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Conversion in the Context
of the Christian Mission

BY J. W. SIMONSON

I AM grateful for this opportunity to soliloquize (which according to the defintion means " to speak regardless of the presence of hearers ") on a subject which has exercised my mind considerably during the seven years that I have had the privilege of serving the Church overseas. The thinking and reading in preparation for this paper—if it has done nothing else—has at least helped me to clarify my own mind on this vital subject of conversion as it is related to men of other faiths or no faith at all.

In the fascinating book *Hawaii* by James A. Michener, the Rev. Abner Hale is presented as the pioneer missionary who with fervent evangelical zeal seeks to stamp out idolatry and heathenism from the island and apparently succeeds in building up a Christian community. All goes well until one night he wakes up at the sound of music and dancing and finds to his utter disillusionment and disgust that all his labour was shattered and that the seemingly flourishing local church was only a veneer behind which the old pagan ritual continued.

> In spite of Abner's 100 sermons and 200 hymns about destroying heathen idols, this stone (the old pagan altar) was the first thing he saw and he stared at it with unholy fascination, for the curious combination of reverence and ecstasy it inspired in these worshippers bespoke its real force, and through it the little missionary comprehended much of Hawaii that he had not known before—its persistent religious passions, its abiding sense of history, and its mysteriousness. With all his heart he longed to rush forth and strike down the altar that kept these un-Christian forces alive (p. 319).

" He comprehended much . . . that he had not known before." I believe that this sums up a great deal of the thinking that goes on at present about the man of another faith. There are many things about him that we have taken for granted in the past, or failed to take into account, and, therefore, our evangelistic approach has been incomplete and unrealistic. We have looked at the other man only from our point of view, in the light of our background and imposed upon him religious patterns and concepts which, though wholly familiar to us, were utterly strange and foreign to him with the result that they never penetrated into his deeper consciousness and replaced the " old man ", but hovered insecurely on the surface.

Let me just for a moment illustrate that point from my own impressions. I went overseas with an evangelical understanding of conversion as I had experienced it myself and in which I had been brought up. If you want me to define what I understand by conversion, I mean that crucial decision at one particular point in one's life to repent of sin, to turn in faith to Jesus Christ, and to accept Him henceforth as one's

personal Lord and Saviour. And then, following on from this decision, the convert will have a testimony of salvation, will participate in the worship and fellowship of the Church, and will dedicate all his life to the service and glory of God who has called him out of darkness into light.

But overseas—and here it would be presumptuous to generalize and make sweeping statements, but by and large—our emphasis on conversion and confession of personal faith in Jesus Christ seems to be conspicuously absent from the religious experience of the average Christian. You have a church that outwardly and corporately appears strong and sturdy and certainly puts many of the churches in Western Christendom to shame when you look at it in terms of numbers and church attendance. But very few of its members will be able to speak to you of their conversion or will have a personal testimony of faith in the living Christ. Probing deeper one soon discovers that below the surface there are still deep layers of old beliefs and fears and super-stitions which suddenly erupt or are laid bare in times of personal stress or national crisis.

Stephen Neill in *The Unfinished Task* says:

> Why is it necessary to admit that with all the marvellous manifesta-tions of the power of God in the non-Christian world the net result of so much missionary devotion over 200 years seems to have been the calling into existence in many parts of the world of large and very imperfectly converted churches ? (p. 119)

" Large and very imperfectly converted churches," an apparent paradox and yet true. That there has been a missionary devotion, especially in the last century, which far exceeds the labours of the modern missionary who works under far more civilized conditions, is beyond any doubt. Max Warren in his recent book *Problems and Promises in Africa Today* expresses his impatience

> with critics of the missionary enterprise who from the lofty stand-point of the present, and rich in hindsight, criticize the missionaries of one hundred years ago, or even fifty years ago, because they were historic-ally conditioned by the thinking of their own age (p. 47).

Missionaries cannot be blamed for the " very imperfectly converted churches " that we find in Africa and Asia today. Let us then try to examine some of the factors which might account for the widespread absence of a doctrine and experience of individual conversion in some parts of the world.

*   *   *   *

1. *Non-Christian background.* The most important factor which has only recently been taken seriously is the whole combination of old beliefs, customs, and traditions from which the new convert has emerged and by which he is constantly surrounded. Stephen Neill, again in *The Unfinished Task*, reminds us that

> when the convert has come in from a wholly non-Christian background he brings with him, however sincere he may be, a heathen imagination, a non-Christian set of standards that can only very gradually be reduced to order (p. 45).

And Max Warren in his inquiry on *Revival* speaks of

> an Africa whose life has only, within the life-time of men and women
> now living, been lit with the first rays of the Gospel.   The deep levels
> of its social and family, as of its tribal, life have not yet been baptized
> into Christ . . . Africans have turned by the hundred thousands to
> Christianity as a new way of life.   But only a fraction of these have
> seen that Christianity is not just a substitute for their old pattern of
> living, but a revolution which calls for a new beginning in every man,
> whatever his race (pp. 84f.).

And very often Christianity is not just a substitute, but an addition
to the old beliefs, so that both the old gods and the new God are being
worshipped side by side.   Dr. Gelfand says of the African of Mashona-
land: " He can believe in his own religion without necessarily practising
it, and at the same time be a practising Christian ".   John Taylor in
The Primal Vision adds to this observation that " this is undoubtedly
true of thousands of good Christians in all parts of Africa " (p. 28).

Notice that John Taylor acknowledges these as " good " Christians.
Men and women who, according to William Temple's dictum, have
surrendered as much as they know of themselves to as much as they
know of God, but whose whole world-view and environment has never
yet been properly penetrated by the Gospel.   We must not sit in
judgment over them because their standards of faith do not conform
to ours nor be impatient with them because they are still imperfectly
converted.   From one to two hundred years is only a relatively brief
spell during which to break entirely free from the old ways of life.
Kenneth Cragg in *Sandals at the Mosque* gives us a very humbling and
salutary reminder when he speaks of

> the persistent underground of non-Christian structures and patterns
> of thought which persist in all of us, racially as well as individually
> (p. 77).

" Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone "
(Jn. 8: 7, RSV).

2. *Environment*.   The second factor to bear in mind is that we
cannot compare our society with that of other peoples.   We in the
West can hardly speak of society or, if we do, of a disintegrated society.
This to our shame.   For man is primarily an individual who is at
liberty to involve himself in society or—at least to some extent—to opt
out of it.   Not so with man in the African or Asian society.   There he
is man-in-society.   He cannot be an independent, self-contained
individual; his life is bound up with the life of the society to which he
belongs and it is society which rules and controls his life.   Admittedly,
due to Western influence or perhaps it would be fairer to say to the
impact of industrialization, urbanization, and materialism, even in
those continents the concept of society is breaking up.   But in the
large rural areas this process of disintegration fortunately has not yet
begun.

In the past the Western missionary with his evangelistic zeal has
not sufficiently taken into account the tremendous pull that society
has over the individual.   We have demanded of the individual personal
decisions which in the face of the society of which he was a member he

was not able to make or to keep.   John Taylor in *The Primal Vision* says:

> We expect the peasant to opt out of the ancient solidarities of family and tribe and become individualized so as to make those personal choices and separations of himself from the mass which we find central to the Christian experience (p. 114).

And Kenneth Cragg in *Sandals at the Mosque* carries this observation further when he points out that

> the transformation of the person needs to be thought of in other dimensions than those of the person alone. . . .   To be a Muslim (or Hindu or Buddhist) is to be part of a total culture and to be set in a corporate context of personality.   The redemption of human nature likewise cannot finally be completed in wholly individual terms.   The familiar and characteristically Christian truth is that being " in Christ " involves a personal decisiveness.   But we have traditionally interpreted " in Christ " in terms insufficiently social and corporate (p. 77).

All too often the conversion of, say, a Muslim means pulling him out of his society and transplanting him elsewhere where he is not at home. According to Dr. Bijlefeld, who pioneers the " Islam in Africa " project in Northern Nigeria on behalf of the World Council of Churches, it is

> very important to bear in mind what we are introducing Muslim converts to.   If no Church is available to receive and welcome and provide a new community, it is a sin against God to baptize an individual convert, and he will not last.   Where there is no Christian community we must create one into which he can be received and to which he belongs.

In the same lecture from which the above quotation is taken Dr. Bijlefeld referred to the practice in Indonesia where Christians from the neighbourhood are given money to move to the village of the converted Muslim and start up a new Church.

John Taylor in *The Primal Vision* insists that the " Christ of the primal world-view demands decision, but not disengagement.   The decision must be communal " (p. 128).   In the same quotation he refers to the Neuendettelsauer Mission in New Guinea which refused to baptize any individuals until the tribe as such had made its response as an unbroken whole and put itself under the " new morality ". When this total reorientation had taken place there was room for personal commitment to Christ and baptisms were administered.   But even so it was usually households rather than individuals that took the step.

   3.   *Third generation Christianity.*   Stephen Neill in *The Unfinished Task* asks this question:

> Why in the younger churches has it proved so difficult to maintain in the second and third generation the enthusiasm of the first beginning ? (p. 37)

He answers the question by reminding us that this is a problem that faces every church.   Once it has been long enough in existence, he says, a church acquires the stability of tradition.   And tradition tends to kill spontaneity.   Later in the same book he observes that

unless the Christian conflict is maintained at its highest pitch there is the inevitable tendency for the church to be drawn down to the level of life that surrounds it (p. 116).

This is one answer. Kenneth Cragg also has something to say about the third and fourth generation of Christians and refers to the distressing emergence of old evil practices such as one would imagine to have long since disappeared from the Christian consciousness. This he attributes to the insecure foundation of their faith in the first place. He says that " wherever the issues in man's inward remaking are underestimated we can expect that human nature will surely defy or defeat the surface changes " (p. 77).

Bishop Sundkler in *The Christian Ministry in Africa* provides a further answer. To him the conflict between the rapid growth and quality of the Church's life becomes the central problem. He refers to what the Roman Catholics call the " law of strangulation " The first generation of Christians are characterized by intense conviction and interest which culminates in mass movements. This is followed by the second generation where the lack of trained leadership and pastoral care results in loss of interest, and the third generation in which the general deterioration becomes visible. According to Bishop Sundkler, in the mass movement situation the pastor ceases to be minister and becomes administrator. The implication of this, I presume, is that there is lessening emphasis on evangelism and conversion as soon as the stress is laid on Church organization and management.

4. *Inadequate teaching.* John Taylor in *The Growth of the Church in Buganda* says:

> The average Christian knows about the Cross and the salvation of the soul almost to the point of glibness. But the whole of the theological content of faith seems to him too remote from daily life, which is scarcely surprising considering the fewness and incompetence of teachers (p. 229).

That observation is borne out by my own experience and a number of people in different parts of Africa and Asia who were consulted in connection with this paper. One of these writes about his impressions:

> The Church is really incapable at present of an evangelistic ministry because (a) it is very ignorant of the Bible and basic Christian doctrines; its theology tends to be Islamic and legalistic; it has a very easy view of forgiveness, amounting to what Bonhoeffer calls ' cheap grace ', and therefore it never comes to grips with sin. (b) Its corporate life is not such as to commend Christ. There is little warmth of fellowship and love, and much party-spirit.

This, alas, strikes a familiar note for many of us in this country. But how much greater is the problem in many churches overseas where, at least in the past, the clergy have themselves received quite inadequate training for the ministry and where a great deal of the teaching and evangelistic ministry is carried out (or often not carried out) by untrained catechists. No wonder that many so-called Christians have a deficient understanding of their own faith and have never made a real profession of conversion involving their feelings, their reason, and their will. Stephen Neill is certainly right when he says that the

word " Christian " overseas covers a whole range of meanings of adherence to the Christian community " from saint to regular church-goer, to occasional performer, and so to non-worshipping, irregular, excommunicate, and near-apostate " (*The Unfinished Task*, p. 116). One could add to this list the large number of people who belong to a myriad of independent churches and sects, many of a syncretistic nature.

*   *   *   *

We have briefly examined some of the reasons which may account for the insufficient evidence of conversion in some of the former missionary regions and now well established Christian churches in some parts of the world. I am well aware that there are other reasons besides the ones we have considered in this paper. I am also equally aware that in all the churches in Africa and Asia there are individual men and women who are gloriously converted, who have a victorious testimony to their salvation, and who are going on with the Lord. But just as there are all too few really committed Christians here at home so there are all too few in churches overseas, where in any case in many places the Christian community represents only a tiny minority of the total population.

Our concern in this paper is with conversion in the context of the Christian Mission. And when we are told that probably about 70 per cent of the 135 millions in Africa south of the Sahara are neither Muslim nor Christian, that of the total population of the world only one-third are at least nominally Christian, whereas one-third are quite unresponsive to Christ, and the remaining third have not even heard His Name (Douglas Webster in *What is Evangelism*? p. 24), then I think it is right for us to wrestle with this question of conversion overseas and not to indulge in any facile complacency. So then, in this concluding part of the paper, let us begin with a challenging quotation from Stephen Neill:

> The younger churches are still very small, in most countries only a few per cent of the population. So far from the evangelization of the world having been nearly accomplished, it may rather be said that the pioneer stage has at length been passed through, and that this is the moment at which serious and constructive evangelization ought to begin (*The Unfinished Task*, p. 115).

What then is the " serious and constructive " task of evangelization that the churches overseas and indeed all who participate in some measure in the World Mission of the Church ought to address themselves to ? What are the factors that in a reappraisal of the theology and ministry of conversion ought to be given " serious and constructive " attention ?

1. *The Communication of the Gospel.* The problem of communication has almost become a hackneyed phrase. But this is one of the major problems that the theologian and also the real evangelist have been grappling with in our day. We know only too well how difficult it proves to get the Gospel across to secular modern man. If it proves hard to present the Christian message within the context of a society that has at least the background of a Christian civilization and is

familiar with Western thought forms, how much harder must it be to present the Gospel to individuals, societies, and cultures where one can take nothing for granted !

John Taylor in *The Growth of the Church in Buganda* writes:

> The communication of the Gospel is a matter of culture contacts. We believe that the convert receives the Word of God, but he can only hear it from within the ' auditorium ' of his world as he sees and knows it (p. 252).

Max Warren in *Challenge and Response* takes this same thought further when he pleads:

> We have got to meet men where they are. It is no good trying to shout at them from the distance separated from them by language, a culture, a complex of customs, a religious habit, a system of religion, all of which are alien to them. For man is not a disembodied soul. He lives in a culture, within a complex of customs, with habitual religious ideas enshrined in a religious system. The essential fact is that these things are his own. And if our corresponding things are quite different then they do, in fact, separate us from those to whom we go (p. 59).

Johannes Blauw in a recent article in the *International Review of Missions* says:

> As Christians we must aim to meet men of other faiths in the very heart of their belief, at the last frontier, where deep calleth unto deep (October, 1963).

We must meet men where they are. This is the saving action of the " Word made flesh ". This was also the approach that St. Paul used in his missionary work:

> To Jews I became like a Jew, to win Jews . . . to win Gentiles I made myself like one of them . . . Indeed, I have become everything in turn to men of every sort, so that in one way or another I may save some (1 Cor. 9: 20-22, NEB).

The disciple must do no less than His Master; the modern missionary cannot do better than follow the example of the first Missionary. We must involve ourselves in the way of life of the other man, study his past, his customs, his culture, yes, even so enter into his faith that we begin to feel the pull and the power of it. There is no short-cut to an effective ministry of conversion. As Kenneth Cragg says:

> (The Christian) as the bearer of the ' Word made flesh ' must strive to enter into the daily existence of the Muslims, as believers, adherents, and men (*The Call of the Minaret*, p. 189).

He adds that " this is the prerequisite of being understood ". The need of our day overseas is not for the spread of the Gospel in space, but for the penetration of the Gospel in depth. This means that far more than in the past we must explore the radical, religious, and national inheritance of the other person if the Gospel is to meet with any decisive, profound, and lasting response.

*   *   *   *

2. *The Communal aspect.* While it remains true that ultimately each man must make his own profession of faith we must admit that in

societies where people think and respond so corporately we have all too often been far too " Western " and individualistic in our approach and thereby done more harm than good.   John Taylor in *The Primal Vision* says:

> As Western Christians we have seen Christ coming, thank God, into our individualized lives, redeeming our particular situation. . . . But until our vision is aligned to the African way of looking at things, until we have felt our individuality vanishing and our pulses beating to communal rhythms and communal fears, how can we guess what the Lord looks like who is the Saviour of the African world ? (p. 35)

Let me remind you of Kenneth Cragg's words on this subject:

> The redemption of human nature cannot finally be completed in wholly individual terms. . . . We have traditionally interpreted ' being in Christ ' in terms *insufficiently social and corporate.*

Here, I believe, lies a profound truth.   Here we are given a clue which calls for urgent study and consideration—a study which perhaps ultimately cannot be undertaken by Western man who is conditioned by his atomistic world-view, but must come out of Africa or Asia and from a setting that has its roots deeply within society.

Almost ten years ago Donald McGavran published a highly provocative book, *Bridges of God*, with the sub-title, " A Study in the Strategy of Missions ".   His plea right through the book is that since a true people —except in the West—is a social organism the Christian Mission must take account of it.   And thus the primary task of evangelism in the so-called mission fields is to set into motion " people movements ", not isolated converts.   He holds that " peoples become Christians where a Christward movement occurs *within that society* ".
And later he goes on to say:

> The individual does not think of himself as a self-sufficient unit, but as part of the group.   His business deals, his children's marriages, his personal problems are properly settled by group thinking.   Peoples become Christian as this group-mind is brought into a life-giving relationship to Jesus as Lord. . . .   This group-decision is not the sum of separate individual decisions.   People become Christians as a wave of decision for Christ sweeps through the group mind, involving many individual decisions, but being far more than merely their sum. . . .   In leading peoples to become Christian the Church must aim to win individuals in their corporate life.   The steady goal must be the Christianization of the entire fabric which is the people or large parts of it so that the social life of the individual is not destroyed (pp. 10ff.).

I hope that this quotation from McGavren's book will at least point us to the kind of interpretation of " being in Christ " that I believe Dr. Cragg has in mind.   As I see it, it means that we have to take another look at the doctrine of the Body of Christ and examine it in relation to peoples whose basic concept is the group, the family, the community.   Have we with our Protestant heritage perhaps placed too much emphasis on the members who in their totality make up the body ?   Have we perhaps failed to attach enough inportance to the Body and its all-embracing impact on its members ?
Leslie Newbiggin in *The Household of God*, which incidentally was

written out of a missionary situation, speaks of the teaching of the Bible on the solidarity of the individual in the group.   He says:

> It is surely clear, on the basis of the biblical teaching, that while we are precluded from treating the individual merely as a product of the various solidarities in which he is set, we are likewise precluded from treating these solidarities merely as the products of a multitude of individual decisions. . . .   It is taken for granted that God deals with men not only as individuals in the solitude of personal responsibility, but also in their natural solidarities of family, household, and nation (pp. 63f.).

He refers to the paralytic who was healed in response to the faith of his friends, or the Philippian jailor whose household was baptized because of the faith of the head of the family, or St. Paul's teaching that the unbelieving partner in a marriage with a believer is sanctified and so are the children.   All these references indicate (in Newbiggin's words) that " the faith of family and friends, the faith of a group, may be as important or more important than that of the individual ".   St. Paul in his key-passage of the Body of Christ in 1 Cor. 12 speaks of weaker members of the body.   In another place in the same epistle he calls Christians in Corinth " babes in Christ " who had to be fed with milk and were not yet ready for solid food (1 Cor. 3: 1f.).   He was addressing members of the Body of Christ.   In the well known passage in Ephesians Paul thinks of members of the Church there as " children " and appeals to them to " grow up " in every way into Him who is the head, " into Christ ".

Do all these references suggest that many members of the first churches were not properly converted in the sense in which we understand it, but initially drifted into the church as families or friends or relations or slaves ?   Are we too strict in kindred situations overseas in demanding individual decisions and personal conversions without any appreciation of the group or unit to which the individual is organically bound ?   Would it be truer to New Testament methods and man's societary nature if the individual were first brought within the orbit of Christian faith and morals and then gradually penetrated and personally committed by the claims of the Gospel ?   In practice this approach means that the head of the family brings the whole family with him when he asks for baptism, or the village elders are followed by part or whole of the village, even though at the outset many of them may not realize fully what that step involves.   But in time they will grow into a fuller understanding and deeper commitment to Jesus Christ by virtue of the group decision that was made on their behalf.

If it is true that we have to think much more in corporate terms about conversion in the mission context, then it follows that we must not only appeal to man's communal loyalties, but to the totality of his existence.   We must have a Gospel which speaks not only of the salvation of the soul, but which speaks of the redemption of the world, whatever that world constitutes in terms of man's daily existence.   In other words, we must not only address ourselves to the group mind, but bring the Christian group mind to bear on the situation.   We must not only speak to the community, but from the community.   This means that the Christian goes out not as an individual to evangelize individuals,

but that the Body of Christ goes out to declare and to demonstrate the comprehensiveness of the redemption that Christ has wrought. These groups or teams comprising members with various gifts and talents approach the pagan, Muslim, or Hindu communities with several prongs, and in so doing show the relevance of Christ to every part of life.   Max Warren in *Problems and Promises in Africa Today* says:

> The Mission of the Church must be seen in quite new terms.   The old triad of church, school, and hospital is no longer relevant except in a few remote areas.   Today the units of creative experiments are to be found in teams of workers, working in townships, in community experiments, in agriculture, etc. (p. 43).

In societies where man is not merely an individual, but man-in-community, he must see the Christian Faith not only represented by individuals, but by community.   He must see the Body of Christ in action.

Already in several parts of the world such evangelistic teams are at work in either rural or urban areas and Christian communities are coming into existence within which each member remains a fully integrated part of the whole.   It seems that the pattern of the future, especially in newly urbanized communities that are springing up all over the world, will be much more the corporate and comprehensive approach rather than a purely individualistic one—that is, groups or teams possessing a number of gifts seeking to make their impact upon the whole of life of the community, it being understood that this does not rule out the converting ministry to each individual member of that community.   Thus the ultimate aim and object will be not to pull the individual out of the unit to which he belongs, but first to embrace the whole unit with the Gospel and then, but only then, to proceed to single out the individual member of it and present him with the claims of Jesus Christ.

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *   *</p>

3. *A converting ministry.*   One final point: D. T. Niles in one of the most exciting books on the Mission of the Church written in recent times, entitled *Upon the Earth,* speaks in it of the absence of a conviction of " Mission ".   And although he confesses that this is true in all the churches, he believes that this is true first of all in the younger churches.   He goes on to say:

> There is in these churches a conviction about the necessity of preaching the Gospel across the boundaries between belief and unbelief, but there is very little passion or expectancy about seeing that boundary crossed (p. 159).

This quotation is borne out by one correspondent who writes from India:

> One must confess that, though there are plenty of keen individuals and groups of evangelists, the great majority of the Church still remain the biggest obstacle to evangelism.   Most of our older and stronger congregations were the fruit of mass movements three or four generations ago.   They have tended to become somewhat self-contained and inward looking communities, which, even if they

profess to welcome new converts, find it difficult to make them really at home.

This, of course, is sadly true of many churches and congregations in this country and we certainly cannot boast about being much more evangelistic than many churches overseas. But, while we have to make that admission, there are two main factors which militate against an effective converting ministry in the churches overseas. First, in many places the church is so wrapped up in the whole machinery of administration and education that evangelism has been crowded out. Secondly, the standard of the ministry in many parts of the world is so low that the teaching given to the local congregations is of poor quality, with the result that the average understanding of the faith is shallow and consequently the witness has no cutting edge.

While it would be utterly presumptuous to assume that we in the West possess something that other parts of the world are lacking, it remains nevertheless true that we have men who have specialized in the whole subject of evangelism and conversion. Most of the churches in Africa and Asia do not have such specialists, or, at any rate, all too few. And even if they had them they probably could not afford to set them aside for full-time work.

It is in this respect that I believe the church in this country still can make a vital contribution to the life of the church overseas by providing—at their invitation—experienced evangelists who in theological colleges overseas and in special schools or centres of evangelism will concentrate on the ministry of conversion and teach the indigenous pastor and layman how to lead both communities and persons to Christ. All this, of course, on the understanding that such a specialist acquaints himself first most carefully with the culture, the solidarities, and the world-view of the people among whom he ministers, and exercises his evangelistic gifts against that background. There is no doubt that the actual ministry of conversion must be undertaken by national Christians among their own people. But indirectly, by providing teachers in this special field, we may under God be able to help in order that, in D. T. Niles' phrase, the "passion and expectancy of crossing the boundary between belief and unbelief" is kindled again.

Most of this paper has been concerned with the Mission of the Church overseas and for that reason may not appear at first sight to be particularly relevant to our own situation in this country. But I think we have to admit that we are as much in a missionary situation today as most other parts of the world which we are still apt to refer to as "the mission field". If we accept this fact, then I believe that much of what I have tried to submit to you in this paper applies equally to the Christian Mission in this country and to our own ministry of conversion.