prestige of charisma, spirit possession and spiritual healing, the power of prophecy and the gift of tongues, the existence and influence of spirits, the importance of the religious leader, the social value of taboos, etc. Consequently the Luo were predisposed to be attracted by the more extravagant features of Revivalism and Pentecostalism without necessarily deriving the benefit from the more sober and genuine concepts of these movements (Dirven, "Maria", p. 127).

Second, the average Legio Maria adherent will have an emotional aversion to a Protestant approach. He feels comfortable in his apparent Catholicism, and to break away to a Protestant-looking group would require a tremendous change in attitude. He is not just a member of any cult, he is a member of a Catholic-related cult. Further, he is chronologically a pre-Vatican II Catholic.

As such, he might not have touched the pages of the Bible. All he knows of "Messias" is what he has heard from the elite class of the priests. He needs to know that the biblical concept of "Messiah" is foreign to the traditional Luo and that the Baba Messias is filling the role of the traditional heroic prophet. Bethwell Ogot, in explaining the traditional Luo roles assumed by Ondeto, notes:

Prophets usually start their new life with some erratic behaviour—long fasts or secluded life in a forest for a period of time. In traditional Luo society some of the prophets were medicinemen . . . . They were also non-conformists, although their non-conformism was sanctioned by the spirit. Most of them were experts in divination by dreams which they believed to be the best method for foreseeing the future. Above all, they provided a supernatural focus for major community activities which centred on them, by reason of the necessity for obtaining their sanction before they could be undertaken. All these characteristics of a traditional prophet in a Luo society are found in Ondeto. He is the successor of the famous Luo prophets such as Gor Mahia, Odera Sande and Obondo Mumbo (Ogot, cited in Ranger, p. 40).

Third, and finally, the Legio Maria is not just a group, but a movement, as Ogot points out:

We shall argue that the Maria Legio of Africa Church is not only a protest movement, but also a prophetic movement. We shall further contend that the significance of this Church lies in the fact that it functions as a transforming spiritual and social agency creating new communities capable of facing the challenges of the modern world (Ogot, cited in Ranger, p. 34).

In addition to these three factors, we should point out that the adherents of Legio Maria are not aggressive in reaching others for their cause. They capitalise on the fact that the society in their geographic domain has recognised them as attuned to the traditional focus, needs, and aspirations. As with the traditional Luo prophets, medicinemen, and diviners, they do not go to the people. Rather, the people come to them (and to their shrines). As such, they rarely share their faith until the counselee either calls for them or visits their shrine.

#### *Suggestions for Ministry*

In light of the above considerations, we suggest as an overall framework of approach the cultivation of a genuine *agape* love for the adherents of the Legio Maria. There is no doubt that they need our love and compassion. How can this be demonstrated? We will list here several suggestions.

First, we must not approach them in an overly critical fashion. If we are too critical, they will quickly become uncooperative. We must start by loving them as people, just as we are.

Second, we must exercise great caution in considering whether or not ever to visit their worship shrines. It would be better to place our emphasis on inviting them to our homes and going to their homes.

Third, the Legio Maria adherents will need our patience. If we want them to listen to us, we first must be willing to listen to what they have to say.

Fourth, we must seek ways of providing an alternative community for them. If we are unable to do this, it will be extremely difficult to win Legios to Christ. This will be especially difficult for non-Luos, and Christians who are of Luo descent should be willing to take on as a special calling the task of winning Legio Marias to Christ.

Fifth, once a solid relationship is established with an adherent, we suggest that it would be best to approach the doctrinal areas through the use of inductive studies of whole books of the Bible, rather than just arguing over selected passages. Possible biblical books which would be relevant with respect to Legio beliefs would be 1 and 2 Thessalonians (for their eschatology), Ephesians (for their ecclesiology) and Hebrews (for their angelology). We would suggest avoiding the prophetic books of Revelation and Daniel until a solid doctrinal base is established, since the symbolism of those books lends itself to misinterpretation more readily than the discussions in the epistles mentioned.

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# **THE QUEST FOR COOPERATION, RENEWAL AND RELEVANCE IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION<sup>1</sup>**

Yusufu Turaki

## **Cooperation**

The need for international cooperation in theological education cannot be over-emphasised, given the variety of traditions and models in operation today. The international scene has become confusing, chaotic and competitive. There are claims and counter claims of superiority/inferiority, effectiveness/ineffectiveness, relevance/irrelevance for the various traditions and models. Therefore it has become a matter of major importance to find a basis for cooperation in the field of theological education.

We must not forget that each of our approaches to doing theological education, as well as the underlying philosophy, is time-bound, and therefore subject to becoming outmoded, archaic and irrelevant. Our claims and our measures for success are also relative to particular contexts. These factors alone should be enough to impel us towards seeking cooperation in theological education. We need one another and the perspectives we each have to offer the other.

The primary goal of each model or approach to theological education is to attain some measure of effectiveness and relevance to the needs of the Christian community. The claims and counter-claims for effectiveness and relevance are usually based upon assumptions of the variant theological traditions. It is important that we take note of the fact that different models and approaches in theological education have underlying theological assumptions and biases. Furthermore, we could be classified in this respect not only by our theological traditions but also by the regions in which we are located. In seeking cooperation, it is therefore not enough for us to address the differing models and approaches for theological education; we must also address the underlying philosophies, assumptions and biases, if we are to foster better cooperation among ourselves. Otherwise these factors may unwittingly become a primary hindrance to cooperation and unity.

The quest we need is not, therefore, for a greater variety of methods or approaches in theological education. Nor are we called again to assert our theological distinctives. Rather our quest should be for an adequate basis for cooperation in the field of theological education. We need to achieve a



common theological understanding of our task and a unity of purpose in that task. We need to secure an agreed theological standard for gauging what we are doing practically in the field of theological education. Instead of competing, or claiming superiority for various approaches, we need to exchange views and share experiences, we need to understand one another and learn from each other.

Amidst the variety of theological traditions and methods, we nevertheless have a common task and a common purpose which we need to articulate. This will require that we take a hard look at our various theological assumptions and biases, our ideologies and hypotheses. No doubt these can serve as useful motivating factors which propel us and our traditions to excel, and which help us to forge our theological distinctives. However, these same factors are also at times obstacles towards cooperation among theological educators.

It is time for theological educators of the evangelical persuasion throughout the world to lay aside negative approaches and criticisms of one another and to turn positively towards ways and means of coming together in unity of purpose and cooperation, towards the enhancement of theological education in our world today.

As we face the challenges of cooperation in theological education, we will need to undertake the following tasks:

1. Address the proliferation of theological traditions, models, approaches, and philosophies in theological education.
2. Define our common task and purpose amidst the multiplicity of models and approaches.
3. Develop an adequate theological basis for inter-continental cooperation in theological education.

### **Theological Renewal and Relevance**

Theological renewal and relevance have increasingly become normative goals in theological education today, whether among the older traditions or among the newer ones. With the older traditions, the issue is that of renewal, the desire for self-reformation so as to be current and up-to-date. For the newer traditions, contextualization becomes the focus of attention as a means of achieving relevance. But too often these goals are pursued by a given theological tradition merely in order to carve out for itself a distinctive name in the field of theological education. It is important to examine the reasons why theological traditions seek renewal or relevance. Some reasons may not be genuinely theological or spiritual but merely sociological. A tradition may embark upon the quest for renewal or relevance out of fear that it might otherwise go out of business.

The older traditions sometimes disagree with the newer traditions of theological education over the importance of contextualization. Although contextualization as much as renewal is aiming at the innovative use of theological methods for relevance and effectiveness, sometimes contextualization is given an unfair critique by the older traditions. The war of words between the older traditions and the newer ones has been one of the major factors impeding our march towards cooperation in the field of theological education.

Theological renewal and contextualization should not be pursued without good theological grounds for doing so. On what theological grounds should we seek for renewal or contextualization in theological education? A model or approach can be said to be outmoded, irrelevant or ineffective when it is adjudged deficient in meeting the needs of the church and society. This could however imply many things: that the method used might have outlived its usefulness; that the philosophy behind the method is no longer useful or relevant; that the theological tradition is no longer attractive, or has less prospect of commanding theological respect; or that the theological or philosophical assumptions underlying the tradition are no longer tenable.

As we face the quest for theological renewal and relevance, we will need to undertake the following tasks:

1. Reassess our theological traditions, methods, models and philosophies in the light of modern challenges within our given contexts.
2. Make some necessary changes and adjustments in our various theological traditions, whether old or new, in order more adequately to address the needs of both the church and society.
3. Evaluate the effectiveness and relevance of the given traditions and methods in theological education within each given context.

#### Church-School Dichotomy

Theological educators need also to examine critically both the historical development and the theological implications of the dichotomy frequently apparent between the church and the theological school. This requires that theological educators define more carefully the place and role of the church in theological education, and equally the place and role of the theological school within the church. The dichotomy between the church and the theological school has become in the present time a serious theological issue. Instead of being complimentary and supportive of each other, they are becoming belligerents.

The unfortunate pattern of dichotomy is bound up with an apparent differentiation of roles in process between church and school. It is a historical fact that theological schools are products of the church. After centuries of growth and development, a differentiation of roles has emerged between the church and

the theological school. Each has increasingly assumed for itself a peculiar role to play in doing theology. In consequence, a state of rivalry and competition has developed over the question of who has a rightful monopoly on the art and practice of theology. The position between the two has almost become that of the church *versus* the theological school.

There has also been an increasing lack of cooperation between the church and the theological school in the actual art of doing theology. The fact that the church does send personnel and resources to the school for purposes of theological training, or the fact that the theological school does groom and develop personnel for the church does not nullify what I am saying. The question has become which institution has the rightful prerogative in doing theology.

The church may criticise the theological school for doing theology in a way that is often irrelevant both to the historical and to the immediate experience of the church. The school may be producing a theology that is heavily theoretical without the practical touch based on the experience of the church. The theological school is also accused at times of encouraging theologians who are critical of the church in its historical traditions, theology, and practices. In consequence the school may be blamed for the founding of independent churches which can become protest movements against the traditional and mainline churches and their theologies.

Conversely, the theological school may at times criticise the church for being too traditional, doctrinaire, and oriented towards the past, with the result that it is unable to meet the needs of modern man. The church's theology and religious experience are sometimes labelled as archaic, outmoded and irrelevant to the needs of the day. Alternatively, some churches may have jettisoned the wealth of historical traditions usually associated with the church, including orthodoxy, liturgy and worship styles and the wealth of historical experience, and thereby invite the censure of the theological school. Such churches may then become too modern, and in consequence represent nothing more than a disenchanting, non-conformist, free movement cut off from its historical roots and focused instead upon an immediate personal, existential experience. In such cases, the question is not of "right theology" but of "existential theology." The proliferation of the "Holy Ghost churches" in Africa in many cases come out from this sort of theological background.

The failure of theological educators to articulate clear definitive roles for both the church and the theological school has over the years led to an unhealthy differentiation of theological roles. This however, does not necessarily mean that the theologians of the church or those of the theological school do not have a clear idea, vision, or mission regarding their institutional roles. It is only that each has its own and thereby tends to go its own way, doing its own thing.

Both the church and the theological school are liable to fall into one of two extremes: doing theology by the measure of orthodoxy and tradition, or doing theology by the measure of personal experience as a protest against tradition. Both isolationism and adventurism are productive of many fallacies and pitfalls in doing theology, whether for the church or for the theological school. The glorification, isolation and further differentiation of the roles of the church and the theological school in doing theology seriously endanger the unity of Christ's body in doing theology. The roles of the church and the theological school should be worked out and experienced as complimentary.

The problem of the dichotomy between church and theological school, and the dangerous differentiation of roles, require that we undertake the following tasks:

1. Examine the historical development of theological education, especially the differentiation of roles and the dichotomy between the church and the theological school.
2. Evaluate areas of strength and weakness in the assumed roles for each, and the theological implications of the dichotomy, together with the resulting competition, isolationism, and assertions of autonomy in doing theology.
3. Work to integrate the roles of the church and the theological school in the field of theological education.

#### **Regional Models and Approaches**

Theological education today has become increasingly regional in outlook, and it is important that we examine the implications of this regionalisation. We can indeed move from the worship of models and approaches to the worship of regionalism in theological education, or we can move from traditional theological identities to regional identities.

I must draw attention to these regional patterns because they can develop their own mind-set about theological education. Regional perspectives have their own biases and assumptions which may contribute either positively or negatively to theological education. I will divide the world of theological education into three broad regions, namely, the Third World region; the North American-British region; and the Continental European region. The primary purpose for doing this is to underscore the need for cooperation in theological education across the whole geographical spectrum of theological education.

##### ***A. The Third World Region***

This region is represented mainly by the theologians of Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and Africa. The overriding focus in doing theology is theological contextualization. In this region, much attention is given both to

the *method* of doing theology and to the nature of *theology* itself. The means of doing theology, that is, the method, models, and approaches are to be made appropriate and relevant. Theology itself is to be made more understandable and relevant. The art of making theology relevant requires training in theological skills and development of theological resources. The theological educator has to become skillful in the art of theological discernment, innovation, creativity, and adaptation. The context within which theology has to be applied assumes greater importance, in terms of its world view, social values and social structures.

With these major emphases in mind, the theological practitioners usually refrain from using wholesale the older theological models and methods, but instead adapt these, or else invent and develop their own. This theological mindset usually produces highly active and vocal pioneers and apostles in the field of theological education. Some of these theological activists pursue this bent as a means of making theology accessible and acceptable to the peoples of the region, while others do so from a spirit of protest and pride over against older theological traditions.

What features prominently in this region is the yearning for theological and church leadership training. The means for doing so rely heavily upon the types of theological practitioners, and the models and methods used and the available resources. The founding of new theological schools is usually based upon the desire to experiment with a new theological method or model or philosophy. Sometimes such developments appear critical and unaccommodating to the older traditions and this posture makes it quite difficult for cooperation in the field of theological education.

#### *B. The North American-British Region*

This theological region is represented by English-speaking North America, Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. The recent emphasis in this region has increasingly been on renewal of the older theological traditions and institutions. The desire to reform and renew theological traditions and to make them relevant to the contemporary society has received much attention. Most advocates of theological renewal of this region stress the need for theological adjustment to the modern conditions of the industrial society. Theological traditions, methods, approaches and assumptions are being critically analysed and evaluated.

The major stress here is to convince older theological traditions and institutions of the need to develop a sensitive heart and a listening ear both to the needs of the older theological traditions and institutions and to modern industrial society. A concern for sensitivity to the needs of the Third World region has also been evident. This dual concern for adaptation to the theological needs both of this region and of other regions has preoccupied the minds

of theological practitioners of this region. As a result, new methods and approaches to theological education are being formulated. Theological apostles of change and renewal are growing in numbers in this region.

Also new products need new markets, and hence the overriding emphasis of putting the new manufactured models and methods for theological education on sale to other regions. Putting such products on sale to other regions is sometimes the cause of competition, resentment, and suspicion among theological practitioners, thereby creating difficulties for cooperation in theological education.

### *C. The Continental European Region*

This theological region is represented by continental Europe and to some extent by the Afrikaaner society of South Africa. This region has three basic emphases: theological retreat, theological reinterpretation of the older traditions, and a search for theological identity or status.

The theological retreat is a movement away from traditionalism, either out of suspicion or out of a desire to flee into a world of "theological asceticism". This retreat from much older theological traditions controlled by the state or national universities or state churches has often found expression among European evangelicals in efforts to found small and obscure seminaries and Bible colleges. This is indeed a search for new theological identity or status in the midst of much older resentful traditions.

Theological reinterpretation of the older traditions is also evident as emphasis is placed upon a "Christian world view", led by Dutch theologians. Secularisation of the industrial society and of Christendom itself is to be overcome by the new understanding and interpretation of the Christian world view. The theological retreat into the world of small things, the isolation, is to strengthen the search for a new theological identity and a new Christian status within the much older classical theological context.

The major contributions of this region to theological education are in its search for new theological identity, status, and freedom, and the reinterpretations of classical theological traditions. The benefits of these instincts need to be incorporated into theological education today.

### *D. Regional Biases and Assumptions*

The regional analysis of theological education today helps underscore that certain regional assumptions and biases do indeed influence how theology and theological education are understood and practised. Distinctive regional characteristics do sometimes generate competition and suspicions that militate against cooperation.

What is both necessary for us to do as theological educators who come from these various regions, and also essential for the better health of theological education, is to focus attention on some of the assumptions and biases which are liable to inhibit our efforts at cooperation. Our use of different methods and approaches in theological education in itself is not the cause for our lack of cooperation, but perhaps our biases and assumptions, our claims of superiority in what we are as theological educators and what we are doing within our theological traditions and regions, do hamper cooperation.

I now wish in the remaining sections of this paper to state briefly how we as theological educators can develop some practical approaches in forging cooperation.

### **Resources for Theological Education**

The present acquisition, development and utilisation of theological resources reflects very much the need for cooperation in theological education today. How theological resources are shared among theological educators, and among various traditions and regions, must become the focus of careful reflection. By theological resources I mean the human resources (administrators, teachers and students), facilities (buildings, equipment, furniture, libraries, textbooks), finances, and curricular models, indeed everything that is necessary for doing theological education.

In terms of resources for theological education, some regions are more advanced than others, and this is why cooperation between regions has to be cultivated. For the sake of clarity, let me divide the world of resources for theological education into two broad areas, namely: the traditional North American-British and Continental European regions on the one hand, and the Third World on the other hand. Resources for theological education in the former regions are far more advanced than for the latter. The former are in a position of having an abundance of resources for theological education, and are also capable of exporting those resources. The Third World region in contrast has far less developed resources and is easily susceptible to a careless importation of resources.

The fundamental question therefore before theological educators of all regions is how best to help the less advanced areas to develop their own resources, and how best to help them import resources in a manner that does not inhibit growth. Since the indiscriminate importation of resources must generate legitimate fears, how best can such resources be developed locally? This is the challenge before theological educators internationally today. And this requires cooperation and unity of purpose among traditions and regions in the development of such resources for theological education. Our concern should be not only how to create and acquire these resources but also how to apply and adapt them strategically across the spectrum of regions and tradi-

tions. This however requires our possession of theological wisdom in the search for effective cooperation. It is only by this means that we can successfully assist one another in the quest towards renewal and relevance.

One practical way of achieving the goal of sharing between geographical regions and among diverse theological traditions would be by cooperative research on the whole question of resources, how they may be effectively acquired, developed and utilised in theological education. For example, variant socio-economic or socio-political values can act as hindrances in the development of such resources in various regions. The cooperative identification of such impediments could help to us in making better judgments in the application of shared resources. What to do with such obstacles or how to overcome them could be the focus of combined research.

And when we discuss resources for theological education, we must come at last to curriculum. I would like to focus more particular comment on this critical resource.

### **Theological Curriculum**

All talk about renewal and contextualization is at bottom a discussion about theological curriculum. The curriculum incarnates philosophies, methods, assumptions and bias. It also reflects the degree to which relevance or renewal is being sought.

There are many approaches to curriculum development, especially in respect to the quest for theological renewal and contextualization. This aspect of the question is not my major concern here. Rather at this point I am interested in what theological educators do with whatever curriculum they might have developed, and especially how that relates to our quest for cooperation in theological education.

What we do with theological curricula can enhance our cooperation with one another or can tear us apart. As I see it, we can do two things with curriculum. On the one hand we can develop it ourselves and export it wholesale; on the other hand we can import it wholesale or with adaptations. This involves transactions between regions and between traditions, and the influence of regional or traditional assumptions on curricular exportation and importation. The call for theological cooperation seeks critically to assess and correct such influences. Theological educators today have to address the question of exportation and importation of theological curricula. The sharp reaction of certain regions or traditions to such transactions between regions and traditions is usually directed against the operation of theological paternalism within the transaction.

I have observed with great satisfaction that there is an increasing move away from paternalism to partnership and cooperation in the field of theological



education and in the development of appropriate curricula. It is no longer necessary to dispute over whether curricula can be developed locally. Already we have seen great strides in this area, especially in some Third World regions where the emphasis is upon self-effort and contextualization. But if this in turn becomes a drive towards seclusion or isolationism, then the results will not be healthy. Theology, no matter how good it is, should not be done in seclusion or isolation. It requires to be ventilated, cross-examined and shared. This principle is sufficiently important that I would like to elaborate on it briefly in conclusion.

#### Universality of Theology

Theology seeks to proclaim a Universal God who transcends His created universe. This universal principle in theology, as defined by biblical Christology, offers the basis for our cooperation in theological education. Reducing theology to a particular context has the danger of producing parochial theology, and of ignoring the need for theology to transcend contexts.

In addition, when parochialism, relativism and contextualism become ultimate and exclusive commitments in theology, we are in danger of losing a theological basis for our cooperation across traditions and regions. Neither context nor tradition should be absolutised, for they are only ways of interpreting and expressing theology, and are themselves subject to fault and defect. It is when we are working in cooperation that we can evaluate critically our own existential positions. Through shared experience and exchange of views we can be able to see the defects of our various regional and traditional perspectives. If we do not have a universal principle permitting us to judge our regional and traditional theologies, then we are doomed to relativism, traditionalism and contextualism, and our theologies become only parochial expressions.

The task before us today as theological educators is that of using the biblically-defined universal principle of theology to address and assess our theologies, our traditions and our contexts. We need to reflect in this light on what we are doing in theological education and in theologising within our regions, comparing and contrasting the variant methods and approaches across the spectrum. And we also need in this light to examine critically our theological assumptions, biases and hypothesis through cooperative interaction.

Our quest for theological renewal and relevance will come to fruition if we will cultivate theologically-based cooperation in theological education. This is where we need God's wisdom. "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously, to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him" (James 1.5). It is my prayer that in our day theological educators from different backgrounds, traditions and regions will be able to find a basis for sharing, for cooperation and for unity of purpose in our common quest for theological renewal and relevance.

## ENDNOTE

<sup>1</sup>Adaptation of a paper delivered to an international gathering of theological educators in July 1989 in Manila, Philippines, during the Lausanne II International Congress for World Evangelization.

## **EXTENDING THE FENCE: SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF TEE IN AFRICA<sup>1</sup>**

Phillip Turley

As is well known, one primary value emphasised by theological education by extension (TEE) is that the learner should apply and practice the principles which have been learned. Rather than simply memorising cognitive material for mental safe-keeping, the learner is to be exposed to, to comprehend, and then to utilise biblical principles in life and ministry as a result of TEE study.

Now certainly if those of us who are TEE administrators in Africa expect this type of behaviour from our students, then it is incumbent upon us to model the same process in our own responsibilities. We too need more carefully to apply and practice principles that we have learned as we look to the future of TEE in Africa.

The first ACTEA All-Africa TEE Consultation took place in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1987, jointly sponsored by ACTEA (the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa) and by the TEE coordinator for AEAM (the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar). At that time it was our privilege to benefit from the teaching of Dr. James Plueddemann, who stressed the need to integrate cognitive and practical learning. Mr. Kiranga Gatimu described the characteristics of distance education and addressed key problems hindering TEE, including the issue of Africanisation of staff. Rev. George Foxall reviewed the history of TEE and recommended the benefits of continental linkage and support services. Dr. Cornelius Olowola called attention to conflicts between TEE and residential programmes and recommended closer cooperation. Dr. Paul Bowers spoke about accreditation and other methods of establishing academic credibility for TEE. At the end of this first ACTEA All-Africa TEE Consultation, the participants did some brainstorming to identify practical things that could be done cooperatively in support of TEE throughout Africa.

The 1987 TEE consultation has had some notable results. The consultation concluded with the formal launching of ACTEA's TEE services. TEE programmes were for the first time allowed to secure regular "correspondent" status within ACTEA's continental membership. This was a major step

forward in the search for greater cooperation between TEE and residential programmes. In fact, it represented a symbolic integration of TEE into the mainstream of theological education in Africa. Structurally TEE programmes have now become a part of the accrediting community for theological education throughout Africa. We are no longer on the outside looking in, but are members of the fraternity.

ACTEA has also responded to our needs by launching the newsletter *TEE IN AFRICA*, which is now in its fourth year of publication. Last year ACTEA produced the new *Directory of TEE Programmes in Africa*. ACTEA also organised a TEE workshop during the ACTEA All-Africa Theological Educators Conference in Limuru, Kenya, in 1990. TEE administrators participated in that conference on equal footing with staff from residential schools. coordinator a second continental TEE consultation, in sequel to the first.

But there is more, much more, that could be done cooperatively for TEE in Africa through the structures provided for us by ACTEA. Let me, therefore, review some of the challenges given in 1987 which we have not yet sufficiently accomplished in the intervening years. Perhaps the time has now come for TEE personnel in Africa to apply and to practice what we at that time learned together. Perhaps a worthy goal for the second consultation in 1991 would be to find effective ways for cooperative action to flow from the cooperative reflection already achieved.

May I begin by highlighting two particular emphases of the 1987 consultation which seem especially worthy of attention as we look in 1991 to the future of TEE in Africa.

### 1. Enhancing the TEE Seminar

In the 1987 consultation Dr. Plueddemann introduced the participants to a bi-polar description of values which influence educational philosophy. On one side he set a system of Platonic idealism which stresses the world of ideas and abstract forms; on the opposite side he set a system of Aristotelian realism which stresses sense perception. He then built a paradigm of the resulting educational philosophies using the familiar rail fence model. The rail fence was described as having two horizontal rails with a series of vertical posts connecting them.

Traditional liberal arts institutions, which primarily teach the intellectual and artistic heritage of the past, are based on a top-rail value system. Bottom-rail educators are more concerned with professionalism, personal relevance, and the needs of society. Top-rail educators are subject-matter centred, while bottom-rail educators are student or society-centred. Academic rationalism is top-rail, while behaviourism and social reconstructionism are examples of

bottom-rail systems. Top-rail educators value the unchanging ideas of the humanities, while bottom-rail educators value using social science to solve practical problems. Top-rail educators emphasise the study of traditional academic disciplines, logic, great ideas, great books, and the development of the mind. Bottom-rail educators emphasise empirical and experimental study of the world, society, and the individual.

The aims of top-rail education are to teach unchanging ideas and to develop rational thinking in the student. The aims of bottom-rail education are to provide jobs, promote individual self-actualisation or to enhance the quality of society.

Top-rail educational methods challenge the student to wrestle with ideas using the Socratic method of conceptual dialogue. Bottom-rail methods stimulate students to discover their inner selves, to learn skills need to earn a living, or to train for a profession needed by society.<sup>2</sup>

The central contention of Dr. Plueddemann was that both values are legitimate and that the two must be properly integrated in order to achieve an effective educational system. To construct an educational system solely on one model or on the other would be inappropriate. Merely to mix various methods from both systems would also be deficient. There must be a true *integration* of the models. Thus it is not sufficient that students study theology in the classroom during the weekdays, and then have ministry experiences on the weekend. Rather, theological study must inform ministry experience and ministry experience must inform theological study. A dynamic dialogue must take place as the student compares his theological studies and his experiences. Each must be designed to “dove-tail” into the other. This dynamic dialogue represents the posts which link the rails in the rail fence paradigm. The posts connect the cognitive and the experimental emphases of education, providing true integration of the respective values.

Theology must inform pastoring skills. The Word and the Spirit do not work without each other. Absolutes of special revelation do not contradict the specifics of general revelation. All Scripture is not only *God-breathed* (top-rail), but is also *useful* (bottom-rail), “for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16,17).

The two rails must not be separated. The two rails are parts of the same system, and must be intentionally held together in fruitful tension. Theory and practice are parts of the same bigger picture, but because of our limited understanding, they are often in tension

with each other. Good theory corrects faulty practice, and healthy practice gives a better understanding of incomplete theory. While there is an inevitable tension between theory and practice, there is nothing as practical as good theory; and reflective practice will modify and strengthen theory.<sup>3</sup>

In discussing this rail fence paradigm, Dr. Plueddemann provides us with a very useful statement of the aim of theological education: "The aim of theological education is to develop leaders to build and strengthen the church. Leaders are developed as they interact (the fence post) with the Word of God (the top-rail), and with the needs of the church (the bottom-rail), in such a way that God is glorified."<sup>4</sup> Therefore, Dr Plueddemann contends, our theological educational methods must accomplish three things: "They must teach important knowledge, stimulate quality experience, and compel critical interaction between knowledge and experience."<sup>5</sup>

In Dr. Plueddemann's application of this paradigm to TEE, he stated that the TEE learning materials provide the cognitive or theoretical input, represented by the top-rail. The TEE in-service component provides experimental practice, represented by the bottom-rail. And it is the TEE seminars which provide the necessary interaction between theory and practice, represented by the fence posts. His challenge to us was that, in light of his paradigm, we must emphasise the strategic integrative role of the *TEE seminar* within the larger TEE process, and that we must enhance our training for seminar leaders.

Seminar leaders must be equipped to guide the students in analysing both the input from the book and their experiences in ministry and life. The seminar leaders must help their students to see relationships and to build principles by which to live and serve that are both biblical and realistic.

I am delighted that progress has been made on the point of Dr. Plueddemann's challenge. Miss Margaret Thornton, formerly with the TEE programme of the Church of the Province of Kenya (Anglican), last year edited a new book titled *Training T.E.E. Leaders* (Nairobi: Evangel, 1990). The book is a syllabus which can be used in the classroom portion of a training course for seminar leaders. It provides useful information and guidance to anyone wishing to start, or to enhance, such a course for seminar leaders. It is based upon such courses offered at Daystar University College in Kenya, and includes material from several individuals who helped to teach those courses.

A substantive beginning is being made in emphasising the importance of providing adequate training for TEE seminar leaders. Those of us who are TEE administrators must look critically at our programmes and at the way that we treat the seminar leaders. Are we choosing the right people who are gifted for the work? Have we provided enough initial training to give them a good start in their work? Have they enjoyed supervision that both encourages them and helps them to discover weaknesses to be improved? Do we provide

continuing support, assistance and training? Are we offering motivation for them to do a good job? Do they know when they have done a good job and when they have done a poor job? We must take the practical materials and ideas presented at this consultation and seek ways of implementing them in our individual programmes.

## 2. Cultivating Cooperative Relationships

As we reflect on the future of TEE in Africa, we must also not neglect the warning which Dr. Olowola delivered in 1987. Dr. Olowola warned TEE leaders that if we intentionally divorce our programmes from the mainstream of theological education, then all of theological education, including TEE, will suffer.<sup>6</sup> He was not the first to sound this danger signal, but I fear that it needs sounding amongst us again.

The seeds of calamity were sown at the time of TEE's birth. It was common in the early years of TEE for enthusiasts to promote TEE through attack. Residential Bible schools and seminaries were routinely accused of weaknesses and failures in an effort to advance the TEE model. For instance, in Ross Kinsler's book, *The Extension Movement in Theological Education*, he makes the following statements:

But a few have suggested that our seminaries and Bible institutes are not even appropriate places in which to carry out theological education. They may in fact damage, thwart, and stifle the churches' natural capacity to grow and develop their own leaders and carry out a dynamic ministry to their own members and to society. The movement called theological education by extension has come on the horizon at this particular moment of history as an alternative model to the traditional schools of the past 150 years.<sup>7</sup>

"Damage, thwart, and stifle" are very strong words. They certainly are not the type of words with which to "win friends or influence enemies!" Yet these are the words used to describe the work of our co-labourers in theological education. In the process of building the case for TEE, residential ministry training is routinely characterised as elitist, cognitive-oriented, and self-defeating. Can we be surprised then that the result has been a cold—even hostile—reception of TEE by the traditional world of theological educators.

Even in Margaret Thornton's new book, TEE is explained by comparing it with residential Bible schools. While Thornton is careful to say that both forms of education are valid, in the comparison they are set off against one another<sup>8</sup>. It may seem innocent and harmless to describe TEE by means of comparisons with residential schools. In fact, is that not a common method of definition: to describe the unknown through comparisons with the known? Yet the lack of even-handedness in the way we routinely carry out this comparison of the

overcome. TEE and residential theological schools, therefore, have been viewed by many as separate entities. It is as though they are two separate trees rather than two branches of the same tree; or two competing ball teams rather than two members of the same team.

If TEE programmes in Africa today wish to move forward, many of them will need to move backward first. They will have to abandon their isolationist stance and rejoin the larger family of theological education. They will need to repair damaged relationships. TEE must acknowledge that it is not an alternative to residential theological schools, but an auxiliary of such schools. TEE together with residential schools, with correspondence courses, and with short term seminar programmes are all complementary facets of theological education.

But the blame does not lie solely at the feet of TEE promoters either. From the beginning the proponents of TEE have suffered heavy opposition from established residential programmes. Tradition has always been a cherished term within scholarly circles. To break with tradition and think of variant forms of educational method has been anathema. Often schools have concentrated on looking at the academic calibre of their graduates and have neglected to reexamine the current state of the church and its leadership needs.

A process has begun, however, in which residential programmes have had to acknowledge that training for ministry involves the acquisition of skills which must be practised, and not just acquisition of knowledge to be retained. They are coming to accept that education cannot be static or it will become irrelevant. It must take into account the pressures and concerns of the day as well as the traditions of the past. Our modern institutions, while they teach "timeless truths", must also reflect the realities of the cultures and economies within which they function. Many schools today have restructured their curricula to include such practical innovations as "term out" programmes and ongoing student ministry (in-service training). The influence of TEE ideology has been salutary.

Extension programmes, like residential programmes, represent merely one of many educational techniques open to us. Between these two models and beyond them is a spectrum of variations. As we look at the training needs of the church, it is inappropriate to ask, "Should we build a residential school or establish an extension programme?" Rather we must ask what kind of educational models can we construct to meet the specific leadership needs of our particular church group. Perhaps none of the forms so far deployed in Africa will be appropriate for a given church. A hybrid of several educational forms may be required. What works in Guatemala may not necessarily work in Kenya; and what works in Kenya may not necessarily work in Mozambique. What works for the Anglican churches may not work for the indigenous



What works for the Anglican churches may not work for the indigenous churches. And perhaps even within one church group *several* educational models will need to be employed in order to train the variety of peoples needed for ministry within that structure and setting.

The future for theological education in Africa lies in cooperation and innovation. Many TEE and residential schools have benefited from relationships that provide mutual enhancement. Most TEE administrators are products of residential schools. Residential schools have provided venues for training TEE seminar leaders. TEE programmes in turn have provided sensitive and ministry-oriented pastors whom residential schools can use as supervisors for their term-out students. I personally have worked within both models and have found that TEE has enhanced my ability to design productive courses and to communicate with students effectively in the residential setting.

The time has come for us to seek even greater opportunities of cooperation. Indeed, it is time for TEE to return to the fold. Not that TEE must drop its emphases; rather it must lose its biases. Theological educators of every background must begin together to examine anew the challenges that confront the training of men and women to serve their Saviour effectively. This means we must do several things.

(a) We need to integrate our educational reflection. Both TEE programmes and residential schools need to search aggressively together for educational methods which are *effective* in producing the desired goals, and also *efficient* in utilising the local resources, both cultural and financial. We cannot say that we have already arrived. Perhaps, we have achieved a step in the journey, but there is a great distance yet to climb in cooperative reflection.

TEE directors should regularly scheduled times of reflection for their TEE staff; not just business meetings or training sessions in TEE method, but open thinking and analysis. ACTEA's *TEE IN AFRICA* newsletter should be actively used by all TEE directors to communicate ideas and methods which have worked or failed in their own programmes, and to keep in touch with wider horizons. TEE directors need also to read broadly in the area of educational theory and practice. Our reading must not be limited to TEE only. We must participate in other educational programmes of various styles. We can do this by attending such events as the ACTEA All-Africa Theological Educators Conference. Staff of residential schools and TEE programmes could share in research projects to evaluate the needs of the church and the best methods of meeting those needs.

(b) We also need to integrate our educational structures and processes. We must search for ways to build bridges between TEE and residential schools. It is good to share instructors between programmes so that teachers from a residential school also teach TEE classes, and vice versa. The TEE programme with which I was previously involved conducted an annual

teacher's conference. This conference followed a rota system of meeting at our denomination's various residential schools and utilising staff from them to speak in the conference. If your programme is an institution independent from any residential school, then include a school principal as a part of your governing board. A TEE programme can introduce variety and also help in bridge building by offering special seminar courses taught by staff of a residential school. Because relationships and situations differ so greatly from one group to another, it is important that each of us uses creativity in discovering appropriate bridges for our particular setting; my "bridges" may not be long enough for your gaps!

(c) ACTEA also should play a greater role in building cooperation. I beg ACTEA to be sensitive to the effects that pursuing accreditation has on residential schools. Whenever the staff of a school begin to consider accreditation, they suddenly become very conservative about educational cooperation. More than once, prospective joint ventures between TEE and residential schools have died due to a fear by residential schools that such ventures might compromise chances of accreditation. These fears may be falsely based, but they affect relationships all the same. The accreditation process for residential schools needs to include a challenge to the school to evidence sensitivity to the variety of training needs and to the resource limitations of the local church. Schools should be required to demonstrate during the accreditation process that their programme is taking its milieu into consideration and has a dynamic relationship both to the church it serves and to other relevant programmes for church-leadership training, including the non-traditional programmes. Connected to this should be an indication that the school is involved in creative review of educational methods open to it. If residential schools know that ACTEA has adopted a set of standards for TEE, and if they know that ACTEA will hold them accountable for progress in the development of appropriate educational methodologies responsive to contextual needs, then they will cease to fear joint relationships with TEE. More than just tolerating innovation, ACTEA should be rewarding it. ACTEA's encouragement for theological education to experiment in developing productive teaching methods appropriate to the African context will prove important for the future of the church.

(d) Above all, relationships of mutual respect must be cultivated. TEE should seek to complement and enhance the overall programme of theological education in our denominations, not to divide and polarise. We must be wise in our descriptions of TEE and in our manner of promoting it. We must look for opportunities to refer potential students to the residential schools. We must speak highly and honestly of the merits of residential schools when the occasion arises. We must look for opportunities to build personal relationships that could open doors to more cooperative professional relationships.

I have concentrated on two challenges from the 1987 TEE consultation which I believe deserve our special attention as we face the future of TEE in Africa. It is not possible to do justice to all of the other concepts presented during the 1987 consultation, nor to all the recommendations which were shared during that consultation's closing discussion. However, I would like to suggest several additional ways in which we might consider moving forward in the enhancement of TEE in Africa.

### 3. Accreditation and Credibility

In 1987 a paper was given on the topic of accreditation for TEE. It is an area of major concern for many programmes, and has been raised on several occasions. As new and varied TEE programmes spring up, the scene has become even more confused. The problem includes questions as simple as definitions and equivalence of terms. But it also includes issues as difficult as measuring student progress and the transfer of credits among TEE programmes and between TEE programmes and residential programmes.

Let me recommend that we should first explore the issue of standards for TEE. After a document laying out standards is produced, then we could address the second stage of defining the accreditation process. I would suggest that a committee on standards should be commissioned, and that they be given adequate time to do individual research before coming together as a group to compile and discuss their findings. Then a draft document could be prepared for evaluation at the next TEE Consultation, and presented to ACTEA for consideration and action. Following adoption of these standards by ACTEA, the committee could then be charged with addressing the accreditation procedures through a similar process.

### 4. TEE Consultancy

TEE programmes involve great complexity of methods and relationships. Many TEE programmes have begun and died because the initiators were unaware of the potential points of conflict between the system they chose and the setting in which they worked. Often those who start TEE programmes are not fully aware of the variety of materials and methods available to them. As a result, they begin a style or level of programme that is not best for their situation. They don't know where to go for help. At other times an established TEE programme is faltering and the director wants help—fast—to understand and hopefully correct whatever is ailing the programme. But where can one turn for such help?

I believe that TEE in Africa would be *greatly* served if ACTEA could provide one or more individuals who, together with a few TEE directors, could serve as a TEE Consultancy Team. In a fashion similar to the ACTEA accreditation teams that visit and evaluate schools, the TEE Consultancy Team could visit

and evaluate ailing TEE programmes, or provide advice to churches and schools wishing to start TEE. The team would be a library of information and experience from which others could draw.

### **5. Education as a Curricular Course**

One great failure in theological education as a whole is that educational philosophy and method are seldom taught within the curricula of our theological schools. Yet it is the very products of our theological institutions which return to *teach* in those institutions. They have learned theology and homiletics, but they often lack the educational theory and skills to pass on that knowledge effectively. ACTEA should require that theological institutions include courses on education which would cover a range of teaching methods, including TEE. This would strengthen all of our programmes.

In fact, education falls within the category of communication. Graduates of theological institutions are responsible not only to know good theology, but to communicate good theology effectively to their people. Those graduates must have more exposure and training in the use of communication methods. Communicating in an educational setting (whether residential or extension) requires good training. Let us begin to concentrate more in this area and be sure that our students are aware that there are many methods of teaching open to them.

### **6. Non-denominational TEE Programmes**

There exist in Africa a plethora of small church denominations, many of which could be characterised as African indigenous or independent churches. These churches often have lacked resources for maintaining residential schools. In addition, they sometimes are not even aware of the options for theological study. It has been recognised before that these churches, more than most others, could benefit from TEE programmes, and yet they do not.

I would recommend that non-denominational schools, which often have the reputation which secures academic credibility but lack the denominational ties that offend, become involved much more aggressively in providing extension courses and programmes for this part of the African Christian community. For instance, Daystar University College in Nairobi, Kenya, belongs to no denomination while serving many denominations. Their programme of study is held in high regard. If they were to offer their biblical studies (or other courses) by extension, many small, independent churches would benefit. For a large and credible school such as Daystar to begin an extension programme would also give greater credibility to extension as an educational method. Other schools would be encouraged to follow the example of a continental leader.

### 7. Centralised Administrative Services

Those TEE programmes that are small face great difficulty in the attempt to survive from day to day. Many small programmes in particular lack the resources to provide effective administration. There is no money for a secretary or for office expenses. Sometimes even the director is on a part-time basis. These programmes are unable to issue course certificates on time, maintain up-to-date and accurate student records, or respond quickly to inquiries from prospective students. In the end the students become discouraged and drop out, thereby eroding further the programme's ability to survive. Usually, the programmes are small because the denominations they serve are also small. Other factors may enter into the reason, but the result is the same—small programmes have a special problem in maintaining adequate administration.

If the resources of many small programmes could be pooled through a fee system, then a central office could provide administrative services to each of them. While the individual programmes could maintain their distinctives and set their own policy, the central office would process their paper work, issuing student certificates and providing regular reports. Some of the services that could be provided would include:

- (a) Furnishing all forms necessary to register students and to report their performance.
- (b) Maintaining a permanent student record file for each programme.
- (c) Issuing certificates with each programme's name on it and according to the standards they establish.
- (d) Issuing progress reports and statistics to each programme director at regular intervals.

There are several ways in which this central administration service could be organised. AEAM could establish this as a service through its TEE department. Or a major publisher of TEE learning materials, such as Evangel Publishing House in Nairobi, could provide this as an auxiliary service. In the case of the latter, book ordering could also be incorporated as part of the service. Or perhaps a TEE association, or a major, well-established TEE programme, could provide such a service.

### 8. Administration Training Courses

The process of TEE staff nationalisation often falters at the point of handing over administration. The new director has perhaps studied and even taught numerous TEE courses, but he has never been an administrator. He knows little about administration. Many programmes never make it as far as nationalisation, because the expatriate who started the TEE programme also lacked administrative skills. In one recent case known to me, an embarrassing decline in student enrolment was reversed in a very short time by the simple

expedient of reorganising and upgrading the administrative processes of the programme.

An intensive course on the subject of TEE administration should be a prerequisite for anyone appointed to serve as a TEE director. The course should be practical and detailed. Such a course could be offered on a short-term basis by a school such as Daystar University College in Nairobi, or by AEAM or ACTEA, or by one of the TEE associations, or by several of these acting in concert.

### **9. Fearless Finances**

During the 1987 TEE Consultation, Kiranga Gatimu commented that "Ninety per cent of the programmes rely on overseas financing."<sup>9</sup> Finances are supposed to be one of the advantages of TEE. TEE is touted as a cheaper alternative to residential schools. However, as we have all discovered, while TEE is perhaps cheaper, it is not cheap. Finances have been a problem for most of the TEE programmes in Africa. Yet, is it really the finances which are the main problem? Is it perhaps really a fear of finances?

I have often observed that while our students complain about the cost of the book, the serious students almost always pay it. Expatriates seem particularly susceptible to these complaints about cost. They often hold down charges by paying expenses from personal or mission funds. But is this fear of finance justified? I discovered in our TEE programme that it was not. We nearly tripled the cost of our programme through higher course fees and higher book costs during a very short period. Yet student enrolment increased rather than decreased. The programme has not yet reached the point of total self-subsistence, but it is much closer than a few years ago.

I would challenge TEE directors to make honest assessments of the genuine cost of running a programme. Begin to move charges closer to reality without apologising. If TEE is really the educational method for Africa, allow it to prove itself honestly. If students and the church value what they are receiving, then they will find a way to pay for it. If it is not valuable enough for them to pay that amount, then maybe we have the wrong programme.

### **10. Residential-based Extension Programmes**

Residential Bible schools in Africa do not always share all of the weaknesses of western schools. In fact, many of them are strong discipling communities. Often ministry involvement is an integral part of the school's programme. They sometimes demonstrate other strengths as well. Credibility from scores of successful graduates is not one of the least of these. A faculty of well educated individuals with a breadth of expertise is more often to be found in a residential programme than in an extension programme. And the resources of an extensive library should not be underestimated.

I believe that extension programmes in Africa should be built from a position of strength rather than one of weakness. Starting an independent institution is difficult under any circumstances. Beginning a free-standing TEE programme without any connections to existing and recognised institutions is needless frustration. A church planning to begin an extension programme would do well to ask their existing residential school to develop an extension division of its current programme. Obviously the church will need to make a commitment to expand the financial and personnel resources of the school, but the start-up cost will be less than otherwise. Such an extension programme would be able to draw upon the strengths of the existing staff, library, and administration. Then the extension programme will be seen not as competitive but as complementary.

### Conclusion

Many TEE programmes in Africa have taken the bold step of trying something new. Others have not. Those who reach beyond the traditions, the habits, the "tried and true" will usually prosper and grow. Stagnation is first of all a disease of the mind and secondly, a paralysis of method. Some of the ideas I have presented here will not work in your situation; others may. But, most of all, it is my prayer that the thinking of TEE administrators in Africa will be stimulated, that they will review the needs of their church constituency anew, and that they will stretch themselves to find better ways of meeting those needs. In this way we may have good hope for the future of TEE in Africa.

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from a keynote paper given at the ACTEA Second All-Africa TEE Consultation, held in Jos, Nigeria, 3-8 June 1991.

<sup>2</sup>James E. Plueddemann, "The Challenge of Excellence in Theological Education" (unpublished paper presented to the Nairobi Fellowship of Theological Colleges in Nairobi, Kenya, 10 July 1987) p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>6</sup>Ray Davidson, "Report: ACTEA All-Africa TEE Consultation," (unpublished report of the ACTEA All-Africa TEE Consultation held in Nairobi, Kenya, 15-18 July 1987), p. 2.

<sup>7</sup>F. Ross Kinsler, *The Extension Movement in Theological Education* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1981) pp. 41-42.

<sup>8</sup>Margaret Thornton, ed. *Training T.E.E. Leaders* (Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1990), pp.14-15.

<sup>9</sup>Ray Davidson, "Report", p.3.



## BOOK REVIEWS

*Discipleship of the Mind: Learning to Love God in the Ways We Think*  
by James W. Sire  
(Downers Grove: IVP, 1990)  
249 pages; \$9.95

*The Transforming Vision: Shaping a Christian World View*  
by Brian J. Walsh and J. Richard Middleton  
(Downers Grove: IVP, 1984)  
214 pages; \$9.95

*Loving God with All Your Mind: How to Survive and Prosper as a  
Christian in the Secular University and Post-Christian Culture*  
by Gene Edward Veith  
(Leicester: IVP, 1987)  
155 pages

*The Opening of the Christian Mind: Taking Every Thought Captive  
to Christ*  
by David W. Gill  
(Downers Grove: IVP, 1989)  
142 pages; \$7.95

During his 1991 ACTEA International Lectures, Dr. Tite Tiénou presented the challenge for African writers to explore and develop an African Christian world view. The four books briefly reviewed here, some of which were mentioned by Dr. Tiénou, all attempt to define and apply a Christian world view. Not only do they serve as valuable introductions to the entire issue of world view, but these volumes may also serve as useful *models* for the kind of writing which could present a Christian world view from an African perspectives.

*Discipleship of the Mind* covers a great deal of the same ground as Sire's much-noted earlier book *The Universe Next Door* (first edition 1976, second edition 1989). Both establish several key issues which shape any world view and explore the responses of several representative world views to those issues. While *The Universe Next Door* treats various world views in order to understand their distinctives and differences, *Discipleship of the Mind* particularly

emphasises a Christian world view and its implications. Sire has lectured on world view issues for many years and is well-qualified to address the subject. Formerly associate professor of English at Trinity College (IL, USA), he currently serves as campus lecturer with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and senior editor with IVP in the United States.

For the sake of simplicity, *Discipleship of the Mind* reduces the number of world views to three broad categories: theism, pantheism and naturalism. Chapters 2 to 6 and 10 present a Christian response to basic world view questions. Chapters 7 to 9 apply a Christian world view to the specific issues of technology, academia and literature/media. The book concludes with a valuable 25 page bibliography of books, journals and articles in numerous disciplines which set forth a biblical world view. This bibliography, compiled by Brian Walsh and Richard Middleton, is an expanded version of the one which appears in their book reviewed below.

Sire's book is helpful in several ways. First, like all of the books here under review, Sire stresses that world view is not something we consciously formulate. It begins with our most basic unquestioned attitudes. The Christian attitude is marked by the "fear of the Lord," and humility toward the self. According to Sire, all Christian thinking begins with this proper perspective. Second, Sire here draws more upon the insights from the sociology of knowledge than in his earlier book. Since world view shapes and is shaped by social context, the discipline of sociology of knowledge has much to offer our study. Third, while Sire's treatment of cultural issues remains brief, his insights regarding such areas as the effects of television and individualism are important for Africa. Television and videos do influence the changing cultural landscape of this continent today, and will continue to do so as development increases. Sire helps sensitise us to the fact that much of that impact comes through what is communicated on an assumed, unspoken level.

No one book of introductory length can fully define nor explore the implications of a Christian world view for a specific discipline. The reader may feel frustrated that the arguments are sweeping and the applications too general. All the books in this review are by necessity somewhat sweeping in their argument. But as introductions, they serve their purpose well. Even when the brevity of some arguments makes them appear ill-founded, they nevertheless provide valuable food for further reflection. And because Sire provides in this book a more detailed exploration of a Christian world view than in *The Universe Next Door*, the book will be valuable alike for his earlier and new readers.

Walsh and Middleton state in their preface to *The Transforming Vision* that their purpose is to help students develop an *integrated* world view that is both faithful to the Scriptures and provides motivation toward obedience. Since both authors have completed masters level degrees in philosophy, and are

former staff members with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship in Canada, they are well attuned both to the needs of students and to the dynamics of world view. They succeed in their purpose on all counts.

*The Transforming Vision* is divided into four parts. A brief summary of each will provide an opportunity both to survey the content and to summarise strengths and weaknesses in the presentation. Part One, as expected, explains what world views are and how they function. While all the books in this review must undertake this task, these authors clarify their presentation by comparing and contrasting world views of Japanese, Canadian and native North American families as expressed through such practical tasks as care of children. For those still confused about *what* world views are and *why* they are important, this is the place to begin.

The authors define a world view as a response to four basic questions: (1) Who am I? (what is the nature and purpose of human beings?); (2) Where am I? (what is the world I live in really like?); (3) What's wrong? (how do I explain evil?); and (4) What is the remedy? (how is it possible to overcome these problems?). In addition, the authors establish criteria for evaluating the validity of any world view. These questions and criteria are consistently applied to define and critique all that follows. The clear groundwork laid in the first part of the book, and the careful reference to this in succeeding pages, constitutes one of the strengths of this fine work.

Part Two establishes the authors' understanding of a biblical world view. First, a biblical world view must be based on creation. The creation/evolution controversy so dominates much Christian writing on this topic that the world view implications central to the Genesis account are often overlooked. The authors rightly recognise that while creation does not receive the extensive treatment in the Scriptures given to other doctrines, nevertheless it clearly provides the foundation upon which all else builds, by expressing God's lasting purpose for His creation. Of particular concern is the creational mandate to rule over earth, defined here as the task "to develop and preserve our creational environment" (54). This task, given at creation and inseparably linked to our creation in the image of God (a debatable interpretation), defines our primary responsibility as stewards over all creation, a responsibility integrally linked to the formation of a world view.

The second point in the authors' understanding of a biblical world view is that the Fall affected *all* parts of the original pristine creation. This naturally leads to their third theme, namely the redemption which will ultimately touch all of creation, both humanity and nature. In light of our task of "imaging God" as stewards of creation, and God's all-inclusive redemptive purposes, a biblical world view insists on a holistic vision that encompasses all of creation. At all points in this treatise, therefore, the comprehensiveness of a Christian world view receives its due emphasis. No such false dichotomies as sacred and

secular domains may exist. A Christian world view maintains a holistic approach which finds God's domain over all of creation.

Part Three of *The Transforming Vision* examines the world view which predominates in the West. While accurate when describing the origins and development of this mindset, the analysis of its contemporary manifestations is often too general. For example, while the accuracy of many of the authors' indictments of western capitalism remains unquestioned, they fail to acknowledge that no economic system can cast the sinless first stone. Greed, the unabated lust for more, rather than any "system" constitutes the root problem, as a Christian world view should readily recognise. In Part Four of their book, Walsh and Middleton describe in general terms a programme for Christian communal action in light of present circumstances. The focus lies on a "communal" response. God acts primarily through the "body" of Christ, so that we are not left to act alone. The book concludes with a valuable 12 page bibliography, broken down by various disciplines. Adding to the value of the bibliography is a listing of journals and newsletters by discipline.

This is an important book. While I may demur with some of the arguments and conclusions in Part Three, the basis laid in Parts One and Two are strong. The authors' treatment of the sacred/secular dichotomy in particular warrants the overused appellation (but I will use it anyway) "worth the price of the book". For example, how often have we heard the phrase "full-time Christian service" applied to pastoral ministry (implying that such work is more "spiritual") while other vocations become relegated to a "less spiritual" status. Such a distinction cannot stand up before the biblical evidence and hinders the work of Christ.

The final two books in this review both assume knowledge of a Christian world view and therefore concern themselves more with applying a Christian mind within various disciplines. Veith's *Loving God with All Your Mind* provides a mild, fast-paced apologetic targeted for Christian students in the largely anti-Christian environment of Western universities. Veith, a lecturer in English at Concordia College (Wisconsin, USA), maintains that a biblical world view provides the basis and motivation for learning, even in the most "secular" fields. Furthermore, Christians can hold their own in this hostile intellectual climate.

The book falls into three sections. In the first, Veith establishes his case that pursuit of learning and knowledge in whatever field is a "legitimate God-pleasing calling for a Christian" (page 11). In the second, he takes a broad look at the intellectual assumptions which shape the current university landscape in the United States. Finally, he attempts to demonstrate that a biblical world view lays a holistic foundation for learning which is superior to all others. Perhaps the greatest weakness of this book is that in each of these areas Veith offers only a running overview (even for an introductory work). The other

books in this review all present a more solid analysis in each of Veith's three main areas. Therefore, the book cannot truly fulfil the bold agenda set forth in the introduction.

Nevertheless, this book does have value. Even though Veith improperly categorises some disciplines as "secular", he demonstrates that such a distinction forces Christians to withdraw unbiblically from God-honouring activities. Such a surrendering of the Christian's rightful place in the university only leaves a vacuum for others to shape the values of a society. More than others, this book assumes a knowledge of the Western university context. As such it may seem strange to readers on this continent. However, that in itself may be a useful education. The "Christian West", not infrequently assumed in African discussions, is in fact a myth and has been for some time.

Gill's *The Opening of the Christian Mind* condemns the sacred/secular dualism which allows one to be a Christian on Sundays but to leave faith behind on Monday when returning to work. Christ's lordship rules over the entirety of the believer's life. The author has a PhD in history from the University of Southern California, and serves as president and professor of Christian ethics at New College Berkeley (California, USA). He writes for university students and working graduates in an attempt to communicate both what it means to submit one's mind to the lordship of Jesus Christ and how to develop such a mind. Unless our minds become "captive to Christ", Gill insists, all other areas of our walk will suffer.

For students Gill offers helpful suggestions for vocational and educational choices as well as practical advice about how to develop a Christian mind while pursuing an education in a non-Christian setting. He offers similar suggestions for those already in the workforce as well as many examples of how Christians are now applying a biblical world view to their places of work. For the Christian, integrating our Christian faith and our work is crucial. The inclusion of further practical guidelines such as "Six Marks of a Christian Mind" (chapter 4), and a "curriculum" for developing a Christian mind (chapter 7), help make this stimulating reading. Gill opens his final chapter with the following words: "It would be very difficult for us to find convincing texts for a biblical theology of conformism" (page 129). Rather, the biblical mandate requires that we "salt the earth". He summarises this mandate (in a delightful fashion for those who like to use alliteration in preaching) under the headings: conviction, courage, creativity, competence, and community. Gill concludes with a three-page bibliography.

In conclusion, it is interesting to note that of the authors represented in this review, one has a PhD in history, two have doctorates in English, and two did their masters degrees in philosophy. One would expect "theologians" to be writing the books on these subjects. Evidently, these authors practice what they preach in applying a Christian world view to their respective disciplines.

These books are written in the West and many of the illustrations are western. However, they contain much of value for readers on this continent and certainly serve as worthy models for those prepared to take up Tiénou's challenge. The church in Africa will be in the debt of those who do.

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*A New Teaching, A New Learning: A Guide to Teaching Theology*  
by Gerald Collier  
(London: SPCK, 1989)  
xii, 171 pages; paperback £7.50 [£3.50 in the third world]

This book is the twenty-fifth in the series of Study Guides published by SPCK, originally on behalf of the Theological Education Fund (TEF). Categorized as one of the "advanced" titles in the series, it is designed as a workbook, with fairly short units of study and exercises amenable either for personal use or for group discussion. The author, a retired principal of Bede College at the University of Durham in England, is an educationalist with deep interest in Adult Education. The book attempts to offer new ways of teaching theology in developing countries of Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. It is aimed at those engaged in theological education by extension (TEE) as well as those who are engaged in residential theological colleges and Bible schools.

There are five parts to the book. In the first part, the author presents eleven key objectives that the theological educator ought to pursue. They are: basic knowledge, comprehension, self-directed learning, communications skills, application to new situations, analysing argument, invention, assessing quality, existential understanding and practical judgment, team-work skills, and ability to get inside cultural assumptions. Quite a number of these fit the educational objectives in the cognitive and affective domains, as set forth by Benjamin Bloom and associates. They are therefore not all that "new" to the field of education.

The second part of the book is aimed essentially at those engaged in TEE. There the author restates the eleven objectives in forms that are readily applicable to, and understood by, students engaged in self-study. The author's distinction between two broad types of objectives will prove to be quite helpful to theological educators. The broad types are: knowledge-based objectives (recognisable by statements of objectives that concern knowing), and process-based objectives (recognisable by statements of objectives that concern action

in terms of what the learner should be able to do). Earlier in the book Collier observes:

Few theological students are primarily concerned with the "academic" study of theology, divorced from its bearing on the realities of daily living. Most are searching for a deeper understanding of the faith, and of the interrelationship of their academic studies with the problems encountered in the everyday world. The interweaving of theoretical principles and "real world" experiences is vividly attested by those who organise TEE courses in Latin America (page 23).

TEE instructors and programme developers should find the chapter on self-study materials at post-secondary level quite useful. There the author deals with how to construct self-study courses. Students of TEE would likewise find very helpful the section on how to study effectively. So would they find useful the chapters dealing with self-assessment and group tutorials. Students in both residential and non-residential programmes would find the chapter on memorisation to be of interest, where the author deals with how to prepare for formal examination, and techniques of memorisation suited to visual and verbal schemes.

Theological educators, whether in residential or extension work, will benefit from the discussion on practical projects. Collier provides four essential steps for marrying field work with academic learning concepts (page 74). On the thorny subject of grading students' assignments and projects, the author offers a very useful chart (pages 84-85) to guide in what to look for and how to rate the quality of work, on the bases of structure, argument, style, presentation, sources, and mechanics. This chart may help to minimise the element of subjectivity in grading.

The third part of the book is designed primarily for organising learning in residential settings. The author deals with the art of lecturing and with varieties of small-group methods. In residential-type instruction at tertiary levels, the author reports that the lecture method accounts for at least 80% of teaching time (page 97). He goes on to note that students express discontent with most lectures, and that students would prefer lectures that are clear, orderly, logically planned, and those which emphasise basic principles. To improve the lecture method, Collier suggests the use of teaching aids such as audio-visuals and overhead systems (where practicable), and mounted posters, charts and diagrams as alternatives where so called for. Realising that these materials are but aids to lectures, and that of themselves they do not make for good lectures, the author goes on to suggest how to prepare logical structure for lectures, and problem-based structure in lectures. In order to ensure clear explanations in lectures, the author offers three ways having to do with clarification, procedure, and rationale. He then goes on to suggest

ways to get students involved during lectures by means of what he terms "signposts": practical exercises, buzz groups, pyramid techniques, scripted role-play, taped lectures, handouts, time towards the end of lectures for students to go over their notes, encouraging pairing up to discuss the lecture, and lastly for the teacher to cross-check students' turned-in notes. The section which deals with small group methods will be quite helpful in enhancing residential courses such as those in pastoral counselling, sermon preparation and delivery, and similar subjects.

In the fourth part of his book Collier provides two chapters to help those in theological education, whether teachers or students, to gain some insights into other cultures, into their own cultures, and to better understand self. Understanding self and others is quite essential to ministerial training in view of the reality of field experiences outside of the context of learning.

The fifth and concluding part of the book is concerned with assessment of academic objectives and of professional objectives. Here the author revisits the eleven objectives with which he started as they relate to assessment. Whereas knowledge-based objectives and comprehension of subject discipline may be assessed by means of short answer questions and multiple-choice questions, Collier proposes that theological educators test for critical judgment and higher-order skills (objectives 5-8) by means of individual or group projects as well as by means of complex form of the modified essay questions. As for assessment of existential understanding and practical judgment, as well as of practical skills and competence, the author provides techniques for assessing professional objectives. His insightful suggestions on how to interweave students' academic study with real life activity and consequently the assessment of the fusion of the academic and the practical represent a welcome balancing act long called for in theological education. The final chapter provides very useful charts for rating/assessing the student's performance in the areas of: self-directed learning, communication skills and team-work skills (pages 143-45). As the chart on page 148 shows, the pattern of assessing various types of objectives—academic and professional—may easily be adapted to suit various needs in the process of ministerial training, whether it be in Africa or elsewhere.

The book is commended to those who engage in residential and non-residential theological education whether they are teachers or students. The book has something for everyone. It may be used either for personal professional enrichment, or for corporate planned workshops and discussions at the faculty level. Whereas the book provides vitally important principles of teaching and learning that could readily apply in ministerial training, the author's self-acknowledged "thinness of my theological knowledge" (p. xii) will readily be



apparent at different points to those who are interested in applying sound educational principles to areas of their theological disciplines.

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*Cross-Cultural Christianity: A Textbook in Cross-Cultural Communication*  
by Atchenemou Hloma Clement, Raymond Hassan, Moyo Ozodo, and  
Bill Kornfield  
(Jos: Evangelical Missionary Institute, 1989)  
ix, 89 pages

Since textbooks for advanced Christian studies in many subjects are an urgent need in Africa today, it is heartening to see this contribution in the area of cross-cultural communication. Especially in Africa, with language cultural groups numbering in the thousands, the task of cross-cultural communication becomes a special challenge for the Christian community. This book offers foundational preparation in this task. The authors' involvement in the administration of one of Africa's first interdenominational training schools for missionaries made the need for such a textbook a matter of urgency. Therefore they set out to provide such a book on cross-cultural communication. Keeping their audience in mind, they have endeavoured to write in simple English from a non-western perspective for the training of non-western missionaries.

Though it is never stated in the book, the contents could well be considered a condensation and adaptation of the revised edition of Marvin K. Mayers' *Christianity Confronts Culture: A Strategy for Cross-Cultural Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Academic Books, 1987). The first three chapters dwell on acceptance—of self, another person and another group—as the key to missionary effectiveness. Introductory case studies and short paragraphs interspersed with creative illustrations and appropriate exercises make these chapters easy to read. The last two chapters deal with tools and methods of presenting Christ. In chapter four, brevity and ease of reading give way to considerable technical data and terminology: cultural cues, functional equivalents, primary data, participant observation, informants, culture brokerage, life histories, questionnaires, marginality, and the form/meaning component. The concluding chapter also has its complexities: contextualization, decision makers, felt needs, self-governing, self-supporting, self-educating, and self-propagating churches, paternalism, situation of slavery, situation of freedom. The glossary of new words at the end of the text is helpful. An

additional twenty relevant case studies are provided and related back to each chapter.

This book is a primer in Marvin Mayers' methods of cross-cultural communication. It contains most of his models and much of his terminology. Even the case study approach is vintage Mayers. However, the text also makes reference to other missiologists such as Paul Hiebert, Alan Tippett and Don Richardson. Illustrations and case studies derive from workshops conducted by Dr. Kornfield in Africa and South America. It is a primer that may exceed itself in trying to introduce all the current buzzwords for cross-cultural communication.

The text is subject to some critical appraisal. Mayers should have been credited more visibly in the acknowledgements. And Mayers should have been better "contextualized" in this text. His concepts and terms are introduced too simplistically. At the heart of Mayers' approach are some western assumptions about psychology and sociology. Self image, for example—the key word in the first chapter—is a western notion that may not be valued as highly in Africa. Discussion of the norm of culture also requires more explanation than that given.

Presentation of the material should certainly be improved in any revised edition. Type setting is not at its best. The authors intend to write for readers for whom English is a second language, but lengthy sentences, complex paragraphs, and poor outline formats detract from this objective. And though the book sets out to provide principles, these principles are difficult to identify in the text. Only two are easily detected in chapter two, though the chapter contains many others. The whole idea of principles seems to be lost thereafter until it re-emerges in chapter five. A simple change of format would have helped. The glossary containing only sixteen words could easily have been extended to include dozens of other words and phrases. One gets an uneasy feeling that this important text was published under pressure of time. Added attention could have improved the quality.

Though one must hope that a revision will be possible, the text in its present form will prove a helpful resource for short-term courses and seminars, and as basic outline material for classroom lectures. It fits a need. Condensations of western materials can be helpful. Meanwhile, let us hope for the development of textbooks in Africa that are more characterised by originality, insight and sensitivity to continental distinctives. [The book may be ordered from: Nigeria Evangelical Missionary Institute, PO Box 5878, Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria.]

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*Frontiers in Muslim-Christian Encounter*  
 by Michael Nazir Ali  
 (Oxford: Regnum, 1987)  
 191 pages; £12.95

One feature which distinguishes this book from others in the genre is the identity and experience of the author. Unlike the authors of most recent titles on the subject of Muslim-Christian relations, Michael Nazir Ali is not a North American or European. Nazir Ali is a bishop in the Church of Pakistan, and is current head of the Church Missionary Society (CMS). He comes from a family that converted from Islam to Christianity, and thus has a different outlook from many other authors. The question of the relationship between the church and Islam is something that Nazir Ali writes about from a life-long experience as a citizen of a self-styled Islamic state.

*Frontiers in Muslim-Christian Encounter* is a collection of essays, many of which were published in Pakistan over the last decade, on the subject of the relationship between Muslims and Christians. The seventeen essays are organised under four main sections: Theology in Encounter, Missiology in Context, Faith in Dialogue? and The Christian and the Social Order. Nazir Ali focuses on topics such as Christology, the doctrine of the Word of God, the role of the church in evangelisation, the question of the use of the Quran in discussions between Muslims and Christians, and the role of Christians in society. These topics are the standard ones to expect in a book such as this. However, Nazir Ali's perspectives are thought-provoking and bring fresh concepts to these areas of discussion.

One clear theme that runs through the book is a devotion to the apostolic tradition:

Valid and even necessary limits to inculturation would certainly include faithfulness to Scripture and to Apostolic tradition. Scripture is the norm which has been given by God and adopted by the Church; it defines and preserves the people of God. Apostolic tradition ensures the continuity of a local church with the Church through the ages, and its contiguity with the contemporary Church world-wide (12). The entire concept of apostolicity is sadly lacking in many contemporary evangelical circles. This has often been reflected by a disregard for church history and/or a disinterest in any denomination other than one's own particular group. A lack of interest in preserving apostolicity is also reflected in a readiness to employ methods derived from secular social sciences in order to hasten "results"

In recent American missiological developments, this attitude has sometimes developed into an antipathy towards the remnant groups of Christians that

have survived under 1400 years of Muslim domination in the Middle East. They are considered to be a barrier to the evangelisation of Muslims within the same lands. While Nazir Ali is the son of a convert from Islam to Christianity, he shows considerable interest in, and sympathy for, the ancient churches of the Middle East. He recognises their faults, especially in their all-too-often lack of proclaiming the gospel. He urges the church in Pakistan, and in other Muslim lands, to maintain links with the churches in the Middle East, to follow their positive contributions to society and to avoid their mistakes.

Nazir Ali furthermore criticises the "homogeneous unit principle" that has been so much in vogue with western workers in the last decade (particularly those influenced by the Pasadena missiologists).

Nor does the Church of Pakistan recognise the attempts to create Churches on ethnic, caste or cultural lines as evangelical. Christians from similar backgrounds can meet for fellowship, Bible-study and worship, but such groups are not to be elevated to the status of a Church. In the New Testament, the Church is a gathered community of diverse kinds of people who have been made one in Christ (Acts 6, Gal. 2, Col. 3), and it should be our vision to integrate all kinds of people into Christ's Church in Pakistan (101).

This is one of Nazir Ali's most direct criticisms of modern American evangelical missiology; in general, his tone is irenic with most criticisms introduced subtly. However a glance at the index of authors (complementing 13 pages of "Notes") shows a noticeable absence of references to the plethora of books printed in the last fifteen years by evangelicals promising "new ways" to win Muslims to Christ. Nazir Ali's sources stretch across the centuries and the continents; among Western authors quoted one sees names associated with earlier decades like Cragg, Sweetman and Zwemer.

Nazir Ali demonstrates his commitment to the apostolic tradition by frequent references to church history with regard to Muslim-Christian theological discussions. This is one of the valuable contributions of this book to the subject matter; some of us may have heard of the Syrian Christian John of Damascus, but how many of us are aware of Patriarch Timothy of Baghdad? Both of these church leaders debated with Muslim theologians in the first centuries of Islam's existence. Nazir Ali reminds us of the importance of reviewing the lessons of the past as a vital preparation for our modern task. Nazir Ali even contrasts the style of the debates on Christology in the early church with what he terms "unconstructive" result of much modernistic theologising in this subject.

In his discussions on contextualization Nazir Ali further uses the historical approach to point out the fact that many aspects of Islamic worship and architecture were actually borrowed from the Syrian, Coptic and

Mesopotamian churches with which the Arab invaders first came in contact. From his own perspective of growing up as a member of a tiny Christian minority in a Muslim land, Nazir Ali warns that Islam tends to influence (sometimes subconsciously) the style and content of Christian worship in a negative way. In a related area, Nazir Ali asserts that eating meat sacrificed at one of the Eid celebrations should not be done by Christians, since participation in the Eucharist necessarily precludes participation in rituals from another religion.

In a particularly illuminating chapter on veneration of Muhammad, Nazir Ali shows that in popular Islam, Muhammad is virtually deified and takes on the role of a saviour and intercessor. In other words, he usurps the place of both Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Thus, the attempts of some missionaries to use Quranic references to the uniqueness of Jesus as a starting point in their evangelistic work will be ineffective and will be countered by assertions of the superiority of Muhammad. Western missiologists anxious to discover new contextualizing innovations would do well to consider these warnings.

Nazir Ali seems to be addressing many parts of the book to fellow-Christians on the Indian subcontinent. He makes many references to issues that are on the agenda of the ecumenical wing of the Indian church. Nazir Ali chides the proponents of liberation theology for their lack of acknowledgement of the sinfulness of all humans—not just the rich. He regrets the selectivity of the WCC in criticising human rights violations and oppression only in certain lands (no doubt referring to their pattern of ignoring the oppression of Christian minorities throughout the Muslim world). Nazir Ali's insights into the "communal schizophrenia" that follows the establishment of repressive regimes which are based on the ideology of Muslim fundamentalism are helpful in gaining an understanding of such societies.

As is the case with collections of previously published essays, there are a few chapters that are not as appropriate or well-researched as others. One might wonder on the inclusion of an entire chapter on the attitude of the founder of Pakistan, Sir Muhammad Iqbal, towards other religions. In another chapter, "Christian theology for inter-faith dialogue", Nazir Ali makes a few comments on conditions in Africa that are inaccurate. His statement about the relation between Muslims and Christians in Ethiopia: "a situation where historical relations were good has in fact become one of gloom", is not correct. While early Muslim attitudes towards Ethiopia were positive, (because of the refuge given to some of Muhammad's followers by the King of Axum), centuries of warfare ensued between the two sides. For example, in the 15th century an army of Muslims under Ahmed Gran nearly destroyed Christianity in Ethiopia. Nazir Ali's statements on Nigeria, in the same chapter, were likely written before the destructive anti-Christian riots of 1987 and since, and thus sound too optimistic. Despite these specific inaccuracies relating to the African situation, the book still makes useful reading for Christians on this

continent. *Frontiers in Muslim-Christian Encounter* is a suitable text for a graduate level course; it will also be useful as a library reference in theological schools offering the first degree.

Nazir Ali is an evangelical Anglican who has chosen to stay within the sphere of the ecumenical movement. This is reflected at various junctures in the book. One may not agree with his position on various issues relating to inter-faith dialogue, yet his insights and his scholarship are worthy of consideration and reflection. One of his key positions is stressing the internationalisation of missions: the need for cooperation and interchange between members of the Body on all continents. As such, the contributions of this Asian theologian will be as useful for African believers concerned with the challenge of Islam as for Europeans or Americans.

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*Constructing Local Theologies*  
by Robert J. Schreiter  
(Maryknoll: Orbis, 1985)  
\$14.95

Robert Schreiter's *Constructing Local Theologies* is a significant work on the issue of contextualization. Rather than using the term "contextualization", Schreiter prefers the more interesting (and less loaded) term "local theology". This book is a serious work by a mature Roman Catholic scholar who is familiar both with current trends in anthropology and with current trends in contextualization.

Schreiter begins with an overview of the various types of contextualization. He sees three major approaches: (1) translation models, which simply translate the Christian message into the new setting (typified, he says, by Charles Kraft); (2) adaptation models, which generally take culture more seriously but are still framed in Western philosophical categories (seen in Tempels and Nyamiti); and (3) contextual models, which begin their reflection in the context, not with a received message (typified by the ethnographic approach, such as Negritude in francophone Africa, and the liberation approach).

Schreiter bases his own model for constructing a local theology on the idea of a map, which enables someone involved in the process to know where he is, but does not provide a single, set "recipe" for arriving at his goal. Historically,

there tend to be three starting points in the process of a community actually beginning to theologise: (1) a community wanting to develop a local theology finds itself confronted with some already existing ones; (2) an event overtakes a community that forces it to respond immediately, with reflection coming later; or 3) the results of longer theological efforts (with conferences, etc.) may present materials that must be responded to in local circumstances (pp. 25-26).

There are three basic features of Schreier's model which should be noted. First, revelation is to be discovered in the context itself and not brought in from the outside. In this sense we can look for the omnipresent Christ, who will already be in the culture, through the symbols and circumstances we find there. Schreier notes:

To maintain the desired openness and sensitivity to a local situation, . . . *the prevailing mode of evangelisation and church development should be one of finding Christ in the situation rather than concentrating on bringing Christ into the situation.* Without such an attitude, based on the theology of the incarnation, one consistently runs the risk of introducing and maintaining Christianity as an alien body in a culture (p. 39; emphasis mine).

Second, critical to Schreier's approach is a commitment to "listen" to a culture. Whatever we identify as the actual starting point, this is the point of departure for developing local theologies. How are we to listen to a culture? Schreier proposes that this be done through the use of semiotic (sign or symbol) analysis. Based on Clifford Geertz's work, this approach "sees a culture as a vast communication network, whereby both verbal and non-verbal messages are circulated along elaborate, interconnected pathways, which, together, create the system of meaning" (p. 49). He further states:

The interaction of signs, groups of signs that mutually define each other, and these kinds of rules [which he later defines] are a creative collaboration that produces a culture. . . . The task of semiotics is to describe and explain the signs, their interaction, the rules that govern them, and the complex that we call culture which emerges from all this (p. 50).

Through a sensitive semiotic listening to culture, Schreier proposes that we can discover the main symbols useful for the development of a local theology.

Third, the roots sustaining the growth of a local theology are three, namely: gospel, church, and culture. These three interact dialectically to help shape and produce a local theology. This "dialectal" interaction is a process whereby "continuing attention [is given] to just one factor and then another, leading to an ever-expanding awareness of the role and interaction of each of these factors" (p. 19). The reason for listening to the gospel and tradition is not

because they are transcultural. Rather, they are worth listening to because they are more or less successful versions of local theologies, seen in the fact that they have stood the test of time.

Once we have listened to a culture and understood it, how do we begin the dialectical process? We select cultural texts that will become the focus of theological reflection. Cultural texts are not books, but usually areas of tension in the culture expressed symbolically. Once our selection has been made, we are ready to "begin the gospel dialogue with the larger church tradition". There are two dimensions to this dialogue: (1) determining the proper mode of discourse (through a sociology of theology, presented in Chapter 4); and (2) determining the quality of the result (dealt with in Chapter 5).

Several strengths of Schreiter's model may be noted:

1. It is deeply committed to the local culture, and to the development of theologies that make sense within the local culture.
2. It takes both culture and Scripture/tradition seriously.
3. It demonstrates the semiotic methodology of analysing culture, which many anthropologists agree is the best method.
4. It allows for and explains social and theological change over the course of time.

At the same time, the following weaknesses should also be noted:

1. One major weakness is Schreiter's lack of awareness of any evangelical model other than that of Charles Kraft, whom he presents as typical of the "translation" model.
2. Schreiter's overall model is so difficult that the average Christian would be lost in trying to follow it, and true community input would be blunted at best.
3. To date the semiotic approach as actually practised has tended to be heavily subjective and not verifiable in the public arena.
4. The model appears to be heavily western in its analytical approach to understanding a culture.
5. Without proper constraints, "finding Christ in a culture" can dangerously justify the use of cultural symbols, practices, or concepts which may be antithetical to biblical revelation.
6. Because of Schreiter's Roman Catholic framework, he assigns a higher authority to church tradition than many Protestants will accept.
7. Most significantly, for Schreiter's approach the Bible is not much more than a casebook of a successful local theology, rather than the final judge of all local theologies.

In spite of these weaknesses, Schreiter's work still serves as an excellent introduction to the field of constructing local theologies. His awareness of both anthropological and current contextualization discussion results in a book that will stimulate thinking among evangelicals committed to making



God's word relevant in their local context. For that reason, I highly recommend this book for school and faculty libraries, though I do not recommend it as a class text.

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*The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*  
by Sidney Greidanus  
(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans/Leicester: IVP, 1988)  
374 pages; \$19.95

There is an old saying that advanced scholarship is "learning more and more about less and less." Biblical scholarship sometimes seems to fit that proverb, putting such a stress on detailed, specialised studies, that there is little place for an integrative look at how various disciplines relate to one another. Sidney Greidanus combats that trend in *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*. Greidanus, professor of theology at The King's College in Edmonton, Canada, seeks to bridge the gap between hermeneutics and homiletics, discussing how to study the Bible in order to prepare relevant, biblical sermons. He builds on an earlier study, *Sola Scriptura*, in which he developed principles for interpreting and preaching historical texts. *The Modern Preacher* is a "hermeneutics for homiletics" for all biblical texts. Greidanus displays an impressive command of sources in both hermeneutics and homiletics. Serious students of either will not want to ignore his book.

Greidanus introduces his book by making a strong case for expository preaching as the best guarantee of preserving biblical authority in preaching. He then presents one of the main ideas of his book: sermons should be based on a hermeneutic that carefully considers the form or genre of the biblical literature and should reflect that form or genre in the structure of the sermon itself. Much of Greidanus' book is a development of how to do this. First he discusses the three aspects of hermeneutics which the interpreter must consider to accurately understand the text: its historical context, its literary characteristics, and its theology. Second, he introduces the three steps the preacher must follow in developing his sermon: selecting the text and determining its theme, structuring the sermon, and making sure it is relevant. Finally, Greidanus applies his hermeneutical and homiletical principles to four major kinds of biblical literature: Hebrew narrative, prophetic literature, gospels and epistles.

Greidanus' book has many strengths and will be a help to teachers of hermeneutics and homiletics as well as pastors who are preparing weekly sermons. He is very strong in showing how to understand and forge a sermon theme or idea from different kinds of biblical literature. I especially appreciated his emphasis on "holistic interpretation" (bringing all interpretive tools to bear on finding the meaning of the text) and his discussion on how to use literary observations to help the interpreter gain understanding of the text, rather than just noting them for their own sake. He also gives some helpful hints on how to reflect the genre and form of the passage in the structure of the sermon.

Throughout the book Greidanus properly balances the need for the preacher to proclaim the author's originally intended message but to do it in a way that is relevant for today's listeners. He shows the preacher how he can always be thinking homiletically, that is, always be thinking about the relevance of the passage, without distorting the original message of the passage.

As part of his discussion of historical interpretation, Greidanus gives a thorough presentation of the historicity of the Bible. He has a high view of Scripture and gives useful criteria for determining whether a text should be understood as history. However, there is a weakness to his discussion of the historicity of the text. For an evangelical, the question of whether a text is historical or not must be based on whether the original writer *intended* for it to be historical or not. Greidanus fails to stress this.

Though the book will be useful for anyone who is studying the Bible in order to teach and preach, it has its problems and should not be used uncritically. For example, regarding selection of texts, Greidanus feels that only "significant texts" should be preached: "Not every verse in the Bible makes a good preaching-text" (126). It is true that some texts *are* more significant than others, but Paul said that *all* Scripture is profitable for instruction and training in righteousness.

On several subjects Greidanus makes a positive contribution, but needs more detailed development. For example, he gives an excellent presentation on the principles for finding the relevance of a text. However he labours too much on what *not* to do. More examples of how to make a passage vividly concrete and contextual to today's situations would make this section stronger. Another example is his section on sermon form.

There are a couple of vital questions in hermeneutics today that are almost totally ignored. The discussion of *sensus plenior* is quite brief. But perhaps the most glaring weakness of the book is its failure to discuss the problem of how an interpreter's pre-understanding will influence his understanding of the text. How can the interpreter's pre-understanding help and hinder his understanding of the message of the text? How can his pre-understanding lead him to legitimately finding relevance in the text for himself and for his congrega-

tion? Any work on hermeneutics that fails to address the issue of the interpreter's pre-understanding is leaving crucial questions unanswered.

Another area of the book with which I was uncomfortable was Greidanus' strong resistance to using biblical characters as the basis for sermons. His reason for this is that the main character of the Bible is God, and that for preaching to remain theocentric, the theme of every sermon from narrative literature must be the actions and character of God. It is true that preaching must centre on God and that he is the main character of the biblical story, but it seems clear that the original intent of many authors is to reflect positive and negative examples of how people respond to God's revelation of himself. Sermons focusing on biblical characters can also be God-centred. Greidanus gives some important warnings about simply moralising about the lives of biblical characters, but he also seems to overly limit the extent to which interpreters should identify with them.

Most Africa pastors will find the price too high to buy the book for their personal libraries. For school libraries that can afford it, however, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text* will be a valuable addition for their hermeneutics and homiletics courses. Greidanus' serious attempt at integrating the study and the proclamation of Scripture will be a useful resource for those teaching young students how to "preach the Word."

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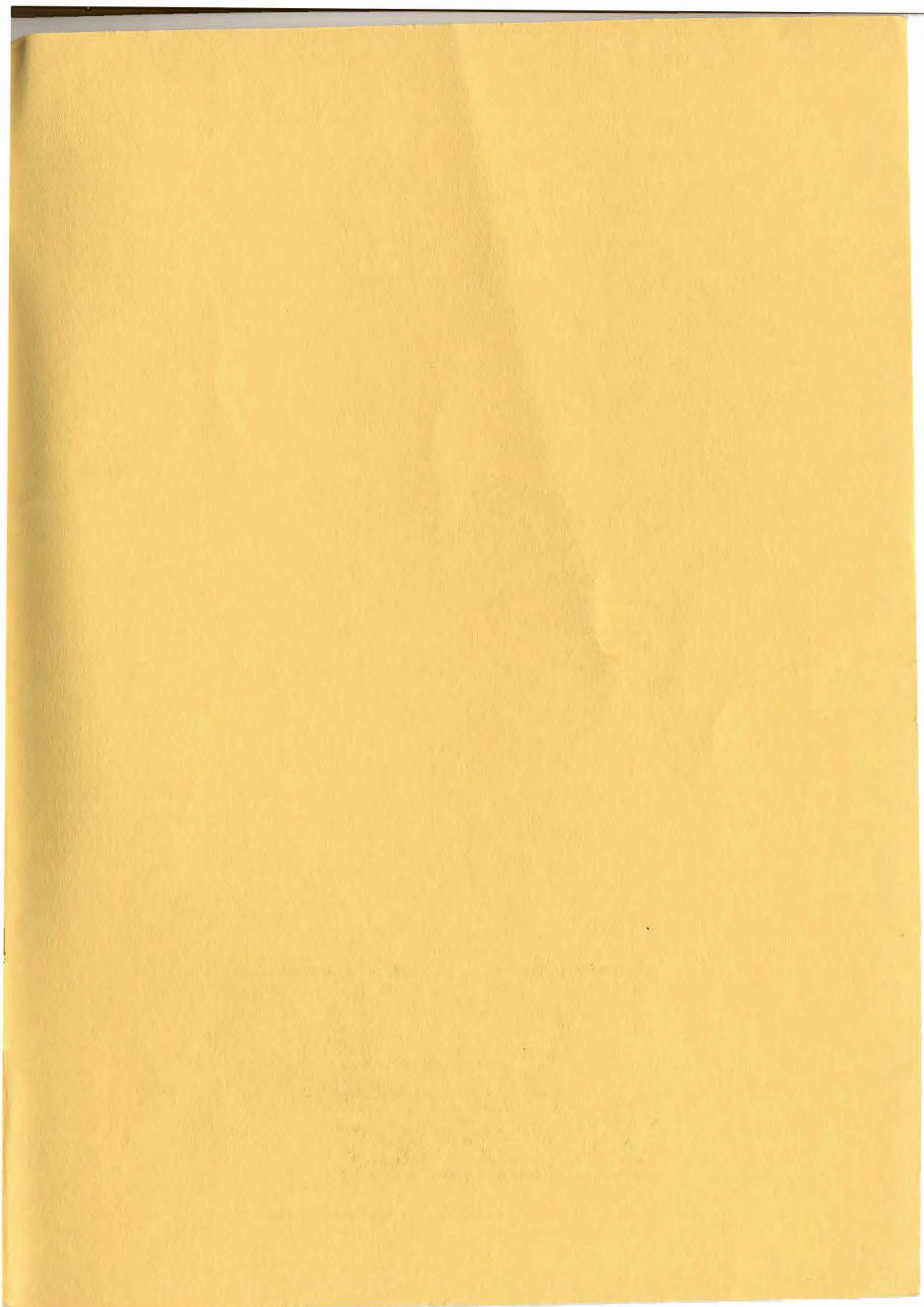
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