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Africa Journal Of Evangelical Theology

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Cover: The emblem of Scott Theological College, shown on the cover, features the Mumbu Tree, a historic and cultural landmark on the College grounds. The Mumbu Tree is used by AJET as a symbol of the gospel in Africa. The good news of Christ, like the Mumbu Tree, is ageless, enduring and firmly rooted in African soil.

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Why Africa needs Augustine

An Ajet Editorial

African Christianity is still on a restless search. For the last thirty years, since the wave of independence in the early sixties swept over the continent, the African church has been looking for greatness--a spiritual greatness that would be the envy of the watching world.

It is not as though the church has not tried hard to find the secret of greatness. The church has traveled far down the path of cultural authenticity. African theologians dug deep into the African traditional past to find the good in ATR upon which to build a contextualized Christian theology. African versions of liberation theology, ecumenical theology, charismatic theology, feminist theology, and fundamentalist theology joined in the race to become an "authentic" theology for Africa. Today the marathon for authentic theology has become a maze of theological confusion across the continent.

The African church has sought greatness through nationalization. African Church leaders took charge of their denominations and educational institutions. This was a good and necessary step. Yet some of the very problems that plagued missionary leadership a generation ago--the abuse of power, the squandering of resources, the unhealthy dependence on foreign money--reappeared in our nationalized institutions.

The church has sought greatness as the conscience of the nation and the defender of human rights. But all too often our prophets of social justice who decried corruption in the state found it within themselves and within their organizations and their witness was compromised.

The church has sought greatness along the path of church growth. Though the church has grown large, the masses within the church remain, for the most part, undisciplined. The promise of church growth as the way to greatness remains unfulfilled.

But there is another path of greatness that the modern African church has not explored with enough seriousness. I speak of the theological path blazed by Augustine, the Tunisian theologian of the 4th century. For a great theology produces a great church as surely as mediocre theology produces a mediocre church. Among the treasures of Augustine's theology that could put the African church along the path of true greatness are two gems that seem especially relevant.

The first gem found in the teaching of Augustine and needed by the contemporary African church, is the greatness of the gospel. In his day Augustine was forced to defend African Christian theology against a foreign import called Pelagianism. Pelagianism taught that the gospel is really about man taking responsibility to do his best and help his fellow man and thereby earn God's favor. Pelagianism turned the gospel into a vague religious humanism in which man was the central actor and God the quiet and passive bystander. The cross was reduced from being a powerful place of salvation to becoming a pale example of human sacrifice that should prod us on to wonderful deeds. Such theology emptied the cross of its power.

Augustine took one look at this flattering theology of human ability and saw it for what it was—the spiritual pride of man seeking to obscure the truth that he was a sinner who could not save himself. Augustine understood the Apostolic gospel to teach that man's sin had so eaten away his heart that he was in bondage to godlessness. Only the irresistible grace of God unleashed by the power of Christ's cross could save fallen mankind. The power of the cross was not just a pitiful plea for sinners to allow a pathetic Jesus standing helplessly at the door of the rebel heart to "enter in." Augustine taught that a conquering Christ demanded all men everywhere to repent, stormed the ramparts of our rebel fortresses, and brought the stubborn will into glad submission to his redemptive rule and reign.

Pelagianism is all around us today in Africa. Liberal Christianity in all its forms and evangelical Christianity in some of its forms are riddled with this human-centered theology that blunts the power of the cross. If the African church would find the path of greatness it must recover this God-centered

gospel that shows man for what he is—helpless in his sin—and God for who he is—the conquering Christ who purchased salvation on the cross for his church and unfailingly applies it to all for whom he died.

A second gemlike treasure of Augustine's theology is also needed by the church of Africa in its quest for maturity and greatness. I refer to his view of God. Augustine worshipped a great God who was the lord of history. Augustine's God was not shaken when the city of Rome fell in 410 AD. Augustine's God was not caught by surprise when the barbarians swept over Africa. Augustine worshipped a God whose purposes in history were bigger than nation-building, bigger than the goal of liberation or humanisation. Augustine believed in a God who was moving Africa and the world towards the true goal of all history—the coming of the City of God—the eternal kingdom of justice and peace to be established by God alone at the end of history.

Augustine resisted the temptation to reduce God's program of the kingdom to current political theories or economic ideologies. The church existed in Africa and the world as a witness that all things human (whether nations or ideologies or political agendas) are temporary and passing away. The only enduring future, the only future at all, is that future victory of Christ over all his enemies. This is the certain future that Augustine called "the City of God." No force could thwart such a God of history. No event or individual could escape the powerful gravity of God's providence which directed all earthly things towards the realization of the Kingdom in Christ.

African Christianity needs to hear Augustine on this point. Human and temporal goals consume the time and energy of the modern church. Martin Luther King struck this Augustinian note when he warned the churches to stay God-centered and kingdom-centered even while they work in the world:

Living in the colony of time, we are ultimately responsible to the empire of eternity. As Christians we must never surrender our supreme loyalty to any time-bound custom or earth bound idea, for at the heart of the universe is a higher reality—God and his kingdom of love—to which we must be conformed." (*Strength to Love*, NY:Harper and Row, 1959, page 1)

Living responsibly for the empire of eternity means turning our back on greed, lust for power and position. Living for eternity means enduring suffering patiently and surviving gladly in times of want knowing that eternal rewards await us from a great God who does all things well. Marxism has always sneered at this "pie- in- the- sky theology." Ironically, Marxism has all but disappeared as a serious option for the future while the vision of the Kingdom--thousands of years old--continues to burn bright. An exalted view of God and his sovereign purposes, and a more realistic view of man and his passing agendas is a critical need for the African church that would travel the path of greatness.

I am tempted to talk about Augustine's confidence in that greatest of all books, the Bible, or of his love for Christian unity but these are subjects for another time. The message for today must not be obscured: Africa needs Augustine because his vision of the greatness of the Gospel and the greatness of the Almighty God behind the Gospel can lift us from our restless wanderings and set us down on the true path of greatness.

* * * * *

African Christianity's need to rediscover Augustine is another way of describing its need for theological renewal. The articles in this issue all address that need in a variety of ways. Gordon Molyneux explores one of the earliest chapters in the quest for a truly African and Christian theology as he examines "The Contribution to African Theology of the Faculté de Théologie Catholique in Kinshasa, Zaire." Julius Muthengi looks at the issue of poverty and seeks to offer a theological understanding of that perennial African dilemma. Ross Gaskin brings the eye of both a theologian as well as an anthropologist to his comparative study of the beliefs and customs of two tribes--one African and the other Australian. A number of book reviews also promise to sharpen our theological saws. May God help you to enjoy and profit from this issue of the *African Journal of Evangelical Theology*.

Notices and Contributors

Some special notices have arrived at the AJET editorial desk which we wish to pass along to our readers.

- The Faculty of the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology has recently published a book entitled *Perspectives on Leadership Training*. This collection of faculty essays explores the vital issue of training African men and women for effective leadership in today's changing world. Within Kenya the cost of the book is Ksh 200/=. The cost of the book surface mail anywhere in the world (including Africa) is \$5.00. The cost of the book sent Airmail is \$8.50 within Africa or \$10.00 elsewhere in the world. Please enclose a check payable to N.E.G.S.T.(Perspectives Account). Include a letter with your name and address and instructions for shipping and quantities desired. Send your order to: Perspectives Editorial Committee, NEGST, P.O. Box 24686, Nairobi, Kenya.
- Gordon Molyneux's *African Christian Theology* (San Francisco: Mellen, 1993), has just been published. The material presented here in AJET is drawn from that monograph with a fuller set of references and documentation. The monograph is based on doctoral research done at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, under the supervision of Professor Richard Gray. Another chapter from the dissertation, on Kimbanguist hymns, has already appeared in the *Journal of Religion in Africa*. Regarding this book, Adrian Hastings has stated: "The contribution which Dr Molyneux has made to an understanding of African theology in this book seems to me to be a very considerable one. It is remarkably comprehensive and ecumenical. No other work I know of has attempted to understand African theology in this way as a living whole." The hardback edition of the book will retail at \$69.95. Inquiries and orders may be addressed to: Mellen Research University Press, attention Dr Robert West, 534 Pacific Avenue, San Francisco CA 94133, USA.

- The Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, Connecticut, USA, is pleased to announce the Research Enablement Program for the advancement of scholarship in studies of Christian Mission and Christianity in the non-Western World. For more information about application and qualifications please write to Mr. G.A. Little, REP Coordinator, OMSC, 490 Prospect Street, New Haven, CT, 06511-2196, USA.

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- Dr Julius Muthengi is the Deputy principal for Academic Affairs at Scott Theological College in Kenya. He holds his doctorate from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in the United States. He has contributed previously to the *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology*.
- Dr Ross Gaskin is a member of WEC International serving with that agency from 1960 both in Ghana and as Regional Director in Australia. He is currently a professor of Missiology at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology. The article published in AJET first appeared in the newly released *Perspectives on Leadership Training*.

The Contribution to African Theology of the *Faculté de Théologie Catholique* in Kinshasa, Zaire

Gordon Molyneux

Though best known for their role in the post-independence debates over African theology in the 1960's, the Faculté de Théologie Catholique de Kinshasa (FTCK) has enjoyed an unbroken influence on the shaping of Christian theological discussion in Africa. Largely through its outstanding faculty, its theological journals, its conferences and publishing projects, the FTCK continues to be a center of critical and creative thinking about Christianity in the African context.

Through academic interaction and publication, the *Faculté de Théologie Catholique de Kinshasa* (FTCK) in Zaire has played a central role in the emergence of African theology. For any adequate understanding of theological activity on the continent, an awareness of the historic contribution of the *Faculté de Théologie Catholique* in Kinshasa is therefore indispensable.¹ Fundamental to this contribution has been the consistent academic stature of the Faculty itself, expressed not only internally through the rigorous standards of teaching up through doctoral level, but also externally through the numerous publications of the Faculty. Indeed, among existing models of theological activity in Africa, the Faculty must be considered a singular example of the academic approach.

Early History of the Faculté

The birth of the Faculty in Zaire was inextricably bound up with the University of Louvain in Belgium. Indeed, so consciously was it modelled on its famous Belgian counterpart that the daughter university in Africa was even called Lovanium. The connections that bound the two together extended far beyond the mere name. R. Yaketmchouk can write: "The University of Lovanium and its Faculty of Theology were a creation of the Catholic University of Louvain; they belong to her spiritual heritage and are part of her history."² Set just above foundation level in the wall of the present Faculté des Sciences building on the *Campus Universitaire* in Kinshasa (and almost totally hidden by long grass) is a white stone originating from Louvain in Belgium. It bears two dates, 1425 and 1954, the former the year of Louvain's founding, the latter that of its Zairian counterpart.

Yaketmchouk traces the earliest notions of university-level institutions in Africa back to Father Charles (SJ), the first occupant of the newly endowed Chair of Missiology in Louvain in the early 1920s. His enthusiasm for missions in Africa received impetus from the then Pope, Pius XI, whose missionary vision earned him the name *'pape des missions'*. Bishop Dellepiane, the Holy See's representative in the Congo, brought the project of a Catholic University a step nearer fulfilment by persuasively stressing the inevitability and imminence of university-level education, and by warning that if the challenge were not met by the Catholic Church, then the initiative would fall to lay or even Protestant elements. He argued for the establishing of a Catholic University having the same character and legal standing as the Catholic University of Louvain.

Realization of the project was hindered by indecision and even rivalry between Louvain, the Jesuits and the representatives of the Holy See as to who should be responsible and in what way.³

It was in 1954, in the colonial capital Leopoldville, that the University of Lovanium eventually opened officially, under the jurisdiction of Louvain. It was the ambition of the founder of the new University that it would have an academic level comparable to that of European universities and it was their conviction that it was destined to become a beacon of Christian culture shining out over the whole of Africa.⁴

Three years later the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities in Rome conferred upon the new institution the status of Catholic University and in the same year ordered that a Faculty of Theology be set up in the University. Its admission requirements would, like those of Louvain, be very strict. So, just three years before the Belgian Congo entered independence, the country had a Faculty of Theology, which although small in numbers (there were only seven students in that first year), was of a very high academic level, not only modelled on but also governed from its mother-university in Belgium. At the opening ceremony, the Rector, Mgr. Gillon, spoke with pride of the links with Louvain, but insisted also that the research which the Faculty would promote would include specifically African aspects.⁵ The first seven teachers were all Belgian, some seconded by Louvain University, others already teaching in different institutions in Congo.

The anomaly of a Faculty of Theology in Africa governed by a board in Belgium became increasingly glaring as the country moved rapidly towards independence. The need to adapt the programme more to the African situation was becoming more pressing and African students, exasperated by the conservatism and rigidity of colonial structures, delighted in calling into question the presuppositions of some of their European teachers.⁶ They found some of their support in unlikely places: some 15 years earlier, in the mid-1940s, the Belgian priest Placide Tempels had similarly argued that the African way of understanding needed to be given serious consideration. His book, *La philosophie bantoue* was to have widespread repercussions in Africa and beyond.⁷ The publication of the hard-hitting *Des prêtres noirs s'interrogent* in 1956 was becoming influential and was further unsettling Western complacency.⁸ One of the leading contributors to the book, Mulagwa Cikala, joined the Faculty of Theology after completing his studies in Rome as the Faculty's first African teacher.⁹ The students' sentiments also received backing closer at hand from the then Abbé J. Malula of Leopoldville, who spoke out against an 'imported Christianity' which fails to distinguish between that which is divine and that which is 'simply Western.'

According to the future Cardinal, missionaries, while making real efforts at adaptation, remain strangers and 'the African soul remains untouched'. He urged the start without delay of an in-depth task of adapting the Gospel message to the Bantu soul, arguing that it is to the substratum of this soul, by means of an indigenous hierarchy, that Christianity must be joined.¹⁰

Most of all, however, it was political events which were to precipitate action which otherwise might have taken many years. The date for Congo's independence from Belgium was set for June 30, 1960. It was barely over a month before that, on May 21st, that Mgr. van Waeyenbergh, the Rector of Louvain and President of the Board of Governors of Lovanium, called a meeting of the Board to discuss what was now seen as the inevitable transfer of the Board from Belgium to the Congo. On June 10th (barely three weeks before independence) the new Statutes were unanimously accepted, with Louvain Board members being replaced by bishops and lay people in the Congo, selected in such a manner as to emphasize the national character of the new Board.¹¹ The first meeting of the new Board on African soil took place, almost literally at the 11th hour, on June 29th, the day before independence.

If the transfer of the Board to Congo was symbolically important as it undoubtedly was, perhaps so too were the tardiness and hesitation (one might almost say reluctance) of that transfer, which seemed to express the uncertainty on the part of many Europeans as to the possibility and place of a specifically African ecclesiastical and theological contribution. Already the year before Tharcisse Tshibangu (at the time a student in the Faculty) had written in a university publication of the need in Africa 'to pass from a Christianity which is merely received to a Christianity come of age, which is understood in all its dimensions and is embraced consciously and freely....'¹²

For his part, the Dean of the Faculty, A. Vanneste, while acknowledging the European coloration of theology after almost two thousand years of history and admitting the need for pastoral adaptation in the Church, warned:

But let us be careful to avoid all misunderstanding. The Christian religion bears within itself a truth which is divine and therefore universal and eternal in a way which is wholly unique. In some ways, therefore, it can never adapt to local and temporal circumstances, but must rather seek to be constantly itself, as completely and as radically as possible We wish to declare frankly, we do not think that the moment has come yet to launch an 'African Theology'. We prefer rather that theology in Africa should seek to be a real theology; as with Christianity, theology must first of all be itself.¹³

His article did not rule out an eventual African theology, but underlining the relative and contingent nature of any culture, African included, he saw it as being no more than 'a particular expression of the eternal truth.'¹⁴

The Debate on African Theology

The Faculty, therefore, was born into a world of political and cultural ferment and turmoil. And the now celebrated debate on 'African theology' between Tshibangu and Vanneste, which was organized by the 'Cercle Théologique' of the Faculty in 1960 (the very year of independence), must have taken place in an atmosphere which was much more than merely academic. The debate was published in the widely-read and influential *Revue de Clergé Africain*¹⁵ and thereby received national and international diffusion. Tshibangu continued to insist on the existence in Africa of a thought-pattern different from the Aristotelian-Thomist systems of the Western Church, a world-view which was global, synthetic, existential, holistic, which, while finding echoes in some Western philosophers and writers, nevertheless was recognizably African. He went on to argue that if this were so, then a theology of 'African colour' should be possible.¹⁶

Vanneste, for his part, questioned gravely the value of insisting upon African specifics. Coming close to contradicting what he himself had said in 1958 about the relative nature of each and every culture, he envisaged a world where universal values were accepted, values which had grown up in Europe through successive centuries turning again and again to Graeco-Roman models for inspiration and which had provided European culture with that 'high degree of perfection which the entire world recognizes.' The future of theology in Africa, if Africans did not want to be merely turned in upon themselves searching for their own distinctives, was to seek to contribute towards the emergence of 'universal catholic theology.'¹⁷

Tshibangu, at the conclusion of his article, agreed that the movement was indeed towards a universalization of thought, but maintained that this universalization would not mean the obliteration of cultural differences but rather their integration.

The debate was to continue for years to come, during which time the voices taking the side of Tshibangu became ever more numerous, while those siding with Vanneste became fewer. In 1964, the FTCK organized its first *Semaine Théologique de Kinshasa*, a week-long open-forum debate on a subject deemed important for the Church in Africa.¹⁸ The influence of these 'Semaines' extends beyond the many who attend its public sessions, since the official reports are published by the Publication Department of the Faculty and find their way to libraries in many different parts of the world. The fourth *Semaine Théologique de Kinshasa* in 1968 was devoted to the subject of African theology and is often referred to in subsequent literature as being of particular importance.

Vanneste once more appealed for the essential unity of Catholic theology towards which all theologians should direct their efforts. Perhaps moving away from his earlier European-centred remarks of 1960, Vanneste acknowledged the existence of theological plurality (which, indeed, could even be considered in a positive light as a '*pluralisme par richesse*'). But his remarks seemed, at least to his African colleagues, to be a rather reluctant concession to expediency, a temporary if inevitable stage in the progress toward a universal 'world theology'. Anything short of that goal was suspect: 'We must struggle against Western theology, Eastern theology, African theology.'¹⁹ His remarks provoked accusations of exaggerated Hegelianism from a Congolese fellow-speaker, Tshiamalenga, as indeed they did from another staff-member, Ngindu, who registered his obvious disagreement with Vanneste in his report of the Conference:

It must be said right away that, for Canon Vanneste, diversity, plurality, multiplicity must all be superseded, in the Hegelian sense of the term, that is, they must be assumed, integrated into a superior synthesis and that it is towards this synthesis that every effort of understanding and of theological investigation should tend.²⁰

While Ngindu in his detailed report on the fourth 'Semaine' lists only Vanneste as the protagonist of the 'unity-not-plurality' position, he chooses three of many protagonists of the 'plurality-therefore-African' position. Two of the named, Mulago gwa Cikala and Mgr. Tshibangu, as Zairians, would have been expected to endorse the pro-African position. Their cause received

important support from the non-African and internationally recognized figure of theologian-author J. Danielou, Dean of the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic Institute of Paris. Danielou understood African theology to mean the seeking of understanding of the Christian revelation by the African. The one Christian truth needed to be assumed by each type of humanity according to its own particular manner. Hence there was incontestably a proper place for African theology. It implied, according to the French theologian, two things: on the one hand it had its starting point in Holy Scripture and Church tradition (the twin sources of traditional Catholic authority), and on the other hand a taking seriously (*une prise de conscience*) by the African of his own values; in other words, not only an experience of these values but a reflection upon them.²¹ The lecture given by Tshibangu was a detailed spelling out of the implications and methods of the sort of African theology that Danielou envisaged--a theology that would need to be scientifically rigorous, not only to search and ponder carefully the sources of Christian belief, but also to seek to understand with the help of human and social sciences the African human reality in which the Christian message is received.²²

The 1968 '*Semaine Théologique*' was something of a landmark in the mounting acceptance of the possibility of African theology. In its struggle for wider recognition of the legitimacy of religious pluralism in which the quest for African theology could be made, the Faculty found a powerful ally in Pope Paul VI and in the Second Vatican Council summoned by Pope John in 1962-65. The Council in Rome assembled for the first time representatives from every continent, and it marked a turning point in the history of the Church in the sense that it expressed a much greater openness towards non-Western cultures and non-Christian religions. Vatican II's *Ad Gentes* on missionary activity taught clearly that orthodoxy and pluralism were not necessarily mutually exclusive. Paul VI, for his part, did not delay in applying what Vatican II had postulated in his *Africae Terrarum* (1967) and in his address to Ugandan bishops in 1969. Only 10 years separates Paul VI's *Africae Terrarum* from Pope Pius XII's encyclic *Fidei Donum* (1957), yet the two discourses represent two different eras in Catholic history. The earlier homily was essentially an appeal for the implantation²³ of the Catholic faith in Africa by having European Bishops release at least temporarily some of their priests for this task. Paul VI on the other hand, addressing himself to African peoples, listed moral and religious values contained within traditional

African cultures, values which were worthy of 'attentive consideration.' He went on:

The teaching and redemption of Jesus Christ constitute, in fact, the fulfilment, the renewal of all the good which exists in human tradition. That is why the African, in becoming a Christian, does not have to deny himself, but rather he affirms the old values in spirit and in truth.²⁴

Here, then, was official recognition at the highest level of a true African identity. Two years later, at the Symposium of African Bishops in Kampala in July 1969, Paul VI was no less outspoken in approving that pluralism which, while remaining faithful to official Catholic teaching, is also faithful to the 'style, temperament, genius and culture' of those who profess that faith. And he concluded: 'In this sense, you can and should have an African Christianity.'²⁵

Remarks such as these were widely reported in Africa, not least in the publications of the Faculty, and theologians like Mulago and Tshibangu did not hesitate to quote them in defense of their advocacy of an African theology.²⁶ The decade of the 1960s (the early years of the Faculty), therefore, saw the issue of African theology push beyond the tentative questionings about the legitimacy of such a theology to a position where the question was no longer 'If?' but 'How?' By 1970 Tshibangu felt able to write:

We have reached a place where the problem of African Theology is no longer one of principle, for that is now settled. The problem now is the elaboration of that theology.²⁷

Even Vanneste, who had long expressed skepticism about such a theology, was coming to admit that 'theological pluralism has become a "doctrina communis"', but insisted (perhaps wistfully?) that the very resistance that had been expressed by himself and others had contributed in its own way, for it had compelled African theologians to justify the legitimacy of their claims and to constantly deepen the theological and epistemological bases of their assertions.²⁸

Perhaps it can even be said that the period of theological controversy in the 1960s were the Faculty's most important years. The FTCK was an arena in which the struggle was actually taking place, with its lecturers and writers not mere spectators but contestants.²⁹ In the important debate, the FTCK played an active role, not only by the international conferences and discussions which it organized, but also, and perhaps especially, by the wider diffusion of the debate by means of its publications. Had it not been for these latter, the influence of the Faculty would have remained local and circumscribed.

Vanneste admits that with time his position has modified, but he also insists that he still prefers to lean towards the universal nature of Christian theology, rather than towards any specific, particularist expression of it.³⁰ His evolving position on the question of 'African theology' is evident in a series of three articles in the journal *Cultures et Développement*. The first was written 14 years after the Kinshasa debate and the other two followed at intervals of three years, so that in all 20 years are represented.

The first article in 1974 acknowledges that, looking back 14 years to the debate, it is obvious that the two 'theses' (his and Tshibangu's) were not so much contradictory as representing different but complementary emphases. Having admitted this much, Vanneste nevertheless maintains that while a certain pluralism is permissible, it cannot be an end in itself, but should serve as a means to enrich the universal.³¹

The second article in 1977 acknowledges the increasingly wide support for the idea of African theology. Vanneste underlines the different *raison d'être* of Western theology and African theology; while the former tends to be speculative, the latter is more pastoral, concerned not so much with the risk of asking radical questions about the Christian faith as with ridding Christianity of its 'foreignness'. While noting the contrast between the two theological paths, Vanneste again emphasizes their possible fruitful complementarity.³²

In the third article in 1980, Vanneste shows how African theology is burgeoning (conferences, bibliographies, etc.) and devotes considerable space to discussing admiringly the doctoral thesis of the young Zairian theologian Bimwenyi Kweshi, *'Discours théologique négro-africain; Problème des fondements'* (Louvain, 1977), which in Vanneste's opinion 'far surpasses anything yet written on the meaning, the possibility and the necessity of a truly African theology. It marks perhaps the largest step in the move on Vanneste's part from a reluctant skepticism to a cautious affirmation of the

possibility and desirability of theology in Africa which is worthy of the name 'African theology'.³³

Although the important differences of opinion within the Faculty over the question of 'African theology' were most conspicuous during the 1960s, they have not been entirely resolved in the years since. Three different Faculty staff members, representing either side of the 'divide', volunteered separately to the author that the names of the Kinshasa periodicals are significant, reflecting the opposing viewpoints of scholars.³⁴ It was decided³⁵ in 1977 that the name of the periodical published by the Faculty would be called *Revue Africaine de Théologie (RAT)* --it represented a publication produced on African soil reflecting on theology (whose universality was thereby implied). The *Bulletin de Théologie Africaine*, on the other hand, which was created a year or two later by the Ecumenical Association of African Theologians (in which several Faculty professors figure prominently) was, by clear inference, a publication which expressed theological reflection of a specifically African dimension. This was spelt out in its first editorial by the Coordinator of the Provisional Committee of the EAAT, Englebert Mveng:

Our Bulletin is a BULLETIN of AFRICAN THEOLOGY We no longer need to wonder whether an African theology is possible. From now on we are in the workshop [*chantier*] of African theology To insist on the birth of African theology is, for us, to liberate the Holy Spirit, who until now has been enchained within categories which are foreign to us, and which prevent us from fully grasping the message which he addresses to us today [capitals his].³⁶

Conversations in Kinshasa revealed a certain impatience felt by more than one Zairian Faculty member about the non-specific nature of the *Revue* and a hope that before much longer it will become more wholeheartedly African in its stance.³⁷

African Theology and *Authenticité*

The controversy of the 1960s was just over when a storm of a different nature gathered. Not for the first time in its history, national political events

were to affect the Faculty profoundly. On October 4, 1971, Zaire's President Mobutu launched his drive for 'authenticité'. It is at first view surprising that the President's veritable crusade for a reassertion of traditional Zairian culture does not find in the publications of the Faculty a more sympathetic echo. The *RAT* does not contain a single article on the subject from its launching in 1977 until 1984. A thesis on '*Christianisme et discours politique au Zaire*', summarized in *CRA* (1979) by its author Nyunda, turns out to concern only the pre-Mobutu years, while an article in the same periodical in 1980 entitled '*Evangélisation et authenticité*' concentrates wholly on steps towards inculturation advocated by the post-Vatican Catholic Church.

If the response by the Faculty was less than enthusiastic, the reason becomes apparent in the only article that directly addresses the 'ideology of recourse to authenticity.'³⁸ The article prints the address given by Faculty Professor Ngindu Mushete at an international conference on traditional religions held at Abidjan, Ivory Coast, in July 1974. In it Ngindu gives a blow by blow factual account of the astonishing measures taken by the Mobutu government in its authenticity drive. It is clear that Western Christianity in general and Catholicism in particular were singled out as one great obstacle in Zaire's quest to 'rediscover its soul.'³⁹

In 1972 Catholic (i.e. 'foreign') first names were outlawed, and only genuine African names were permitted. Soon after, Cardinal Malula was banished from his residence, accused of authoring a subversive document. In 1973 thirty-one journals were suppressed, most of them Catholic. The day following the suppressions the political party 'dissolved' the Episcopal Assembly, which it accused of subversion. In 1974 Zaire, as a 'secular state beyond religion', abolished December 25th as a public holiday. Later in the same year the State Commissioner for political affairs ordered the removal of crucifixes, pictures, or photos other than those of the President, from all public buildings (private dwellings and places of worship were exempt). That it was the Catholic Church in particular that Mobutu saw as a threat is clearly spelled out in a newspaper article (*Le Soir*, April 6th, 1973):

The human institution, I say human, which is called the Church, which exists at the Vatican, has nothing to do with Zaire, with Mobutu.... We will no longer accept political, economic, religious, or

spiritual domination imposed from the outside. Before independence, three authorities were acknowledged: Administration, Business firms, and the Church. The first two have given way; there is no reason why the Church should not do the same. I have never had any trouble from the Protestants, nor from the Kimbanguists, because they do not receive their orders from overseas. But the Zairian Bishops do.... They are nothing more than agents working for foreign powers.⁴⁰

The Catholics, for their part, rightly diagnosed the clash as essentially '*un affrontement des pouvoirs*.' A special note on Church-State relations in Zaire in *Pro Mundi Vita* (1975) pointed out that it was not essentially an ideological or religious conflict; it was rather that

the Catholic Church (and to a lesser extent other Christian bodies,) is the only solidly implanted institution in Zaire which still dares to pass judgement or give directives independently from the political party.... The regime feels it is being observed, scrutinized, and even condemned by the international character of the Catholic Church.⁴¹

In time the tension between the Catholics and the State relaxed somewhat, with hostility giving way to a mutual if wary respect. But in view of all that happened and was said, it is not difficult to appreciate why the Faculty has viewed the potential ally of 'authenticité' with such coldness and has given the notion such scant room in its publications.

If the cause of African theology in the Faculty owes little or nothing (at least openly) to nationalistic trends embodied in Mobutu's authenticity drive, it continues to find inspiration in post-Vatican II events, and innumerable articles in FTCK publications refer to the travels and pronouncements of the present Pope, John-Paul II, who is seen as being in continuity rather than rupture with his predecessor Paul VI. Most notable among the events chronicled in FTCK publications are the visits of the Pope to Africa in 1980 and the visit to Rome of Zairian Bishops in 1983. The Pope acknowledges building on the foundation laid by his predecessor Paul VI but goes further, by exploring the implications of 'africanization' into the recesses of liturgy, catechism, art and community life, and by seeking to find the balance between what is constant and what is cultural:

Of course, the Gospel is not to be identified with cultures; it transcends them. But the reign which the Gospel announces is lived out by people profoundly tied to a culture; the construction of the Kingdom cannot do without borrowing elements of human cultures. And from these elements evangelization should cause original expressions of Christian life, celebration and thought to surge forth from traditional culture. You wish to be at one and the same time fully Christian and fully African. The Holy Spirit is asking us to believe, in fact, that the leaven of the Gospel, in its authenticity, has the power to raise up Christians within diverse cultures, with all the richness of their heritage purified and transfigured.⁴²

To the Bishops of Kenya the Pope clarified further what 'Africanization' meant:

It is not a question of falsifying the Word of God or of emptying the Cross of its power (cf. I Cor. 1:17), but rather of bearing Christ into the very heart of African life and to raise the whole of African life up to Christ. Thus, not only is Christianity important for Africa, but Christ himself, in the members of His body, is African.⁴³

These remarks, designed to affirm the special contribution that Africa can make, are balanced by the Pope's frequent reminders of Papal and episcopal authority:

Theologians are the formal 'co-adjudicators' of the Magisterium, especially in approaching new questions, ... But it is no less true that only the Pope and the episcopal college are the organs of the Magisterium and the Magisterium is not delegated out to others.... Do not forget that it is up to you, the Bishops, in union with the Successor of Peter, to judge in the final resort the Christian authenticity of ideas and experiences.⁴⁴

In this way the Pope has sought at one and the same time to stress both the extent and the limits of the post-Conciliar flexibility of the Catholic Church.

The years since 1970 have thus seen the expanding Faculty working at elaborating the infrastructure of that African theology whose legitimacy it had fought so hard to establish back in the 1960s. Its four *Départments* have a current total of 370 students, of whom 173 are *séminaristes*, destined to have a career of some sort in the Catholic Church.⁴⁵ A recent inventory established that the Faculty library has over 21,000 books, a total which is brought up to nearly 28,000 if current periodicals and their back-numbers are included.⁴⁶ From the Faculty and its Departments flows a constant stream of published material, which more than anything else emphasizes the research leadership within its field which the Faculty has exercised within the continent of Africa. The Louvain principle '*On ne croira pas à une recherche qui n'aboutit pas à une publication*' ('no one will take seriously a piece of research which is not published') was put into practice from the early years of the Faculty.⁴ One of the Faculty's requirements for the doctoral qualification is that part of the thesis should be published. The two major periodicals relating to African theology (*RAT* and *CRA*)⁴⁸ contain, therefore, much material emanating from the Faculty itself.

The Centre d'Etudes des Religions Africaines and its Cahiers

A major dimension of the emergent African theological inquiry has been the scientific investigation of that cultural, religious and philosophical world which forms its context. In this investigation the FTCK-related *Centre d'Etudes des Religions Africaines* (CERA) has played an important part. Back in 1967, Vincent Mulago questioned:

Can we really hope for the blooming of an African theology as long as we lack an explicit and scientifically organized system of noting and interpreting the (African) reality?⁴⁹

The year before, Mulago had been appointed director of the newly created centre, which (as its name implies) is a department for research rather than for teaching. He set about his task with energy and enthusiasm. Sensing the full support of Vatican II (the 10th Anniversary report of the CERA quotes

extensively from *Ad gentes* and refers the reader to *Lumen gentium*), the new Centre had as its task the scientific understanding of African religions, beliefs and customs, both traditional and modern, in order to resolve the problem of the integration of Christianity to the way of life of Africans.⁵⁰ A library centre was set up to facilitate research; it currently houses some 2,500 volumes, of which the large majority relate to the African religious, ethnographic and linguistic context.

According to Mulago, the rigorous scientific research that CERA was committed to was actively encouraged by the then rector of the University, M. Gillon.⁵¹ And the Faculty, characteristically not content merely to discuss and research, decided from the outset that there should be a published review, *Cahiers des Religions Africaines*, through which the discussion could be widened both as to input and as to readership. Its editorial committee was made up of staff of the FTCK and of University specialists (particularly from the Literature and Social Science Faculties) both in Kinshasa and from other African and even European countries. The first edition appeared in 1967, a modest double number in type-style offset form. Publication has continued since then bi-annually, and the quality of printing was established at its present high standard with No. 3 (1968). According to the subscription and dispatch files in the Faculty Library, the *Cahiers* is exchanged with some 66 other journals from around the world. In addition there are 127 subscriptions from within Africa and 184 from elsewhere. Altogether this indicates both the wide circulation of the journal and also the wealth of the Centre as a focal point of documentation. In addition to the *Cahiers*, the Centre also has a published series *Bibliothèque du CERA*, which by 1985 had published eight significant works, ranging in subject matter from African world view to Islam and from African philosophy to the Kitawala sect.⁵²

An analysis of all items (i.e., essays, monographs, reviews, reports, bibliographies, etc.) appearing in the *Cahiers* between 1967 and 1985 reveals a penchant for studies in the realm of traditional Black Africa. Of the 337 items, no less than 211 (over 60%) are of this nature. And the fact that almost half of the items in this category are longer articles and monographs representing some sort of original research (rather than commentaries on what others have said) is further evidence that the journal seeks to provide a serious channel of research. Most of the 108 items which concern specific African tribes (traditions, institutions, language, etc.) are to be found in this category;

some of these are ethnographic bibliographies serving the researcher with valuable resource tools. Several CRA articles explore the African traditional understanding of sin and forgiveness or reconciliation. A large number of other items concern the interrelation of traditional views with Christianity. The remaining contributions address a very wide spectrum of subjects, many of which relate to contemporary (rather than traditional) African concerns and to various international questions. Taken as a whole, the *Cahiers* constitutes an important contribution to African studies, concerned primarily to examine the traditional thinking and society of Black Africa, yet aware that the Continent unavoidably is influenced by and open to the rest of the world. Two entire volumes of CRA (Nos. 21-24) were devoted to full reporting on a conference organized by CERA in Kinshasa in 1978 on 'African Religions and Christianity'. The Conference was international, ecumenical and multi-disciplinary with some 38 participants from nine countries. Almost half of these were theologians, but there were also five philosophers, twelve social science specialists, two historians and a psychologist. The first part was devoted largely to African traditional religion, but including also more modern elements of African experience (messianic movements and Tempels' Jamaa movement). The second part concentrated on the relations between the African world and Christianity. Mulago, summing up the Conference, could speak of the wisdom and originality of traditional African thought and its persistent importance in the individual and communal life of Africans. He stressed the need for open and sensitive dialogue between that thought and the Gospel for an African theology to come into being which would be more than a simple echo of theologies 'elaborated in the home countries of the first heralds of the Gospel.' Such a theology, Mulago insisted, would be one:

resolutely informed by and open to life in all its dimensions, capable of establishing an ethic, a social practice, a specific spirituality and one which would be able to integrate within itself that religious sensibility which is proper to Africans.⁵³

Two entire numbers of the *Cahiers* in 1982 were devoted to African music, art, theatre and literature, serving to illustrate again the African preference to understand 'religion' in its many-faceted dimensions.

The Faculty's *Revue Africaine de Théologie*

While both the name and the objectives of the *Cahiers des Religions Africaines* indicate a well-defined aim, the *Revue Africaine de Théologie* displays a much broader range of interests. It too enjoys a wide international circulation, with 213 subscriptions from within Africa and 229 from outside the continent. In any given issue of the *Revue* might be found articles on New Testament exegesis, essays on European philosophers, reports of international conferences and debates on African Church problems. This is in keeping with the stated aims of the journal:

It seeks to contribute to a new synthesis of Christian life and thought, in conformity with the genius and aspirations of African peoples.⁵⁴

The majority of articles have some direct or indirect bearing upon Africa, but by no means all. Among the more important fields addressed by RAT are: Biblical studies, philosophy, ethics and sacraments. If full-length articles are considered (which probably, more than the other types of items, represent original research), then the largest number of contributions to the RAT, almost one third, are to be found in the field of Biblical studies (exegesis and hermeneutics). Despite a much talked of African predilection for the Old Testament, the overwhelming majority of these studies are in the New Testament (NT, 23; OT, 1). The 'Secrétaire du Département de Théologie' and Professor of New Testament at the Faculty, Atal sa Angang Andziegu, explained this imbalance as due in part to the specialization of the teachers.⁵⁵ But he also insisted that it would be hermeneutically and methodologically incorrect to 'indulge in merely establishing parallels between the Old Testament and African thinking', and quoted Luke 24:27 as establishing that it is through Christ that the Old Testament is truly understood. Accordingly, any hermeneutic which has as its goal a simple correlation of Old Testament and pre-Christian African thought and values is falling short of its true purpose. Most of the studies are detailed textual criticism or exegetical essays which would be just as at home in any European journal, and are apparently not designed to integrate in any direct way with the African scene. Atal would make no apology for the 'non-African' nature of these articles: 'We oppose the idea of an "African selection" of Scripture.

Of course, there must be application [to the African context], but this follows and indeed it presupposes a prior strict exegesis.'⁵⁶

Nevertheless, other studies do seek to point the way beyond textual exegesis for its own sake and to address biblical issues of importance for the Church in Africa. The report of the '*Premier Congrès des Biblistes Africains*', held in Kinshasa in December 1978, is chronicled in RAT 1979. While covering such subjects as continuity and discontinuity between the Testaments and that between the Old Testament and African traditional religions, the report concludes with Mgr Mukeng'a Kalond's insistence that 'the task of biblical exegesis is not so much to make lots of analyses, but rather to reveal a living Christ who meets a given people in order to bring them God's salvation.'⁵⁷ Mgr Monsengwo's address in 1982 to the Pontifical Bible Institute in Rome is published in RAT 1982. In it the Auxiliary Bishop of Kisangani pleads for the 'eminently ecclesiastical and pastoral function of Scripture, too often befogged by a show of erudite wisdom' and urges a constant dialogue between the 'professionals of the Word of God' and its 'users' (preachers and hearers).⁵⁸

Philosophy finds coverage in both of the Faculty's major journals. The RAT has a total of 26 philosophy items, half of them articles, the rest mainly reviews of books published either at the Faculty or elsewhere. The CRA has 11 items, four of which are articles, directly concerned with philosophy (although statistics become less meaningful where such categories as religion/philosophy/cosmology are so interrelated). Several articles point to the difference between traditional Western analytical and scholastic philosophy, with its roots in ancient Greece and Rome, and the practical, synthetic, global categories more familiar to African thought. Certain European authors (theologians and philosophers) are appealed to, however, as making important breaks with the mainstream of Western speculative philosophical thinking and opening new tracks which run closer to African insights. Among these would be Karl Rahner with his notion of 'transcendental anthropology'--a theology which has man at its centre, not in a God-less but in a God-affirming manner, and which Ngimbi-Nseka (RAT, 1979) sees as fitting well with African cosmology.⁵⁹ Gabriel Marcel's emphasis upon 'inter-subjectivity' finds a ready response in the African notion of corporate solidarity, according to the same author in another article (RAT, 1979).⁶⁰ Nkeramihigo favours Paul Ricoeur's rejection of that form of

existentialism which falsely opposes creation and liberty and he approves of insistence that justification is the secret of liberty (RAT, 1981).⁶¹ Perhaps most of all, the French philosopher Bergson is considered (notably by Tshibangu⁶²) to have called radically into question the 'aristotelianism' which is at the base of Western philosophy. It is perhaps for this reason that a large number of the theses and dissertations produced by the students at the Faculty concern 'bergsonisme'.

Turning from Europe to Africa, the publications of the Faculty reflect the differences of opinion as to whether there exists such a thing as 'African Philosophy'.⁶³ On the one hand Professor Smet has produced a large bibliography of philosophy in Africa. There is a flourishing Department of Philosophy and African Religions. Louvain's Professor Ladrière is quite categorical: 'African philosophy is today a well-established reality, as is attested by a constantly growing list of works.'⁶⁴ Others are skeptical. P. J. Hountondji (whose book *Sur la philosophie africaine* is reviewed by Basinsa in RAT 1979) insists that philosophy as a theoretical discipline cannot, by definition, be unconscious. So Tempels was wrong to speak of a 'Bantu philosophy' which existed collectively though inexplicitly. Moreover, true philosophy must be written, for only then is the memory freed to be critical. Oral tradition cannot therefore count as philosophy.⁶⁵ The Zairian reviewer, Basinsa, disagrees with such a narrow definition, claiming that philosophy can be widened to include all 'explication of human experience.'⁶⁶

Faculty member Tshiamalenga directly addresses the question in his article '*La vision Ntu de l'homme*',⁶⁷ listing those who affirm an African philosophy (Tempels, Kagame, Rubbens, Mujynya) and those who reject it, at least in traditional Africa (Crahay, Hountondji and Kagame latterly). Tshiamalenga seeks a position between the two groups. He sides with this second group in proposing that the rising generation of African philosophers be done with the 'tempelsian' notion of a 'it goes without saying' African philosophy, which confuses the African '*vécu*' with the '*réflexif*' which is the proper area of philosophy in the strict sense. But he claims that the rigid definitions prescribed by this group are arbitrary and too narrow. He concludes:

We hold, therefore, that certain stories, accounts and proverbs, etc., are the means deliberately chosen by traditional Bantu to transmit the

fruit of their reflection about the world, man and the Absolute. It is, of course, a philosophy which is incomplete and fragmentary. But then, all philosophy, even the best, is incomplete insofar as it is a human undertaking. There are merely degrees of incompleteness.⁶⁸

Apart from the obvious but important distinction that the debate clarifies between traditional implicit 'philosophy' and modern explicit philosophy, there remains great diversity of philosophical reflection in black Africa. In August 1978 in Dusseldorf, during the 16th World Congress on Philosophy, there took place a symposium on philosophy in Africa, at which nine Africans contributed. The results were presented in a book edited by A. Diemer, *Philosophy in the Present Situation of Africa*. The book is reviewed by FTCK's Laleye, who concludes:

The African philosophers present have illustrated eloquently the great diversity--and therefore the richness--of current African philosophical activity.... They will have given the other participants the impression that they are free thinkers, freely going different ways.⁶⁹

Despite that diversity, it seems clear that increasingly the existence of African philosophy is an accepted fact. Without doubt, the increasing volume of published material helps to establish its validity and assists its development--and the Faculty is in the forefront of such publication. In 1983 the bi-annual *Revue Philosophique de Kinshasa* was launched by the Département de Philosophie et Religions Africaines of the Faculty. Its inaugural issue included 18 articles covering African philosophy, philosophy of language, moral philosophy, esthetic philosophy and the philosophy of development. Evidence of the original reflection contained in the RPK is an article by the present department head, Mudiji, '*La forme et la transforme du masque traditionnel africain*', based on his doctoral thesis at Louvain on Pende masks.⁷⁰ Besides full-length articles, the RPK contains book reviews, reports of conferences and occasional interviews on philosophical subjects.

The journals of the FTCK cover a wide range of subjects and overall it is difficult to discern an official FTCK 'line'. Authors are free to express themselves, and frequently they reveal differing and even opposing positions. While there are articles which have little or nothing to do with Africa directly, such articles are in the minority and the journals incontestably are orientated

towards Africa. The frequency with which articles refer to documents of Vatican II or to papal pronouncements gives the journal (and especially the RAT) an unmistakably Catholic stance, though occasional Protestant contributions are present. The frequent chronicling of international events and conferences is designed to broaden the horizons of the readers to encompass trends beyond the boundaries of Africa and the book reviews (four or five per issue in CRA, twice that number in RAT) inform readers of what others elsewhere are thinking. The RAT also has for many years published a classified 'bibliographie sélective' of African theology, which now comprises well over 6,000 items.⁷¹

Theses

The FTCK stipulates that students must submit a thesis as part of their graduation requirement. The theses initiate the students not only into personal research but also into expressing that research by writing. Since the beginning of the Faculty's history, there have been well over one thousand theses presented.⁷² The largest number of theses (about 58%) is accounted for at *Graduat* level, where the dissertation is usually of about 50 pages long. First degree level (*Licence*) accounts for another 38%; theses in this category are anything from 60 to 180 pages long. The remainder of the theses have been done either at doctoral level (200 to 400 pages) or at the pre-doctoral *Diplôme d'Etudes Spéciales* (DES) level (30 to 40 pages). An analysis of the theses reveals that by far the majority of the theses are in the field of non-African philosophy (e.g. on Sartre, Marx, Marcel, Bergson, etc.) The student choices are influenced both by the 'recognized universal influence' of the philosophers in question or by the preference and competence of the thesis supervisor.⁷³ Most of the theses related to African philosophy explore the writings of Placide Tempels or of the Zairian theologian/philosopher Bimwenyi Kweshi.⁷⁴ Several attempt to develop philosophical terminology in African languages. The high number of theses in the category African traditional religion are, with only three exceptions, specific tribal studies rather than general and theoretical works. Church history, either Western or African, is notable for its absence, although there are several theses (including four doctorates) which research historical

theology (e.g. patristic, medieval or reformation studies). The highest number of doctoral theses relate to Biblical studies, although it must be said that they, and indeed the large majority of all doctoral theses, were written early on in the history of the faculty, perhaps indicating that despite the enviable academic level of the FTCK, the preference is still to do research degrees in the West.

Conferences

The influence of the Faculty has been further extended by conferences which are organized by its different Departments. They permit internationally known participants to visit the Faculty and cater for a cross-fertilization of ideas. The conference lectures and debates are attended by a public of several hundred. The proceedings are reported in detail in the Faculty's periodicals, or in other Kinshasa-based reviews, and thus enjoy a wide readership both within the country and internationally.

The *'Semaines Théologiques de Kinshasa'* were started in 1964 and have taken place almost every year since then.⁷⁵ The full reports were originally published by the Jesuit *Revue du Clergé Africain*, until it was suppressed in 1972; since then the Faculty itself has continued with the series. Formerly each diocese in Zaire used to be encouraged to send one or two delegates, but financial and transport difficulties within the country have made this increasingly impractical. Between 200 and 300 attend the *'Semaines'*, which are usually held in the big Catholic conference and retreat centre at Nganda in Kinshasa (although one year it was held at the Faculty itself).

The *Centre d'Etudes des Religions Africaines* organized its first *'Colloque International'* in 1978, to mark the tenth anniversary of its existence. Its *'Actes'* [Proceedings] are fully reported in CERA's own *Cahier des Religions Africaines*.⁷⁶ The considerable cost of organizing such a *'Colloque'* (approximately \$40,000 each) is met in large part by interested donors (individuals and groups).

Since 1976 the *Département de Philosophie et des Religions Africaines* has similarly organized its *'Semaine Philosophique'*. The *'Semaines'* have taken place almost yearly and the proceedings have been published by the Faculty as a series entitled *'Recherches Philosophiques Africaines'*.⁷⁷

Conclusion

Exactly how influential the Faculty has been and continues to be in helping to bring about an African theology is probably impossible to determine. While the periodicals, with their nation-wide and international readership, have done much to establish the Kinshasa Faculty in the very forefront of theological debate and research in Africa, it is more difficult to ascertain to what extent the views expressed therein have practical repercussion at the various levels of church life. Even amongst the Faculty members and editorial staff themselves there is disagreement as to the influence or otherwise of the published material. The compiler of the *'Bibliographie Sélective de Théologie Africaine'* expressed doubt as to whether the academic discussions of the periodicals had much importance for people at grass-roots level and felt that the theologians task was merely in the scholarly domain.⁷⁸ In contrast, the Director of CERA, Mulago, is of the opinion that the impact of thinking at the Faculty is indeed felt at non-academic levels. He cited the example of the *'Semaine Théologique'* in 1973 as having had a profound influence upon Cardinal Malula, who was compelled to rethink the role of the local church and its leaders (Lingala: *'bakambi'*), and has sought in consequence to increase the responsibility of the *'communautés de base'* within the traditionally strongly hierarchical Catholic Church in Zaire. He also explained that in an effort to avoid theological elitism, the *'Colloques Internationaux'* have sought to include in their programme an evening assembly of a less specialised nature, open to the public and held in a church building in the city, thereby encouraging public participation. As yet another example of the 'filter-down' effect of academic thinking, Mulago cited the *'Semaine Théologique'* in 1985, entitled *'Charisme de la vie consacrée'*, the subject of which was taken up the following year by the episcopal conference (whose concern is pastoral rather than academic).⁷⁹

Bishop Tshibangu, who from the beginning of the Faculty's history has been a key figure in the on-going debate on African theology, is also insistent that there is and must be a close relationship between the academic and the practical. He explained this conviction as a 'personal intuition', that African theology cannot be truly scientific unless it reflects upon the *'réalités de base'*. When he was a teacher at the Faculty he used to send his students out into the streets of Kinshasa to seek by means of questionnaires to understand

the different concepts of divination and death and the here-after held by ordinary non-academic people. Then his students would come back to the classroom to report. The creation of CERA was partly a result of this concern and methodology. However, Tshibangu admitted that often a great distance separates much of academia from everyday life. When he sought in his preaching in local churches to 'translate' into simpler form the learned homilies that he had had to prepare for academic circles, he found that he simply was not communicating. While the academic debates have their place, Tshibangu observes that it is spiritual renewal which does most to purify and enrich Christian living. Through the working of the Holy Spirit the simple come to an understanding which is more profound than that of the learned, a discernment come from the Holy Spirit. For Tshibangu, therefore, the local church is a most important '*lieu théologique*', and spiritual (charismatic) renewal succeeds in exposing the whole of life to the Gospel.⁸⁰

The view is also expressed by yet others⁸¹ that the influence is not only (or even primarily) downward from the Faculty to the Church grassroots, but rather the reverse: Things are happening at the grassroots level, people are thinking in certain ways, seeing things differently. The theologians in turn are seeking to conceptualize these behavioural trends and tendencies.

If it is true, as M. E. Andrews claims, that no people can ever produce a theology who are not 'first prepared to take themselves seriously, and this means in part seeing the importance of the details that are near and not far',⁸² then the Faculty is helping to provide the essential infrastructure of an African theology. The colonial years, by and large, caused Africans to lose pride in their world and in their past and present values. The last thirty or forty years have seen a gradual and multidimensional recovery of that lost pride. The FTCK has made a distinguished contribution to that recovery in the theological dimension. The particular emphasis upon academic interaction and publication that has characterized the contribution of the Faculty from the outset is one clear indication of Africa taking itself seriously.

NOTES

¹ For a fuller treatment of this subject see the author's *African Christian Theology* (San Francisco: Mellen, 1993).

² R. Yakemtchouk, *L'Université Lovanium et sa Faculté de Théologie* (Chastre, 1983) p. 7.

³ *Ibid.*, pp.18-37.

⁴ A. Vanneste, *La Faculté de Théologie Catholique de Kinshasa. Vingt-cinq ans d'existence*, RAT 6:12 (1982) p. 219.

⁵ Yakemtchouk, p. 67.

⁶ Yakemtchouk, p. 83.

⁷ P. Tempels, *La philosophie bantoue* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1949). The repercussions of Tempels' writings (favorable and hostile) both within Congo and in Europe are indicated in the fascinating exchange of letters between Tempels and Hulstaert in F. Bontinck, *Aux origines de la Philosophie Bantoue; la correspondance Tempels-Hulstaert* (Kinshasa: FTCK, 1985).

⁸ *Des prêtres noirs s'interrogent* (Paris: Rencontres 47, 1956). Although the book caused a stir in some circles immediately, it was only later that the full importance of the book was realized. Nevertheless, 1956 is often spoken of in the world of African francophone theology as something of a watershed date on account of the book.

⁹ In conversation (Kinshasa, 1 Feb 1987), Mulago explained that at the time, African Catholic students in Rome had formed an 'Association' with its own stencilled review of theological reflection. Alioune Diop, the General Secretary of *Présence Africaine* (an African cultural and publishing society in Paris) took the initiative to publish certain of the review's articles (among which were Mulago's outlines of his doctoral thesis, which was eventually published with the title *Un visage africain du christianisme*.) Mulago was at pains to insist that it was not the students who pushed to publish their articles, and that it was Alioune Diop who chose the title *Des prêtres noirs s'interrogent*.

¹⁰ J. Malula. "L'âme bantoue face à l'Évangile" *Vivante Afrique* (1958) p. 13.

¹¹ The new Administrative Council included six bishops (some of them national) of different regions of Congo and several lay figures of national

repute, such as the Congolese Governor of the Banque Nationale. Yakemtchouk, p. 99.

¹²T. Tshibangu, *Présence Universitaire* (Kinshasa, 1959) p. 16.

¹³A. Vanneste, *Revue du Clergé Africain*, May, 1958, pp. 225-236.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵The Jesuit *Revue du Clergé Africain*, produced at Mayidi, Congo, continued publication until it was suppressed in 1972. Especially in its earlier years it bore the mark of the magisterial character of Father Denis (SJ).

Telema started publication in 1975 under its Zairian editor Boka di Mpassi (SJ) and represents the continuation of the previous *Revue*, although its first editorial avoids any reference to it.

¹⁶T. Tshibangu, "Débat sur la théologie africaine" *Revue du Clergé Africain* 11:4 (July 1960) p. 346.

¹⁷Vanneste, p. 351.

¹⁸On the 'Semaines', see further below.

¹⁹Quoted by M. Ngindu, "La Quatrième Semaine Théologique de Kinshasa et la problématique d'une théologie africaine", in *CRA* 2:4 (1968) p. 359.

²⁰Ngindu, p. 359.

²¹Reported by Ngindu, p. 361.

²²T. Tshibangu, pp. 363-372.

²³The notion of 'implantation' seemed, at least to many Africans, to represent the mere transplantation of European ecclesiastical teaching and institutions into Africa, and it was roundly rejected by the Declaration of Bishops of Africa and Madagascar (1974), who favoured rather the expression 'incarnation' of the Christian message in Africa.

²⁴Quoted by Vanneste, "Bilan théologique d'un voyage apostolique", *RAT* 4:8 (1980) p. 228.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

²⁶E.g. V. Mulago, "Le problème de la théologie africaine à la lumière de Vatican II" *Renouveau de l'Eglise et Nouvelles Eglises. Colloque sur la théologie africaine*, Kinshasa, 1967, p. 115-152.

²⁷T. Tshibangu, quoted by Vanneste, "La théologie africaine...Note historique", *RAT* 7:14 (1983) p. 273.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

²⁹The debate on African theology continued at the 7th International African Seminar, held at the University of Ghana, April, 1965, the report of which

was published for the International Africa Institute, C. G. Baëta, ed. *Christianity in Tropical Africa* (London: OUP, 1968). The discussion reported therein on page 148, concerning Mbiti's paper and involving R. Bureau and V. Mulago, was, according to Prof Richard Gray (one of the participants) very serious and even heated, reflecting that the debate was much more than academic. (Conversation with R. Gray, July 1987).

³⁰Conversation with A. Vanneste, 28 Jan 1987, Kinshasa.

³¹A. Vanneste, "Où en est le problème de la théologie africaine?", *Cultures et Développement* , 6 (1974) pp. 149-167.

³²A. Vanneste, "L'actualité théologique en Afrique", *Cultures et Développement* 9 (1977) pp. 631-650.

³³A. Vanneste, "La théologie africaine en route", *Cultures et Développement* 12 (1980) pp. 325-346.

³⁴The fact that all three expressly wished to remain anonymous on the point indicated that the issue still remains a sensitive one within the Faculty.

³⁵It has been difficult to ascertain how the decision in 1977 was made, but it may be supposed that Vanneste as Dean at the time had a prominent part in it.

³⁶E. Mveng, "Editorial", *Bulletin de Théologie Africaine* 1:1 (1979) p. 6.

³⁷Conversation with Mulago, Kinshasa, 1 Feb 1987.

³⁸M. Ngindu, "Le propos du recours à l'authenticité et le christianisme au Zaïre " , CRA 8:16 (1974) pp. 209-230. A slightly abridged translation of the French article appears as "Authenticity and Christianity in Zaire" , in J. Fasholé-Luke, R. Gray, A. Hastings, G. Tasié (eds), *Christianity in Independent Africa* (London: Rex Collings, 1978) pp. 228-241.

³⁹Ngindu, "Le propos du recours " , p. 210.

⁴⁰Quoted by Ngindu, p. 217.

⁴¹Ngindu, p. 221.

⁴²"Le Pape chez nous, Discours de S.S. le Pape Jean-Paul II, prononcé à l'occasion de son voyage au Zaïre," 2-6 mai, 1980 , RAT 4:4 (1980) p. 232.

⁴³Quoted by Vanneste, "Bilan théologique..." , RAT 4:8 (1980) p. 233.

⁴⁴"Discours du Pape aux Evêques du Zaïre", Kinshasa, May 3, 1980, RAT 4:8 (1980).

⁴⁵Faculty statistics for 1986-87, compiled and supplied by Léon de Saint-Moulin (Academic Secretary). The total number of FTCK graduates since 1957 comes to 3,683.

⁴⁶Figures are from the FTCK *Programme des Cours* 1986-87.

⁴⁷The Louvain 'saying' was quoted to me by F. Bontinck to explain the prominence given to publishing by the Faculty in Kinshasa. (Kinshasa, 1 Feb 1987).

⁴⁸The third Faculty periodical, *Revue Philosophique de Kinshasa*, has not been included for consideration in this thesis. While it is true that theology and philosophy share certain common concerns, and while several articles in CRA and RAT explore the contribution of the one to the other, the RPK sees itself as a specialist organ of current research for Zairian and non-Zairian philosophers (editorial in RPK 1:1 [1983]). Many of the RPK articles relate to specialist and technical aspects of philosophy in Europe and Africa. Its thrust is thus tangential to the focus of this article.

⁴⁹Discussion at the fourth 'Semaine Théologique' in Kinshasa in 1968; CRA 2:4 (1968) p. 367.

⁵⁰CRA 9:17 (1975) p. 9, 18.

⁵¹Conversation with Mulago, Kinshasa, 1 Feb 1987.

⁵²The series *Bibliothèque du CERA* includes: Mulago, *La religion traditionnelle des Bantu et leur vision du monde* (Kinshasa, 1980); Smet, *Philosophie Africaine—textes choisis I & II* (Kinshasa, 1975); Buakasa, *L'impensé du discours. 'Kindoki' et 'Nkisi' en pays Kongo du Zaïre*, (Kinshasa, ?); Ngindu et al, *Combats pour un christianisme africain Mélanges en l'honneur du Prof V. Mulago* (Kinshasa, 1981); Jomier, *L'Islam aux multiples aspects* (Kinshasa, 1982); Mwene-Batende, *Mouvements messianiques et protestation social. Le cas du Kitawala chez les Kumu du Zaïre* (Kinshasa, 1982); Nkiere, *La parenté comme système idéologique. Essai d'interprétation de l'ordre lignagère chez les Basakata* (Kinshasa, 1984); Bontinck, *Aux origines de la 'philosophie bantoue'. La correspondance Tempels-Hulstaert* (Kinshasa, 1985). Two other books in the series are out of print.

⁵³Mulago, "Discours de clôture", CRA 2:21-22, p. 284.

⁵⁴Vanneste, "La Faculté... Vingt-cinq ans", RAT 6:12, p. 223.

⁵⁵Conversation with Atal sa Angang, FTCK, 4 Feb 1987.

⁵⁶The purpose of exegesis, according to Atal, is first to understand the biblical text. Having done everything possible to understand the author's intention, the exegete's task is then to convey faithfully the same message to people of a different time and place. There is danger in seeking a 'pre-existent Christianity' (in African traditional religion) and 'concordisme' must be

avoided. For Christianity is new (*'un nouveauté'*). Some Africans, in their antipathy to colonialism, have ended up reacting against Christianity. (Conversation with Atal sa Angang, FTCK, 4 Feb 1987).

⁵⁷Mukeng'a Kalond, quoted in "*Le premier congrès des biblistes africains*", RAT 3:6 (1979) p. 84.

⁵⁸P. Monsengwo, "*Exégèse biblique et questions africaines*" , RAT 6:12 (1982) p. 165.

⁵⁹Ngimbi-Nseka, "*Théologie et anthropologie transcendentale*" , RAT 3:5 (1979) pp. 5-29.

⁶⁰Ngimbi-Nseka, "*Esquisse d'une éthique d'intersubjectivité*" , RAT 3:6 (1979) pp. 185-203.

⁶¹T. Nkeramihigo, "*La problématique de la transcendance chez Ricoeur*" , RAT 5:9 (1981) pp. 7-18.

⁶²T. Tshibangu, "*Intelligence de la foi et voies non-occidentales de la théologie*" , a lecture given at the *Semaine Théologique de Kinshasa* in July 1968, and discussed by Ngindu Mushete in CRA 2:2 (1968) pp. 353-372. Cf. also Tshibangu's doctoral thesis: *Théologie positive et théologie spéculative. Position traditionnelle et nouvelle problématique* (Louvain, 1965) pp. 384-385.

⁶³Cf. H. Lodewyckx, *Philosophie Africaine, Origines et Perspectives in Bijdragen, tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie* 47 (1986) 141-169. The article helpfully sets out different stages in the 'evolution' of African Philosophy, and is well regarded by Faculty teachers of philosophy.

⁶⁴J. Ladrière, *Perspectives sur la philosophie africaine* , RAT 5:9 (1981) p. 57.

⁶⁵P. J. Hountondji, *Sur la 'philosophie africaine'. Critique de l'éthnophilosophie* (Paris: Maspéro, 1977), p. 11.

⁶⁶Basinsa, RAT 3:5 (1979) pp. 133-138.

⁶⁷N. Tshiamalenga, *La vision Ntu de l'homme* , CRA 7:14 (1973) pp. 175-198.

⁶⁸ *Ibid* ., pp. 176, 179.

⁶⁹I-P. Laleye, RAT 6:12 (1982) p. 266.

⁷⁰M. Mudiji, *Formes et fonctions symboliques des masques 'mbuya' des Phende. Essai d'iconologie et d'herméneutique* (Louvain, 1981). Mudiji stated that he did his 'Licence' thesis on the philosopher Blondel, but that he

derived little benefit from it. For his doctoral thesis he preferred to be open towards the African milieu (conversation with Mudiji, FTCK, 4 Feb 1987).

⁷¹The 'bibliographies sélectives' were started by Prof. Ntedika Konde in RAT 1:2 and have continued ever since, with Mbiye Lumbala taking over from Ntedika. To date the bibliographies list publications up until 1980, but the series is to continue in future issues.

⁷²Each year's theses are listed in RAT the following year. As of the 1984-85 listing, 1,015 theses had been submitted.

⁷³Conversation with Mudiji, director of the *Département de Philosophie et des Religions Africaines*, FTCK, 4 Feb 1987.

⁷⁴Bimwenyi Kweshi's most important work is his doctoral thesis: *Discours théologique négro-africain. Problème des fondements* (Louvain, 1977) (published by *Présence Africaine*, Paris, 1981.) It received Louvain's 'la plus grande distinction'. Ngindu Mushete, reviewing the thesis, concludes: (Bimwenyi) 'vise à faire une théologie africaine compréhensive et explicative, une théologie où la culture africaine n'est pas seulement décrite, mais intégrée à un ensemble conceptuel plus vaste, permettant une reprise critique des données fondamentales de la révélation chrétienne', *Bulletin de Théologie Africaine*, 1:1 (1979) p.135.

⁷⁵*Semaines Théologiques de Kinshasa*: 1. 1964--*La théologie à l'heure du Concile*; 2. 1965--*L'Eglise et le monde*; 3. 1966--*Le Dieu de nos pères*; 4. 1968--*Renouveau de l'Eglise et nouvelles églises (Colloque sur la théologie africaine)*; 5. 1970--*Le mariage chrétien en Afrique*; 6. 1971--*La pertinence du christianisme en Afrique*; 7. 1972--*Foi chrétienne et langage humain*; 8. 1973--*Ministères et services dans l'Eglise*; 9. 1974--*Péché, pénitence, et réconciliation. Tradition chrétienne et culture africaine*; 10. 1975--*L'évangélisation dans l'Afrique d'aujourd'hui*; 11. 1976--*Pastorale et épanouissement des vocations dans l'Afrique d'aujourd'hui*; 12. 1977--*Libération en Jésus-Christ*; 13. 1979--*Justice chrétienne et promotion humaine*; 14. 1981--*Les intellectuels africains et l'Eglise*; 15. 1985--*Charisme et la vie consacrée*.

⁷⁶The three *Colloques Internationaux* to date are: 1. 1978--*Religions africaines et christianisme*; 2. 1983--*Afrique et ses formes de vie spirituelles*; 3. 1986--*Médiations du sacré, célébrations créatrices*.

⁷⁷The nine *Actes des Semaines Philosophiques de Kinshasa* (and two other works) are listed in the duplicated document of the Faculty's theological and philosophical publications.

⁷⁸Conversation with Mbiye L., FTCK, 30 Jan 1987.

⁷⁹Conversation with Mulago, Kinshasa, 1 Feb 1987.

⁸⁰Conversation with Tshibangu, 2 Feb 1987. Tshibangu was anxious to insist that lest it should become nothing more than individualistic piety, charismatic renewal should express itself within a local church where it can be guided aright.

⁸¹In a conversation with two Bishops and three priests, at the Scheutist 'Centre d'Accueil' on 31 Jan 1987.

⁸²M. E. Andrews, "The O.T. as Israelite Theology and its Implications for a New Zealand Theology", *South East Asia Journal of Theology* 17, issue 2 (1976) pp. 32-40. I am grateful to Dr. H. W. Turner for drawing my attention to this article.

Appendix

Publications of the *Faculté de Théologie Catholique de Kinshasa*

1. Theological

Journal: *Revue Africaine de Théologie* (1977--), twice yearly. Devoted to scientific study of Christian sources and the confrontation between Christian religious heritage on the one hand and African realities on the other. Seeks to contribute to the elaboration of a new synthesis of Christian life and thought which will be in conformity with the genius and aspirations of African peoples.

Series: *Recherches Africaines de Théologie* (1971--), 8 works. Devoted to scientific work in biblical, historical and systematic theology.

Series: *Eglise Africaine en dialogue* (1975--), 5 works. Intended to promote dialogue between theological and religious science specialists on the one hand and the non-specialist Christian and non-Christian public on the other.

Series: *Semaines Théologiques de Kinshasa* (1964--), almost yearly. Full reports of lectures and discussion of the nearly-annual public conferences organised by the FTCK on matters of theological importance.

2. Philosophical

Series: *Recherches Philosophiques Africaines* (1977--), 11 works.

Concerned to organise Africa's thinking of yesterday and today, in response to its historic existence, liberation and integrated development.

Series: *Cours et Documents* (1979--), 6 works by Faculty professors, designed for use as teaching and research texts.

Series: *FILOZOFI* (1979--), 4 works. Philosophical reflection in African languages in order to promote the scientific use of African languages, translate important Western texts and encourage the formation of a philosophy in African languages, so as to revitalize the African genius and its creative capacity.

Journal: *Revue Philosophique de Kinshasa* (1983--), twice yearly. Will publish any research likely to promote philosophical reflection in Africa.

Journal: *Afrique et Philosophie* (1977--) Student journal, designed for student philosophical 'target practice'.

3. Centre d'Etudes des Religions Africaines

Journal: *Cahiers des Religions Africaines* (1967--), twice yearly.

Series: *Bibliothèque de CERA* (1973--), 8 works. Designed to permit a systematic and scientific study of African traditional and modern religions and customs.

The Culture Of Poverty: Implications for Urban Church Ministry

Julius K. Muthengi

The Church's responsibility to the poor is undeniable but ignorance often bars the way to effective involvement. In this article, Julius Muthengi seeks to analyze the causes of poverty and concept of a "culture of poverty" in order to suggest strategies and tactics for effective urban church ministry among the poor.

Introduction

The problem of poverty and issues which surround it are complex. In the last thirty years, anthropologists and social scientists have raised crucial issues with respect to the nature of poverty. Special attention has been given to mass poverty associated with phenomenal growth of urbanization world wide. Poverty involves more than lack of material goods and finances. It includes powerlessness, social and political oppression, lack of education, unemployment, underemployment, and lack of representation in the political arena.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the so called culture of poverty, its characteristics, causes, and implications for church planting, especially in urban contexts. While many books and articles have been written on the issue, the models of Oscar Lewis and Charles Valentine are specially relevant for those of us in Africa concerned to see the Church expand among the poor within our cities.

The culture of poverty concept was first coined by Oscar Lewis in his book *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty* (1959). He developed the idea further in several works (1961, 1966, 1969, 1970). The phrase has been widely used by anthropologists and social scientists such as Harrington (1962), Herzog (1966), L. Lewis (1971), and Valentine (1971).

Over the years, anthropologists and social scientists have carefully analyzed this theory. By and large, there has been little agreement among scholars with respect to the usefulness of the culture of poverty idea. The concept in question will be examined in this section based on two models or theories. First, Lewis' model will be examined in detail. Second, the view of Valentine will be presented as a critique to Lewis' theory followed by some reflection on the theories in question.

The Culture of Poverty Concept: The view of Oscar Lewis

Oscar Lewis developed the notion of "the culture of poverty" on the basis of his ethnographic studies of Mexican families (1959, 1961). He compared groups of people whose way of life reflected a specific culture with the poor in general. Lewis' perspective may be summarized as follows:

As an anthropologist I have tried to understand poverty and its associated traits as a culture or more accurately, as a sub-culture with its own structure and rationale, as a way of life which is passed down from generation to generation along family lines. This view directs attention to the fact that the culture of poverty in modern nations is not only a matter of economic deprivation, of disorganization, or of the absence of something. It's also something positive and provides some rewards without which the poor could hardly carry on (Lewis 1970, p. 68)

According to Lewis (1970), the culture of poverty transcends regional, urban-rural and national boundaries.

Lewis portrayed the culture of poverty as an established fact. He believed that such cultures could best be studied in the context of urban or rural

slums. Moreover, he noted that while there are common traits among those in the culture of poverty, there are differences as well, depending on the particular society. As a way of life, the culture of poverty tends to pass from one generation to another. Lewis (1970) pointed out that by the time slum children are six or seven years, they have absorbed so much of their cultural context that it is difficult for them to change their worldview.

Lewis formulated a number of key characteristics of the culture of poverty. The first key characteristic is that the poor are excluded from participation in the major institutions of society (Lewis 1970, p.70; Valentine 1971, pp.205-206). Lewis conceded, however, that participation in certain institutions such as relief systems, may do more harm than good. Further, low income, lack of property income, perpetual unemployment significantly reduce the chances of effective participation in the larger economic sphere.

The second characteristic of the culture of poverty according to Lewis is that there is tension between what they profess and what they practice (Lewis 1970; Valentine 1971). Those in the culture of poverty may aspire to the values of the dominant group of society, but they live by different standards. For instance, Lewis argued that men would choose to remain single or prolong marriage even when they verbally talk of their desire to get married.

The third proposition in Lewis' model states that organizational structure among the poor is confined to the realm of the nuclear and extended family. Accordingly, those in the culture of poverty may have occasional marginal groupings such as neighborhood gangs. Moreover, there may be a low key sense of community in slums. The phenomenon in question varies from one city to another or from village to village in the rural areas.

The fourth proposition formulated by Lewis is what Valentine (1971) has labeled "a psychological hypothesis." Accordingly, the culture of poverty produces personal identities, individual characters, and worldviews which are marginal, disorganized and restricted. On the individual level, the major traits of the culture of poverty are "a strong feeling of marginality, or helplessness, of dependence, and of inferiority" (Lewis 1970, p. 72).

In addition to the above characteristics, Lewis noted other traits such as high incidence of maternal deprivation, morality, weak ego structure, a strong orientation to the present with little ability to defer gratification or plan for the future, male superiority, and psychological pathology (Lewis 1970). Lewis argued further that those in the culture of poverty have little sense of history.

They, for the most part, emphasize their own circumstances, their own neighborhoods, and status consciousness. In order to clear himself of any bias, Lewis argued that the traits in question function in clusters. Moreover, the profiles of the culture of poverty will vary from one cultural context to another.

Finally, Lewis raised a crucial question with respect to the future of the culture of poverty. He tackled the issue by making two important propositions. First, Lewis isolated two types of the phenomenon in question. On the one hand, there are countries in which the culture of poverty represent only a small segment of the population (Lewis 1970, p. 78). On the other hand, there are cases of mass poverty in certain parts of the world. In the former case, remedy would include psychiatric treatment and social work. In the latter case, the best solution, according to Lewis, would be revolution or effecting social and structural changes in society.

Second, Lewis attempted to clarify the issue of the distinction between poverty per se and the culture of poverty. Accordingly, the subculture of poverty is perpetuated through the world view, aspirations, and character of the children. Economic improvements alone will not solve the problems involved. Lewis argued further that the main reason why it was difficult to eliminate the culture of poverty was lack of organization. He saw the culture of poverty as having a positive imprint... "people with the culture of poverty, with their strong sense of resignation and fatalism, are less driven and less anxious than the striving lower middle class, who are still trying to make it in the face of the greatest odds" (1970, p. 80).

Critique of Lewis'View

Oscar Lewis' works contain some of the most detailed biographical and autobiographical descriptions of daily behavior in the family context. This is both a strength and a weakness. Lewis relies too much upon such biographies and autobiographies to validate the culture of poverty concept. Lewis should be given credit for raising important issues with respect to the often neglected subject of poverty, at least at the philosophical level, but his anecdotal approach is questionable.

Another weakness of Lewis' view is that his study was conducted among specific families in the slums of Puerto Rico and Mexico. One needs to do such studies in other parts of the world before making any kind of sweeping generalization. This is not to deny the fact that those living in low economic strata have a lot in common, regardless of their geographical location. Rather, the intent is to challenge the representativeness of Lewis's case studies (Valentine 1971, p. 197).

Third, Valentine (1971) criticised Lewis by observing that the culture of poverty idea is a hypothesis which has not been scientifically demonstrated.

Fourth, the culture of poverty concept has led to stereotyping, "which in turn invited distortion and misapprehension" (Herzog 1966, p. 95). It should be pointed out that indiscriminate use of the concept may lead to what Herzog (1966) called "the cookie cutter view of culture with regard to the individual and the culture or subculture involved."

Herzog's argument is that the "cookie cutter" view assumes that individual people in a given culture turn out alike, just as the cookies do. She further pointed out that, particularly in urban settings, each individual has multiple cultures or subcultures. Moreover, other factors such as personality traits, history, and dynamics of group interaction all play a major role in a person's response in given situations.

Fifth, Valentine (1969) called attention to the fact that the cultural values of the poor are not much different from those of the middle class. Where differences may occur, it may be caused by situational stresses rather than class differences.

Finally, and most seriously, Lewis' idea of culture of poverty has been accused of distorting "the reality of life among the poor" (Valentine 1969).

The Culture of Poverty Concept: Charles Valentine

The debate between Lewis and Valentine is evident in the anthropological and social science literature of the late 1960's and early 1970's. Valentine's view of the culture of poverty stands in sharp contrast to the views of Lewis.

First, contrary to Lewis' proposition, Valentine argued that the poor participate in varying degrees in various institutional areas of the broader society (Valentine 1971, p. 206). Moreover, the level of which the poor

participate in societal realms depends on the external structures. For the most part, the poor would desire to participate in the police force, armed forces, property ownership, and other aspects of the public arena, if the chances were open to them.

Second, the poor share much of the key values found among the middle class, unless these values violate cherished cultural ideals. Examples include high regard for educational achievement, desire for material comfort, and the value of competition in appropriate contexts.

Third, Valentine challenged Lewis' view of lack of organization among those in the culture of poverty beyond kinship realms. Accordingly, low income areas exhibit local organizational structures such as community councils, political organizations, denominational church organizations, and personal social networks (Valentine 1971, p. 207).

Fourth, Valentine challenged the idea espoused by Lewis that the culture of poverty produces a disorganized and restricted world view, leading further to feelings of marginality, helplessness, dependency, and inferiority. Valentine's perspective is that many of the negative characteristics of the poor offered by Lewis are not inherent traits. Rather, they are the result of distortions of the social order, and thus imposed on the poor. Moreover, Valentine (1971) argued that the fact that the poor continue to function as human beings in adverse conditions, is indicative of inner qualities of great humanity.

It should further be pointed out that the negative characteristic of the poor outlined by Lewis are contingent upon the situation (Valentine 1971). For instance, the poor would no doubt plan for the future, when assured of favorable alternatives. Valentine's recommendation is that while relationships may exist between the life of poverty and the so called culture of poverty, care must be exercised, lest the two ideas be confused. Accordingly, uncritical use of the culture of poverty concept should be avoided, through the exercise of informed, and independent judgment. In view of the foregoing, the "culture of poverty must be discarded as a theoretical guide" (Valentine 1971, p. 211). Valentine concludes that the concept in question lacks any scientific evidence.

Evaluation of Valentine's View

For the most part, Valentine has raised important issues with respect to Lewis' methodology in data gathering and analysis. In addition, Valentine's concern about how widely we can generalize on the basis of Lewis' findings is legitimate. As has already been observed, Lewis' research was very specific, but he nevertheless coined the culture of poverty concept and gave it a universal application. The criticism of such overgeneralization of the culture of poverty idea is one of Valentine's strengths. At the same time, Valentine appears to be overly critical of Lewis' concept. He called for total abandonment of the idea which appears to be an overreaction rather than a balanced conclusion. It seems clear that concept of the culture of poverty needs to be understood in a way that is more nuanced than Lewis's or Valentine's views.

Causes of Poverty

While scholars are not agreed on the culture of poverty concept, all agree that poverty is a global reality which should be taken seriously. Poverty is especially evident in the urban settings where people have moved from the rural areas to the cities in search of jobs and economic survival. By and large, there is a widening gap between the affluent nations and the third world countries, and between the affluent elite individuals and the poor masses.

What are some of the key causes of poverty? First on the list is the issue of land distribution. According to Johnson (1985), recent analysis of 83 countries has revealed that 3% of the world's population controls 80% of the world's land mass. For this reason, the world's cities are filled with people from rural areas in order to seek fortunes!

The Land issue is crucial in understanding the magnitude of poverty in the world today. The writer knows cases in Kenya where parents have to choose between education for their children and maintaining their piece of land. Since education is so vital for obtaining a decent job, many have chosen to sell their piece of land to the wealthy elite in order to pay tuition for their children. In such cases, a family may remain with only a small portion of land for small holding farming. Consequently, their children will have to start from scratch

in the future. They will struggle to buy land elsewhere in order to build their own houses and for farming.

Second, the issue of unemployment and underemployment is another cause for poverty. For example, many jobs require higher education or technical skills, which may exclude the poor from acquiring the jobs. Moreover, even when the poor get employment, they may be paid merely a minimum wage (Claerbaut 1983, p. 74). The poor (especially in urban context) suffer the consequences of either unemployment or underemployment. In the latter case, they earn so little that they cannot meet the basic needs of their families. The writer knows cases in Kenya where some poor men working in cities will choose to send the little they have to their families, rather than use the money for busfare home. In this context, many men stay away from their families for months, trying to accumulate enough money for their transportation and family needs.

Third, the poor also face economic and/or consumer exploitation (Claerbaut 1983; Galbraith 1979). To underscore the issue at stake, Claerbaut argued:

In addition to employment problems, the poor also face exploitive consumer practices. The poor spend a greater proportion of their income for necessities in the form of food, shelter, and health care than do the middle class, although the quality of their investment return is much less. The poor pay more for less... Because there are often no large grocery stores in the neighborhood and no transportation to stores outside the community, the people often buy their goods at small neighborhood establishments. A walk through almost any such store will reveal inflated prices and inferior merchandise. The proprietor takes advantage of the patrons' lack of shopping alternatives. If the people do not do much looking elsewhere, they are often unaware of how badly they are being exploited anyway (Claerbaut 1983, p.75-75).

The issues raised by Claerbaut have universal implications. For example, the exploitation of the poor in American cities reflects the state of affairs in most African cities. In such context, the slum dwellers in places like Mathare Valley in Nairobi, Kenya have to buy whatever goods are available in their

neighborhood. They are, for the most part, dependent on public transportation and very little income.

Exploitation of the poor is not confined to consumer practices, but also in the money market transactions. For instance, many banks are controlled by the middle class elite which makes it difficult if not impossible for the poor to operate bank accounts (Claerbaut 1983, p.75). In Kenya, for instance, the minimum balance to be maintained in the savings account is beyond the ability of most poor people. Moreover, the service charge required for currency exchange is exploitive to the poor. They cannot for the most part maintain a bank account because the minimum balance is too high. It is even difficult for the poor to afford any money to deposit in banks.

Fourth, especially in Africa, climate may be cited as a cause of poverty. In many parts of the continent, people depend on their agriculture for sustenance. Due to the unpredictable nature of rain, great parts of the continent are famine stricken. What happens in Africa's rural areas affects life in the cities since the latter depend on the former for food supplies. Those who do not understand the phenomenon in question may attribute much of Africa's poverty to either corruption or laziness. Such uninformed views should be challenged.

Planting Churches for the Poor

The foregoing discussion underscores the fact that whether we talk of the culture of poverty or poverty per se, the issue is real in the world, particularly in urban settings. There is need for both the church and the governments of the world to address the issue candidly. Whether one is talking of individual poverty, mass poverty, national or international poverty, the fact remains that the gap between the poor and the rich is widening day by day. Adequate measures should be taken to address the issue particularly in the cities of our world, which are the future of governments, church planting, and Christian world mission.

The foregoing discussion on the reality of poverty in the world has great implications for church planting, especially among the urban poor.

The first implication is that the church can provide the poor with skills needed in order to come out of economic plight. A case in point is the Africa Inland Church, Kibera in Nairobi, Kenya. The church was started about eight

years ago in one of the poorest and roughest sections of the city. Initially, the church had 35 members but in about six years, the congregation grew to about fifteen hundred members.

The cause of such phenomenal growth was largely the ministry strategy of the pastor who proclaimed the gospel by word and deed. He started several projects such as a mechanical engineering school, a tailoring school, as well as neighborhood prayer meetings and Bible studies. Within five years, the Kibera Church had ministries beyond their neighborhood. The Church devised a plan called 20/20 in which they resolved to plant twenty churches in the city of Nairobi every twenty months. Moreover, the Church began to build a new auditorium which could seat thirty-five hundred people.

As a result of the Church's witness and tangible expression of Christian love, many positive things took place in Kibera. The crime rate was significantly reduced in the area. Many people found jobs as a result of their new skills. The Church became a witnessing community, leading to further church growth. This is only one example of what the church can do, by God's enablement, to alleviate the problem of poverty.

The example of the Kibera Church is quite in line with what many experts on urban ministry have constantly emphasized. For example, Greenway (1989) has pointed out that many Christians are ignorant about urban poverty. Greenway argued:

...The beginning of a Christian response to the poor in the city, therefore, must take the form of planned visits, the development of trusting relationships, the exchange of ministries and resources, and growing demonstrations of Christian love. I suggest that every suburban or small town church make a long-term commitment to building meaningful relationships with a church in a poor city neighborhood (Greenway 1989, p.176).

As Claerbaut (1983, p.69) pointed out, to many middle class people especially in the United States, poverty is a mere abstraction. Moreover, the people in question cannot become personally involved in the plight of the poor because they do not understand what is at stake.

The second implication of the poverty issue is that the problems of the city call for what Grigg (1987) called "the incarnational model" of ministry. The

idea is that Christian workers should enter the slums and live among the poor. Accordingly, "we must stop treating the urban poor as objects of charity and relief, begin to understand them as they are, and deal with spiritual and social needs together in genuine integration of word, deed, and life." In other words, the environment of the urban poor should be taken seriously for any meaningful encounter to take place between the Gospel and the people.

Other scholars have echoed Grigg's sentiment. For instance, Johnson (1985) pointed out that our world is shrinking. As such, the Church should seriously think of the urban context. Johnson wrote:

It is no longer possible to live unperturbed within the ghetto of our own parochial interests and theological squabbles. Missions means turning outward, pulling up the blinds, opening the windows, and taking the risk entailed in breathing the foul air of the world where people are ensnared and held captive. This is where the word Incarnation needs to be seen and heard (Johnson 1985, p.193).

The incarnational model should be taken seriously by the Church. It seems that many Christians especially in western countries have become too comfortable and complacent. Few are willing to enter into the world of the poor and the down trodden. Christians should wake up and put their houses in order with respect to the crucial needs of the urban poor.

The third implication is that the Church should have a prophetic voice on behalf of the exploited and oppressed urban poor. Networks of church groups can address issues relevant to the poor. Sometimes the poor who are exploited by bureaucracies and red tape do not know their way out. The Church should, however, be careful not to tell the poor for whom to vote.

The fourth implication is that urban churches can target poor neighborhoods and address some of their specific needs. An example would be to start a literacy or tutoring program (Claerbaut 1983, p.86). The writer knows cases in Kenya where such programs led to great opportunities of evangelism. In many cases, when people learned how to read and write, they would engage in Bible study through which many were converted.

In addition to the foregoing, Johnson (1985) has offered other practical suggestions. Accordingly, mission boards should take a hard look at their candidates to determine whether they have the background and skill to cope

with the social problems in the cities. Theological institutions should include courses in social work in their training programs. This is especially important because urban pastors and missionaries need to develop skills in understanding the unique challenges found in urban ministry.

Furthermore, the third world church should be prepared to address social and civil ills in their cities. They should let the Gospel of Jesus Christ speak to human situations in their cities. In addition, churches in cities should take a fresh look at the use of their physical amenities for the inner city ministries.

The reality of poverty in urban settings calls Christians world wide to be tangibly involved in the needs of the less fortunate.

Finally, church bodies should devise strategies for strengthening the economy of the rural areas, which have been deserted by many people in search of a better life in the cities. This is especially crucial in Africa where draught regularly threatens the economy of the entire continent.

Conclusion

In the foregoing pages, the culture of poverty concept has been examined. The concept was coined by Oscar Lewis to refer to the people who are at the bottom of the social strata. Lewis' basic premise is that the culture of poverty is perpetuated through the children of the poor. Lewis argued that the culture of poverty is different from poverty *per se*. Accordingly, the former concept is a given while the latter may be temporary. The dynamics operating in each of these concepts are quite different.

Lewis' view has been criticised by Valentine who argued that it is a mere hypothesis, awaiting scientific demonstration by ethnographic method. For the most part, Valentine proposed counter views to those of Lewis. He finally rejected the concept arguing that it could not be scientifically demonstrated. Moreover, Valentine even doubted the validity of Lewis' data collecting method, and criticized his overgeneralization of his findings.

The study has also critically examined a number of reasons behind poverty. Finally, several key implications of the study to church planting were isolated, and relevant conclusions drawn. For instance, the church should take a hard look at the poverty stricken cities. Christians should get involved in

serious ministry in these areas. Whether there is a "culture of poverty" or not, poverty in the world is a reality which the church cannot ignore.

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Conserving Culture with Biblical Integrity

R. F. Gaskin

The ethnogenesis of both the Konkomba people of Ghana, and the Pitjantjatjara of Central Australia lies deeply hidden in the past. In the first half of this century both groups were still nomadic hunters and gatherers. Similarities and differences in their cultural patterns are evident, particularly in the area of the 'rites of passage.' Both were adherents of tribal or folk religion and the comparison of their culture affords a unique opportunity to observe universal trends as well as specific differences. This study contrasts the worldview of these two ethnic groups as it is traced through practices and beliefs in connection with their 'rites of passage.'

Rites of Passage

Culture is a dynamic organism that patterns our way of seeing reality. Expressions of this reality are conveyed through ceremonies and rituals that form the warp and woof of life. Many of these occasions are to celebrate an individual's progress through society from one status to another. The anthropologist, Arnold van Gennep (1873-1957) coined the phrase 'Rites of Passage' when he first wrote his book in the French language in 1909. This refers to the special rituals that are practised during the various stages of the life cycle.

These celebrations of an individual's passage through society afford opportunities for people to pause from their busyness and to contemplate and evaluate life's values. "Why am I here?" "Where am I going?" "Who am I?" "How do I relate to those around me?" These questions are often asked as people pause to celebrate.

Van Gennep suggested that in each ritual there are three stages, the first being that of separation. This is when the individual is being prepared for the new status. It often involves separation from the community while the individual is subjected to humiliation and sometimes bodily affliction, as in the case of circumcision rites. The second stage is that of transition and refers to a marginal state when the initiates are taught religious secrets and taboos which prepare them for the higher status they will enter into.

Lastly there is the incorporation of the individual back into society but fulfilling a new role and occupying a superior status. An example of this would be in the installation of a king or chief.

The purpose of this study is to examine the rites of passage related to the life-cycle of the two cultures that are under review. The first of these is the birth process.

Konkomba Birth

The Konkomba people of Northern Ghana see the sexual act as being necessary for conception. They believe God (Owambor) meets the child in the womb at conception (Froelich 1954:76) and the ancestors may also intervene in the conception process. Froelich (1954:76) states that if a couple want children then they pour a libation of water and then ask, "Creator of men, give us a child, I will sacrifice to you a chicken, a goat, or a cow." When the child is born the appropriate sacrifice is offered and the father thanks Owambor along with loud clapping. There are numerous rituals pursued at the time prior to birth and preceding it which elicit the Konkomba worldview.

One preliminary practice is that as soon as a woman learns that she is pregnant it is her responsibility to inform her neighbors who in turn inform the husband that the child is expected. Immediately the expectant mother ceases to eat pounded yam as it is considered this will make the child soft and white (Froelich 1954:76). She is restricted to yam baked on the coals or boiled in a pot. This taboo reveals their belief is in a direct connection between the nature of pounded yam (soft and white) and the nature of a newly conceived child. Nobody has ever given birth to a soft, white child but the belief passed on by tradition is a part of the cultural pattern espousing their worldview.

Mbiti (1975:85) speaks of rituals performed after childbirth as part of the cleansing process. He says that there is a general consensus that childbirth brings impurity which is cleansed only by ritual. Mbiti (1975:85) states, "...the purification ritual prepares the mother for the birth of the child, so that there is no obstacle to the flow of life."

The Konkomba worldview perceives birth as one process in the "flow of life" which must be kept moving by the ritual observance passed down by tradition. After the mother has had time to recover from the birth further rituals are performed. Both mother and child are brought out of seclusion to meet the crowd of relatives that gather. Mbiti (1975:86) says it is like a social birth for them. He goes on to say, "In some places it is believed that even the living dead {ancestors} are also present for the occasion."

A further practice, which in the past mystified the writer, is one in which the new baby's hair is completely shaven. This happens on the "day of his outing" or presentation to society at about one month of age. Mbiti (1975:86) points out that this act is a sign of "purification, separation and newness" from the impurity associated with childbirth. Following the feasting and dancing which the celebration provides, a new cycle begins for everyone (Mbiti, 1975:87) and the society takes the responsibility of integrating the caring for the new member.

The naming of the baby in Konkomba society has aspects which also reveal their worldview. Froelich (1954:77) says:

On the day the child is bathed one presents it to the sun and the father gives him a name if it is a boy, if it is a girl both father and mother give her a name.

Usually the names are very meaningful and are often in line with the particular day of the week on which the child is born. If born on Monday the child will be called a Monday child. If the child's characteristics remind people of the departed clan members the people are happy and as Mbiti (1975:87) says: "...a departed member of the family has 'come back' in part through the birth of the baby."

Thus the birth rituals of the Konkomba espouse their worldview and pass on the traditions of the ancestors. Uniqueness of the society is thereby upheld and the Konkomba culture perpetuated for a future generation.

Pitjantjatjara Birth

The Pitjantjatjara conception beliefs and birth rituals are also unique and reveal their perceptions of life and its beginnings. In this regard the words of Clinton (1985:52) give affirmation:

Worldview refers to the integrated perceptions of life, both its knowledge and experience more or less shared by members of a culture.

According to Mountford (1976:563) men are not permitted to be present at the birth of a baby. If there are complications the medicine man may be called in to "straighten out" the baby and to massage the woman's back and abdomen, but even he must leave before the baby is born. The Pitjantjatjara accept that the birth process is strictly "women's business" and the men wait in the distance to hear the sex of the child announced.

The Pitjantjatjara conception belief is in non-physical paternity. Mountford (1976:580) who has studied Pitjantjatjara conception beliefs documents the following:

The desert nomads believe that all their children come from two oval stones near the Niunja water-hole in the western end of the Mann Ranges. These stones are impregnated with an inexhaustible supply of tiny spirit children, the 'julanjias.' Now and again one of these little spirits will leave its home and search for a mother. On seeing a woman with large breasts and a kindly face it will, unknown to her, enter her body and start life as a human being.

The myths surrounding the mystery of conception are varied but all confirm non-physical paternity and the involvement of spirit-children or spirit entities. These mythical beliefs reveal the Pitjantjatjara worldview at its core and map out for the astute observer the basic values and presuppositions of the desert nomads.

At birth the umbilical cord is cut off with a sharp stone and the placenta is buried after it is placed in a pit and a fire made over it. The child is rubbed with warm ashes from the camp-fire (Mountford,1976:563) which is meant to

clean and dry its body.

The umbilical cord is seen to have magical protective power and Mountford (1976:563) documents this aspect:

When the umbilical cord has dried and fallen off it is tied in a ring, rubbed with grease and red-ochre and hung around the infant's neck on a cord. It is believed that this charm will make the child contented but without this cord the infant may be restless and unhappy. As soon as the child is able to walk the dried cord is discarded and burnt in the camp-fire.

This further elucidates the desert nomad's worldview as the practice is passed down to posterity and encapsulates their central beliefs.

Other birth practices reveal a difference in the value of human life as contrasted with the Judeo-Christian stance. Meggitt submits the following:

The midwife buries a still-born baby without ceremony in the "bush" nearby; and she, or the mother strikes a deformed child on the head or turns it face down in the sand to choke, then buries it at once. Minor disfigurements, such as birthmarks, moles and wens, however, are regarded lightly and vaguely as "dreaming-marks" inherited from a person who possessed the same "guruwari" in a previous incarnation.

At this point it is helpful to summarize the contrast touched upon in this section.

KONKOMBA WORLDVIEW

- *Sexual act is necessary for conception.*
- *'Owambor' meets the child in the womb.*
- *The mother informs her neighbors who inform the husband that she is pregnant.*
- *Primiparous women sometimes helped by men to deliver.*

- *Nature of the child deduced from the nature of the food eaten by the mother.*
- *The newborn child presented to the sun.*
- *Child named after one month.*

- *Umbilical cord covered with cow dung.*

PITJANTJATJARA WORLDVIEW

- *Belief in a non-physical paternity.*
- *Spirit-entities enter the mother's womb.*
- *The mother informs the husband.*

- *Women left mainly alone to deliver or assisted by selected female kinsfolk.*
- *Nature of the child often deduced from the nature of the ancestors.*

- *New born child presented to the sociological father.*
- *Child only given a personal name after two years.*
- *Umbilical cord covered with grease and red ochre.*

Initiation

The process of initiation with all its ramifications is often considered the second stage in the life-cycle. It is usually a societal function involving both young and old. Most often it is an action packed series of dramas to mark the promotion from childhood to maturity. It involves colour and dancing, the sharing of secrets and mythologies. It is a time of totemic acknowledgement and the inclusion of the ancestral heritage in the process.

Usually the patterns incumbent in the last of the life-cycles, that of death, are discernible in the rites of initiation. That is to say, the symbolic exclusion of the initiate from society often precedes the "new birth" or resurrection of

the individual back into society. The greatest celebration takes place when the initiate is received back into the community bearing a new status.

In most African traditional societies circumcision plays a major part in initiating the young into adulthood. It is seen as a preparation for marriage and the entrance to the privileges of adulthood.

Mbiti (1975:91) states, "One of the main initiation rites is that of circumcision for boys and clitoridectomy for girls. This is practised in many parts of Africa." It is a painful and blood-letting experience which society demands of all who would become adults. Not to submit to this process with one's age-mates is considered to be shameful.

This, however, is a general statement regarding Africa, but evidence pertaining to the Konkomba people indicates that circumcision, as such, is not widely practised. Froelich (1948:67) clearly states that he questioned the people in Guerin-Kouka and Katchamba at Takpamba and Kidjaboun and the answers have always been negative in regard to circumcision. He concludes by stating, "...if they themselves ever practised initiation [circumcision] they certainly do not do so anymore today."

Konkomba Initiation

The Konkomba philosophy of life affords a less radical view of initiation than many of their fellow countrymen. The initiates who are usually young men past the age of puberty, build their own house slightly separate from the other building in the compounds. This is called the *kenatchipombe* where they meet of an evening to talk and ask each other riddles. They also sleep in this hut. Graduation to the exclusive society of the young men is a sign of their coming of age.

The young men are now encouraged to become skilled in the use of bow and arrow. They are now considered a part of the vital work force and should be able to construct yam heaps with their own hoe at a rate which is satisfactory to the headman (*onikpil*). This the rite of passage at this stage is afforded them as they gradually demonstrate their prowess in farming and archery.

The absence of either circumcision or subincision among the Konkombas underlines their more informal approach to this period in the live-cycle. Blood-letting is not an obligatory feature required of the initiates as a ritual of the rite of passage. There is however, the practice of classic scarifications and on this Froelich (1954:43) comments:

No other mutilation, either of body or teeth, is effectuated. On the other hand corporal scarifications are held in very high esteem with the Konkombas and these are carried out when the individuals have reached the age of twenty or more for the men, and thirteen years for the girls, before the marriage and, at any rate as soon as they are pregnant.

Pitjantjatjara Initiation

Pitjantjatjara initiation, on the other hand, is known as the *inma pulka*, the big ceremony. Aboriginal children are left almost undisciplined during their early childhood but when they approach puberty there is a radical change. The preparations for initiation are long and drawn out. Their education in Aboriginal tribal law begins abruptly at this stage and they begin to learn the tribal secrets and myths and are taught how to endure suffering.

There are different initiation ceremonies among the Aborigines of Australia but both circumcision and subincision are practised by the Pitjantjatjara. Tooth avulsion is a prominent feature among some groups while depilation (the removal of hair) is practised by others. Cicatrisation (the cutting of the initiate's body) according to Elkin (1970:196) is often an indication of graduation to the highest degree. Elkin also mentions an older practice of finger nail removal, "before the highest revelations are made."

These notions all reveal that the Pitjantjatjara employ a radical approach to the initiation of candidates. These severe actions are in keeping with the way they see the universe. There is an aspect of severity placed upon the initiates. The demands and expectations are very high. At the same time the option for initiates to withdraw from these ceremonies is almost minimal, for full initiation is the only door to adulthood and the only way to marriage. The

term *wati* is only applied to a fully initiated man with lesser terms available to those who have not been through the process.

An important Pitjantjatjara circumcision myth reveals the worldview of the people. Mountford (1976:118) documents this extensively and states how that one of the women became distressed over an old method of circumcising the boys. This was with the use of fire sticks. However, many of the candidates died as a result and the myth relates how the concerned women contrived to have the old men use proper flint knives to avoid such suffering.

This element of harshness in the philosophy of the Pitjantjatjara is evident also in the whole attitude towards the initiate. The young men are called *ulpuru* (initiated) and prior to the cutting ceremony are driven from the main camp to fend for themselves. They are not allowed during the whole process to be seen by women who may surreptitiously make food available to them.

The *ulpuru* are also looked upon as semi-outcasts and this whole scene resembles the death of the candidate prior to his new birth or resurrection into the new status of a *wati* (initiated man).

Blood-letting is another important aspect of Pitjantjatjara initiation. Elkin (1970:197) states that:

The tying of arm-ligatures is but a preparation for the duty of blood-letting, and subincision prepares the genital organ for a similar purpose; blood is drawn from it for ritual use, to express emotions in a prescribed ritual manner both in initiation and totemic ceremonies.

Another aspect of the Pitjantjatjara initiation ceremony is the holding down of the candidates by force. A human table is formed by three of the men who lie down in a cleared space alongside of each other. The initiate is placed on top of this living table and *ommari* (circumcisers) perform the operation. An element of brutality is evidenced by Tyndale (1935:219) who reports that as many as twenty-two cuts are made before the operation is completed.

This all indicates the radical approach the Pitjantjatjara have towards this rite of passage. It may be described as severe, even brutal. The candidate is subjected to suffering which must bring him near the limits of human endurance. Banishment, deprivation and loneliness along with the threat of physical death itself, must make it one of the most excruciating rites of

passage practised by humankind. Initiation and especially circumcision in this manner is difficult for outsiders to understand. However, it is a central feature of Pitjantjatjara social life and thereby encapsulates the way they see to be necessary for the maintenance of tradition, the involvement of the ancestors and the perpetuation of their culture.

A characteristic of Pitjantjatjara mythology is that they personify natural species and phenomena as Elkin (1970:222) says, "...this explains them by a principle which man understands, that is a manifestations of personal or spiritual beings like himself, though often endowed with greater powers." This relates to circumcision and to the worldview because some believe the foreskin is changed into a bat which is also a symbol of death.

It remains to summarize the contrasts in worldview in regard to initiation.

KONKOMBA WORLDVIEW

- *No such mutilations.*
- *Not practised.*
- *Relegated to exclusive men's dormitory.*
- *Scarification to identify clan*
- *Prowess with weapons and agricultural tools--a major indicator.*

PITJANTJATJARA WORLDVIEW

- *Tooth avulsion, depilation, fingernail removal.*
- *Circumcision and subincision, arm ligature and blood-letting.*
- *Candidate banished from society.*
- *Scarification as a pass sign of initiation.*
- *Prowess with weapons and tools--a minor indicator.*

Marriage

Many rites of passage take the form of ritual ceremonies whereby society marks a change in the status of a member. Marriage is one of those rituals that prepares members of the society to take on their new role. They are then recognized in their new status once the ceremonies are complete. In almost

every culture marriage forms the basis of the family unit and thereby of society.

Mbiti (1975:98) says of marriage in Africa that it is the meeting point for the three layers of human life. These are the departed, the living and those to be born. This is because the one stands upon the other and is dependent upon the other for its continuation. Not to marry is to interrupt the sequence of life and is looked upon as a failure towards society. Mbiti (1975:98) says, that, "...in effect it is stopping the flow of life through the individual and hence the diminishing of mankind (sic) upon the earth."

In some cultures premarital sexual activities are carried on as a normal human function, but it is usually marriage that legitimizes sexual union and places society's imprimatur upon cohabitation of spouses. Hiebert (1983:167) says that it also, "...assigns then new roles in their relationships to each other, to their offspring, to their relatives and friends, and to society in general."

Mbiti (1975:102) further states that African marriage is not just for the couple involved but includes the establishing of very strong ties between the relatives of the couple being married. He points out the philosophical basis of this and reminds us that people do not exist for themselves but for others. "I am because we are, and since we are therefore I am." This is the basis of the African worldview. Individualism is lost in favour of the communal factor.

Konkomba Marriage

In regard to the Konkombas there are some particular factors that prescribe the basic presuppositions of the people in relation to marriage.

Firstly, there is a taboo against eating meat on the part of unmarried women. The reason given for this by De Jong (1983:20) is that the women will become thieves because they will crave after more and more meat, as meat is so expensive they will need to steal in order to supply their craving. However, it would appear from an ethical perspective that the taboo is reinforcing the strong cultural demands for all women to marry for then they are free to eat meat. To remain unmarried is like committing a crime against society. Mbiti (1975:104) says that it is like withholding a uniting link in the rhythm of life.

Latent within the worldview of the Konkomba people is the notion that motherhood is what is really important for women. Marriage has its place but the ability of a woman to conceive and bear a child is considered a precursor to marriage. A woman is not considered fit and ready to marry if she has not first born a child. This gives proof of her fecundity. It demonstrates that she is mature and ready to cohabit with her spouse.

Froelich (1954:74) states that from the age of seven or eight Konkomba girls are no longer virgins. They are usually promised as wives by their mothers from the time of their conception. A suitor, usually a young man of about twenty years of age, will seek out his future mother-in-law (often a woman of his own age) and negotiate the contract for his wife-to-be. It means then, that he will wait for the newly conceived child to be born and to grow to the age of puberty before being able to marry her.

Froelich (1954:74) comments on this process:

The most general custom prescribes that the fiancée has no sexual relations with his fiancée, but no defense whatsoever detains the other boys from seducing the young girl. One waits until the girl has conceived before celebrating the wedding. As soon as her state becomes known, the fiance delegates one of his relations to go and claim the girl, at the same time bringing a loin-cloth as a present.

The first child, therefore, is usually not the biological child of the male who is to marry. He accepts, though, the child as part of the marriage arrangement and thereafter becomes the sociological father. Konkomba worldview sees no problem in this development, in fact it provides the expectation that it will be so.

Marriage appears to be an inevitable process that takes its own course without deference to the girl who has no choice of partners. She is destined to the one she was promised to before she was born and when proof of her ability as a mother is displayed she goes to her husband without further ceremony.

Froelich (1954) comments:

When the girl has given proof of fecundity the mother or aunt of the fiance goes to ask for her three days on end, but her mother refuses.

On the fourth day (four is the feminine number) she accepts and the fiancée offers a loincloth and a sum of money. The mother collects the calabashes and the pots and sends the girl to her husband. There is no special ceremony...

Further, Konkomba marriage philosophy dictates that when a woman marries it is into the clan that she is marrying and not just the individual. If her husband dies she still belongs to the clan and will be remarried to a close relative.

If the girl refuses to marry to man to whom she was promised from birth, her father knows how to deal with her. Froelich (1954:75) states that he will threaten her with the words, "If you refuse our ancestors will kill you." The respect and fear afforded the role of these ancestors is such that the girl will most likely succumb. In this case the worldview is used as a governing agency and to ensure that the tribal machinations are fulfilled according to the wish of the elders.

Pitjantjatjara Marriage

Marriage customs differ from culture to culture but in all Aboriginal societies special status is acquired by this rite of passage. There are certain sociological prohibitions which must be observed if a marriage is to be considered "correct." One of the strongest of these governs a man's relationship with his mother-in-law. This prohibition is often called mother-in-law avoidance.

The need for such a mechanism comes about because of the manner in which a man is often promised his wife before she is born. The other factor is that, a man at the time of seeking to negotiate for his unborn wife, can often be involved with a mother-in-law who is his own age. As Hiatt (1984:183) says, "It follows that if a man were to have sexual relations with a potential or actual mother-in-law, he might beget his own wife." Hence the need for the mother-in-law avoidance mechanism. It is to preserve "correct relationships" as viewed by the culture. The fact that this notion of "correctness" in relationships is built into the culture is sociological evidence of the Pitjantjatjara philosophy of life.

Reciprocity is another factor that reveals the worldview of the Pitjantjatjara. It is an in-built feature that has a part in governing marriage relationships. If something is accepted, its equivalent must be returned, not to accept is to opt out of the social system. The rite of circumcision is involved here. For a circumciser has the right and responsibility to provide a wife for the male he has circumcised. This system is somewhat of a continuum and not to assist in making this provision is to leave the circle of reciprocity incomplete.

The treatment of Pitjantjatjara women as a chattel further defines the worldview of the culture. Elkin (1970:155) states, "...[women are] a means of settling or balancing obligations between individuals or groups, and a method of expressing certain prescribed desires or intentions." They can be used as a pay-off for obligations incurred and this is especially so in the designation of marriage partners. In traditional Pitjantjatjara society little opportunity for choice of a marriage partner was afforded a woman. She was bound to accept the arrangements made at the time her mother conceived her. This meant that very young females were often married to old men who needed another wife as housekeeper and gave the basis for what has become known as gerontocratic marriage.

A further practice within the marriage sphere which expresses basic Pitjantjatjara values is that of wife-lending. In traditional society there is a readiness on the part of the men to loan their wives in order to gain material possessions. This can also be done as a means of renewing friendships or warding off warring parties. This does, however, underline the low view of women that the men have.

Pitjantjatjara marriage is not accompanied by the pomp and ceremony common to most cultures. After the seven or eight years of betrothal, which begins at conception, the husband will ask her father or mother to send her to his shelter. Meggitt (1962:269) comments on this:

The statement that there is no wedding ceremony requires comment. The people regard the initial removal of the girl to her husband's dwelling at his request as the termination of the betrothal and the beginning of marriage. Her walking through the camp to join the man constitutes the public statement of the fact.

As soon as the bride-price is paid to the girl's parents she is regarded as his wife and although only eight or nine years of age she begins to spend short

periods in her husband's shelter. She is then allowed to return home to her parents for some weeks before resuming cohabitation with her husband for longer and longer periods until she is totally taken up in her husband's community.

Marriage is a basic rite of passage in every human society. Both for the Konkomba and Pitjantjajara, it is more a process than a unique event. Rules governing correctness in marriage relationships abound and the observance of them is presided over by the elders who are the preservers of the cultural values.

Sexual activity is prominent in both cultures prior to marriage and is woven into the pattern of the social as well as the spiritual world. The supply of marriage partners to initiated men is seen as a reward for the observance of tradition.

Children born to the female partner prior to her cohabitation with her husband are readily accepted by the husband's clan as legitimate although both societies do have the notion of illegitimacy when couples are incorrectly related.

Basic premises are revealed in the motions of the marriage process which demonstrate a people's values and reveal the way they think in regard to the world around them.

Death and Funerary Rites

The previous rites of passage that were considered earlier do not overshadow the last of these rites that are yet to be discussed. With every phase of human development there are rituals which as Mbiti (1975:126) says, "...generate a sense of certainty and familiarity. They provide continuity and unity among those who perform or attend them."

The rituals associated with death are among the most complex practised by humankind. In fact it seems that these rituals are a paradigm for all the others leading up to this, the final passage of the individual. In all, they help to provide an explanation of the fundamental nature of the universe and of a person's place in it. They enable people to feel they have some control over the invisible world and that they are not just the playthings of fate without purpose and meaning.

Konkomba Death and Funerary Rites

It is not trite to say that Konkomba people enjoy funerals. It is especially so when they are in honour of an old man (*onikpil*) that it becomes a time of great celebrations. People leave their work and travel far in order to celebrate the passage of the *onikpil* to the place of his forefathers. Having lived a long life his passing is not considered a tragedy so there is dancing and feasting in abundance. His numerous children remain to carry on the flow of life and the whole ceremony speaks of a continuation rather than a cessation. The deceased continues to exist with the living dead, while the younger generation form new relationships which cement ties among the clans.

In contrast, the death of a child attracts no such celebration because the child has not yet enjoyed life, consequently there is no dancing. De Jong (1983:27) states that a woman of child-bearing age is not permitted to witness the actual burial. It is believed that if she does she will be unable to bear further children. In this way the mystery of death pervades their thinking and results in actions which ensure that such a destructive sighting does not take place.

Konkomba traditions insist that the body must be buried on the day of death and as early as possible on that day, allowing only enough time for near relatives to come and for the grave to be dug. This practice is also followed because of the rapid decomposition process which takes place in the tropics.

It is considered imperative for the body to be buried in the home village. There are strong clan links which make this an unwritten law among the Konkombas. It also indicates the strong physical ties, as well as the spiritual associations that people hold in regard to their clan residence.

The Konkomba perceptual world is one that considers the deceased as embarking on a journey to the place of the living dead. As a result of this, the preparations of the body are carried out meticulously. De Jong (1983:28) points out that during these preparations the widows of a senior man remain in the senior wife's room where the women sing dirges while the body is prepared. The women then sleep at night in this hut for two weeks. Froelich (1954:81) describes these preparations and says:

When an old man has died, a cow is killed immediately; during this time the daughters and the sisters of the deceased carry the corpse into

the corner of the court reserved for bathing, they place him on a stool, wash him, shave his head and anoint him with shea butter, then they dress him with a white loin-cloth.

These preparations are an attempt to make the corpse acceptable to his new, after-world environment. Mbiti (1975:115) points out that the shaving of the head is a symbol of separation and at the same time is "...an indication of a people's belief that death does not destroy life, since the growth of new hair indicates that life continues to spring up."

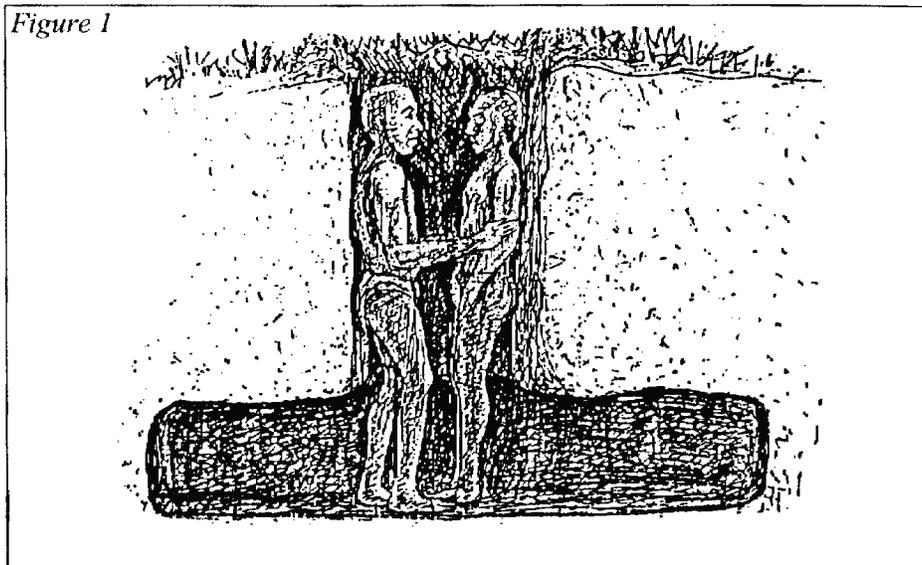
Not only is the head shaved, but while the corpse sits on a small wooden stool the nails are clipped and the body and mouth are washed with water. De Jong (1983:28) points out that the hair and nail clippings are carefully burnt so as to prevent the sorcerer from obtaining these items for medicinal use. To further demonstrate the perceptual world of the Konkombas in regard to death, the words of Froelich (1954:81) are significant:

When a dead man is dressed up, a woman takes a calabash with water with a little bit of earth in it and gives the dead to drink. Another woman kneads some clay with water and places it on a plate; some of this is given to the dead man to eat.

They perceive the corpse to be a personal entity, but in a different sphere. It is the very close sphere of the living dead. They try to visualize death in personal terms and as Mbiti (1975:111) says, regard it as a kind of spirit, but one that never laughs. Every effort is made to keep good relations with the departed hence the offering of food and drink.

An important part of the funeral is the actual burial of the body. While holding the body at the graveside the elders make their speeches to the ancestors and then a near relative enters the upright channel and awaits the reception of the body in a standing position.

De Jong explains : "First the hole is dug, until a person can stand in it while holding the dead body. Then these two sideways are dug, long enough to lie the dead body flat in it." [see figure 1]

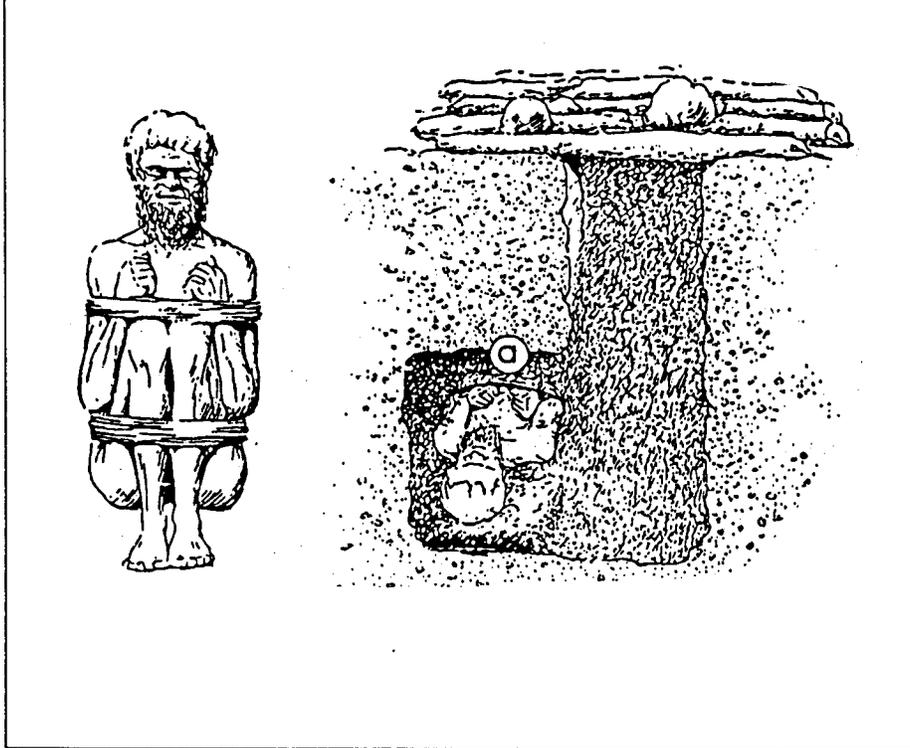


Mbiti (1975:116) sums up these findings and says, "By ritualizing death, people dance it away, drive it away, and renew their own life after it has taken away one of their members."

Pitjantjatjara Death and Funerary Rites

Different assumptions become evident from the acts and comments of the Pitjantjatjara people in regard to death and burial. The rituals associated with these aspects of culture betray their basic presuppositions. While some Aborigines cremate bodies, others leave the corpse on a raised platform until it is dried out. The Pitjantjatjara, however, take pains to bury the body in a deep grave and bind it tightly with "fur-string" made from animal skins. Mountford (1976:565) diagrams this process as follows:

Figure 2: "Body with arms and legs bound closely. Cross section of grave showing body (a) placed in cavity, which is then filled with grass and leaves and covered with logs and boulders."



One of the reasons given for the binding of the body is so that it will not roam about and cause trouble to the living.

Expressions of grief in regard to death reveal central beliefs in Pitjantjatjara culture and on this aspect Mountford (1976:580) comments:

The women, cutting their heads with the sharpened ends of their digging-sticks and weeping loudly, throw themselves on the ground while the men, seated on the ground, sob as if their hearts are broken.

Evidently it is important to show excessive grief in order to demonstrate to the "spirit of the dead" their intense sorrow. Not to do this is to place one's self at risk, in as much as the "spirit of the dead" could take revenge on the insincere mourner.

The method of the actual burial is carried out with great care and the person elected to do this is not permitted to exit the grave until the procedure is complete. This is because of the likelihood of interference from the powers of the unseen world. Mountford (1976:580) documents this procedure:

The body of the dead is buried in a deep grave, carefully packed with leaves and grass so that he will be comfortable. The spirit of the dead is then told that he may not leave the grave except to gather his food, but must not, on any occasion, go near the camps of his old companions.

There is this constant effort to appease the unseen spiritual powers so that they may not disturb the living. In fact Pitjantjatjara rituals are considered as being a process to ensure the continued well-being of the living. To release good spirits and life essence the rituals must be pursued meticulously. One further reason for the pursuance of the ritual is that it not only renews the species but it is understood to renew the waning sex drive of the older men.

A second set of rituals is entered upon some months after the initial burying and this is carried out with special spiritual impact in view. Mountford (1976:580-581) comments:

Some months after the death a party of near relatives, accompanied by a medicine man, will visit the grave to capture the spirit of the dead man who, they believe, will be seated on a small mound of earth which had been prepared for him at the head of the grave when he was buried.

He further states that the medicine man is expected to "place the spirit of the dead into the body of a living person of the same age." In this way "life essence" is transferred from generation to generation and thus ensures the maintenance of the culture.

The death rituals associated with the final rites of passage are elaborate and extended. They often involve the whole social structure in preparation, ceremony and celebration. Communication is made with the spirit world when the ancestors are entreated as the recent dead are sent on their way to join the living dead.

The celebrations connected with the human life-cycle have been seen to be often secretive, aesthetic and all-embracing. These "pauses" in the life of a people help substantiate their basic presuppositions. Each person's basic postulates are clarified on these occasions because they help affirm who they are and what is their place in the universe.

Implications for Mission

In many instances the Rites of Passage in the two ethnic groups employ colourful and dramatic ceremonies involving the whole community. There are many good aspects from these ceremonies which can be employed by the church communicator for the benefit of all. At an Easter meeting located in a Pitjantjatjara community the dramatic effect of hundreds of candles being used in a night celebration contained striking resemblance to the description of a part of the initiation ceremony as documented by Tyndale (1935:210-212):

From every side torch bearers began to converge on the second men's camp, and by the time the crowd had passed it and reached a third men's camp, practically everyone had joined the singing crowd; men in front, then the women, with young boys and girls trailing along in the background. ...Probably more than two hundred and fifty torches were burning as the procession moved to the ceremonial ground.... Scarcely had the above song commenced when all the young boys from six to twelve years of age, whom we had seen busily engaged around the distant fires, now came running forward, tossing fire brands through the air at the men who had been seated in the two circles and singing. For a few moments a shower of sparks, burning coals and haavy red-hot sticks descended. The burning brands passed over the heads of the women folk. The men leaped up, shouted `Ah!

Ah! Ah!' in low, deep and husky voices, and dodged the brands as best they could.

This celebration of the initiates entering their new status or life could be paralleled somewhat with the hope of new life and a new status found in Christ. This link is utilized by the Pitjantjatjara community during their Easter celebrations.

The writer received a request from the Pitjantjatjara community to purchase and deliver three hundred candles for the Easter celebration and could not help but see the wisdom in the use of this graphic piece of reminiscence from the past and its relevance to the resurrection of God's Son with His message of hope and eternal life.

The wisdom of avoiding a cultural void among the Pitjantjatjara is to be commended. The communicators of the early contact period were careful not to denigrate such cultural events as the initiation ceremonies but sought to incorporate the good aspects of these festive occasions in the celebrations of the new church community in the manner described above.

Cultural voids occur when an integral part of an ethnic group's activities, such as initiation rites, is denigrated by the cross-cultural communicator who then fails to incorporate any corresponding rite as a replacement. This results in a void and a failure to fulfil the "felt needs" of an ethnic community.

In the sixth century before Christ, the nation of Israel, when deported to Babylon for their seventy-year captivity, was known to have recalled their traditional songs and chants. The practice of initiation was also continued through this long period of trial. It seems that recalling the feasts and ceremonies, the dances and songs gave cohesion to the alien nation. It helped them retain their identity in the climate of secularism and pluralism. Enshrined in these traditional practices was their world-view, their view of monotheism, of humanity and of the universe. The rehearsing of their rites of passage preserved and perpetuated their basic premises.

An interesting event took place at Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) during the orientation week of the first term, 1991. A picnic was convened underneath some huge trees on the campus where the college provided a wholesome meal for everyone. There was a wonderful sense of community as the newly arrived students met campus residents and saw the NEGST family in a totally informal setting. Barriers were down and a

call was made for people to form small groups according to the countries they came from. More than fifteen countries were represented and each group prepared a small act to perform at the base of a giant tree for the seated crowd to witness. People had fared well with the meal and there was a relaxed carnival atmosphere as one by one the groups made their national presentations. It was a wonderful sight to behold. Senior students and faculty forgot their status and standing as traditional songs and dances were performed with vigour. Peals of rollicking laughter rang through the trees as improvised drums and sounding gongs were invented and tribal acts recalled from remote village life and childhood days.

It was only afterwards, upon reflection, that many of us realised the implicit value of such a celebration. Each national group was actually celebrating their ethnicity and encapsulated in their songs and dances was their worldview; their basic tribal values. The cohesion that each group felt was enormous. The re-enactment bound them together with the strong cords of their ethnicity and the children stood by captivated as they witnessed their parents play-acting the ancient tribal practices. In this way values are imbibed and passed on to the younger generation. Without such celebrations basic values and tribal practices are easily lost to posterity and secularism and modernity dictate the patterns of life.

Rites of passage, viewed for a long time with negative connotations by cross-cultural communicators, need to be reconsidered in the light of the disintegration of society and loss of traditional values. The intrusion of secularism and modernity calls for a reevaluation of these rites in the light of Scripture and also from the history of the nation of Israel. Wholesale denigration common in the past, needs to be halted and cultural preservation pursued so that the treasures of each ethnic group can be brought into the Kingdom of God, (Rev. 21:24-26) for the glory and honour of our most glorious King.

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City of God, City of Satan:

A Biblical Theology of the Urban Church

by Robert C. Linthicum (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1991) XIII,
330 pages, paper back. Subject Index and Scripture Index.

The book has thirteen chapters in three major parts. Part one sets out the theological proposition that the city is the habitation of God and a "battle ground" where God and Satan are engaged in constant spiritual warfare. In the second part, the author postulates the vicarious death of Jesus Christ as the ground on which the church builds its faith and practice in the city. The last part presents four elements which the author considers as the source of power to sustain city ministry. i.e. personal spiritual formation, participation in community, maintenance of a vision, and faithfulness rather than search for success.

Dr. Linthicum has made some very striking theological insights which contribute to the quality of his work. One of those insights is the way he finds in the very name "Jerusalem" an etymological concept of the city as the abode of both God and Satan. This view is opposed to the traditional interpretation of Jerusalem as the *habitation of peace*. It is in this other interpretation that the author attributes the inherent dualistic antagonism from which stems all sorts of evils in the city.

Another striking feature of this book is the author's holistic approach which is exhibited in his exegesis, interpretation and application. While the author acknowledges the individual's responsibility in social evil, he also contends that there are institutionalized evil systems in the city which require that the city be transformed by God just like the individuals who indwell it. The transformation has to affect all dimensions including spiritual, social and physical aspects of the city.

Yet in spite of his radical view of evil in the city, the author remains optimistic. He views the city as part of the world which has been reconciled to God through the vicarious death of Jesus Christ. For this redemption to be realized in the city, "presence, prayer, practice and proclamation" have to take place. Those who have been reconciled need "personal spiritual formation, participation in community, maintenance of vision" and faithfulness rather than search for success. The last point here is very important. It calls for humility and dependence on God for the result. In a society where success is the motto for everything, the shift of emphasis to faithfulness is a unique and commendable insight.

The deplorable conditions of life in African cities as well as social and economic injustice call for the involvement of the church. Linthicum gives a theological challenge as well as practical guidelines as to why and how the church should

participate in reclaiming the cities of Africa for God. The author gives yet another very serious challenge that the church need not only deal with individuals in the cities but also encounter the institutionalized systems of injustice with the Gospel of justice and love. As the author puts it: "the church is also called to put its body where its mouth is" (p. 174).

The book will help the church to understand the biblical challenge for Urban Ministry and the responsibilities that the ministry entails. It is a readable book that is recommended for theological institutions in Africa.

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***Christianity and the Nature of Science:
a Philosophical Investigation***

*by J. P. Moreland (Grand Rapids, MI, USA: Baker
Book House, 1989) 170 pages*

In this companion volume to his acclaimed *Scaling the Secular City*, J. P. Moreland, professor of philosophy of religion at Talbot School of Theology (Biola University), sets out a philosophical apologetic for the relationship between science and Christianity. Moreland is a philosopher first, a scientist second. This makes for a somewhat unique approach to this not-so-new topic. Whereas many such books dealing with the tension between these two subjects have been written from the perspective of science, and hence unwittingly yield the "high ground" to the discipline by defending according to science's own rules; Moreland's approach is clear from his title. It is the very nature of science that intrigues him, not simply what science says or does. The result is a philosophical apologetic which levels the playing field by calling into question the very underpinnings of science, viz. its own thinking about itself.

Moreland begins with science's own definitions, and shows that not only does modern science not always live according to its own prescriptions, but that there is no clear line of demarcation between science and non-scientific disciplines. Philosophical and theological concepts, for instance, are very much a part of science, he argues, in that science is ultimately based upon philosophical presuppositions. This is a polite way of saying that scientists are biased, and bring those biases into their science. He likewise demonstrates that science is very much a

part of theology and philosophy, because rather than being inductive in its approach to problems, e.g. beginning with observations, science often follows more of an eclectic model that utilizes differing methodologies, including educated guesses. He argues that science not only is limited as the "end-all, be-all" of knowledge, but that *scientism* (faith in science as the last word of truth and rationality) is based on myth, not reality.

Moreland's conclusion is that both "science and theology...interact on common ground" (13). In this sense, they might be more compatible than they often appear, and more than perhaps some modern scientists would like to admit!

Moreland's *raison d'être* for writing this book is that he believes science to be the most critical influence upon the world today. Hence, instead of running from it, Moreland believes that Christians must come to terms with it. He is against what he terms "easy," or "neat," positions which attempt to sweep apparent conflicts under the rug, or worse pretend they do not exist. In this he has succeeded admirably. Moreland's defense is superb--one could even say, brilliant. Unfortunately, in the process of avoiding those easy, neat solutions, he also has avoided being easy, period. Moreland is a difficult "read," and this is unfortunate because he deserves to be read. While declaring on the one hand that this book is a "serious attempt to explore areas of interactions among science, philosophy, and theology" (14), he defines his target audience as possibly being "informal church or parachurch educational activities" (15). The "serious" are content to chew the tough stuff; but most of us, accustomed to learning by sound-bytes, need some of those easy, neat, solutions. It would seem that the author needs to decide just who it is he is trying to reach. Moreland's ideas are too important to be kept a secret.

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How Long, O Lord?

*by D. A. Carson (Leicester, England:
Inter-Varsity Press, 1990) 275 pages*

One of the great theological and philosophical problems facing all Christians is the problem of evil. There have been many volumes written on this deep mystery and Donald Carson, Professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, has added a unique and helpful book.

The purpose of this book is to aid Christians in preparing themselves for times of suffering. It is "a book of preventative medicine." It is not primarily a theological examination of texts related to evil and suffering but a practical and personal discussion designed to enable Christians to respond to suffering in the correct manner when it does occur. The author briefly rejects several unbiblical and sub-biblical views on suffering and evil. These include the views that there is no God, that God is not omnipotent, that God is omnipotent but does not involve himself in the affairs of this world and that the knowledge of evil is necessary and in that sense good.

The second section, the largest in the book, "probes several biblical themes important to the problem of evil and suffering." These subjects include poverty, war, natural disasters, discipline by God, persecution of Christians, hell, illness and death. An important chapter in this section is chapter 8 which discusses the realized kingdom of God and the coming kingdom, and what these contribute to our understanding of suffering. The author's point is that God is just and while justice may not be done in this world it will be accomplished in the end. We must adopt the long view. Chapter 9 is an examination of the book of Job. This chapter was given at the NFTC Student Symposium in 1990. Carson's understanding of this book is that God never answers Job's questions concerning his suffering. There will always remain some mysteries to suffering but we must respond as Job did, in faith that God has the answers.

The final section contains the "meat" of the book. Dr. Carson proposes that the Bible teaches both of the following truths:

1. God is absolutely sovereign, but his sovereignty never functions in such a way that human responsibility is curtailed, minimized, or mitigated.
2. Human beings are morally responsible creatures - they significantly choose, rebel, obey, believe, defy, make decisions, and so forth, and they are rightly held accountable for such actions; but this characteristic never functions so as to make God absolutely contingent.

Carson calls this position "compatibilism" and stresses that both are true and must be held simultaneously. He offers support from the Bible for both, convincingly demonstrating that these truths must be held together. From this proposition the author then says,

God stands behind good and evil in somewhat different ways; that is, he stands behind good and evil asymmetrically. To put it bluntly, God stands behind evil in such a way that not even evil takes place outside the bounds of his sovereignty, yet the evil is not morally chargeable to him: it is always chargeable to secondary agents, to secondary causes. On the other hand,

God stands behind good in such a way that it not only takes place within the bounds of his sovereignty, but it is always chargeable to him, and only derivatively to secondary agents.

The final chapter contains some applications of compatibilism, notably in prayer and evangelism. The section on prayer is a bit confusing. He rejects the idea that since God is sovereign in everything our prayers must never be more than acknowledging that his will is best but then says we should pray in line with God's sovereign plan. Is not acknowledging God's will is best and praying in line with His will the same thing? The book also includes an appendix of some thoughts concerning AIDS and a Christian response to this disease. This is an essential topic for all of us to reflect upon in light of the growing epidemic worldwide.

At the beginning of this review the adjective 'unique' was used to describe this book. After reading this book some similarities to *The Problem of Pain* by C.S. Lewis and *Where is God When it Hurts* by Philip Yancy came to mind. All three are popular treatments of the subject of pain and suffering. This book differs in that it deals more directly with the biblical evidence, offers more footnotes (though they are put at the end of the book and do not detract from the reading) and includes several real life stories to enliven the reading.

The subjects touched upon in this book are complex. The subject of evil must include a discussion of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility as well as the freedom of man. Obviously a book of some 275 pages, including many illustrations, cannot present opposing viewpoints and involve itself in long, detailed discussions of the strengths and weakness of each position. But then that is not the purpose of this book. It is meant to prepare believers for enduring the suffering that at one time or another we will all face and with that purpose in view it succeeds admirably. It is a beautiful blend of theological reflection with practical advice and suggestions.

Each chapter concludes with approximately seven questions for further study and thought and if completed would lay a solid foundation for weathering the times of storm. This book should be bought and read by believers struggling with questions concerning God's providence and mankind's responsibilities, by believers farsighted enough to prepare themselves for distressful times and by believers who want to examine the edges of the deep mystery of evil in a good God's world.

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***A Study Of Conversion Among The Angas Of Plateau State Of
Nigeria With Emphasis On Christianity***

by Daniel Nimeir Wambutda (Bern: Peter Lang:1991) 238 pages

Perhaps the most significant recent study done on the Angas (properly Ngas) people of Plateau State in Nigeria, this book is written by the respected Angas theologian, historian and social anthropologist, Dr. Daniel Wambutda. In the preface the author states that his purpose in writing is to correct the misrepresentation of Angas ethnology written by colonial anthropologists like C. K. Meek, H. D. Foulkes and C. G. Ames. He also provides an explanation for the phenomenon of Angas conversion to Christianity, which, (as the title suggests) is the central issue of the book.

In the first chapter, Wambutda provides a history of the Ngas from the pre-Jihad period to modern times. Relying on oral tradition, he suggests that the Ngas are one of the Afro-Asian Chadic-speaking people who lived in Central Sahara before moving to Borno, from where they migrated to Nyam, then Sara "north of the present day Ngas land." Chapter two presents a detailed analysis of Ngas social structure before the advent of Christianity. The social structure was based on the clan system. The clan was centered around the concept of Nkara. Chapter three then gives the religious background of the Ngas, based on the Ngas social structure. Religion is communal. The Ngas are a very religious people. As Wambutda has shown, "it would have been virtually impossible to conceive of existence in Ngas without religion" (p 138).

It was to this religious tribe on the Jos Plateau in Nigeria that the Cambridge University Missionary Party (CUMP) were attracted in the early 1900s. The story of the encounter is presented in Chapter Four. The last chapter provides us with the crux of the study, an explanation of the conversion of the Ngas to Christianity. Social scientists, especially instrumentalists such as Robin Horton, Ifeka-Moller, and Humphrey Fisher, have offered their insights, which the author effectively summarises. But they have only scratched the surface. What has eluded these scholars, and even some scholars of religion like the author himself, is the fact that there is always a power-encounter whenever Christianity meets other religions. It is not just a question of Christianity, perhaps by use of superior technology, uprooting the other religions, but there is also a battle between God and the gods of such religions. This encounter can lead to the defeat of these gods (under the control of Satan), or the other way round. The influence of these social scientists on the author, as much as can be seen, is in according undue credit to Pax Britannica as

a catalyst for the Christianization of the Ngas people. Also characteristic of many African cultural nationalists and their European counterparts, the author presents Ngas traditional religion as if it was a lifeless museum piece devoid of negative and harmful power. For instance, the author presents go-ne-pinwa, which are actually spirits of witchcraft, as having salutary purposes.

Of particular interest to me as a young church historian is the lack of critical analysis of mission policies. The CUMP missionaries were rather paternalistic in their relationships with the Ngas, thereby fostering what may be termed 'rice Christianity.' But the Sunday United Mission (SUM British Branch) who took over from the CUMP had a different policy. SUM had adopted the theories of Henry Venn who had argued that a missionary's main role was the establishment of a self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating church. For instance, the SUM authorities never paid native evangelists, believing that the local people themselves should support these evangelists. This explains why the Ngas protested the CUMP hand-over of that area to the SUM in 1930; hitherto all the native evangelists and teachers were on the pay roll of the CUMP.

This book is the author's Ph.D. dissertation (University of Ife, 1978). Apparently it was not reworked before it was sent to the publishers, as can be seen in the preliminaries, and typographical errors also abound. Also, the price is very high. Nevertheless the book throws fresh light on attempts by early missionaries to Christianize pagan areas within the muslim emirates of Northern Nigeria, a neglected topic in historical reconstruction in both European missionary and African historiographies. This is a good book, and will be treasured by scholars in theology, history and social anthropology.

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Proclaiming Christ in Christ's Way: Studies in Integral Evangelism
edited by Vinay Samuel and Albrecht Hauser (Oxford: Regnum Books,
1989) 228 pages; £9.95

"Integral evangelism", according to the contributors to this book, is a new initiative in evangelical theological reflection and action. The integration intended is that elusive one between the proclamation of the gospel and social transformation. After the earlier western rejection of attempts at this integration, some non-western

evangelicals have expressed a new interest following the Lausanne gathering of 1974. The essays in this collection set out the theology of this evangelism--a blend of evangelical and ecumenical concerns, in what John Stott in his comments calls the "overlap" in the discussion, a discussion with which he himself is comfortable. The Stuttgart Statement of 1987, contained at the end of the essays, is reportedly the high-water mark of this theological expression. German evangelical Walter Arnold, Executive Secretary for Missions and Ecumenical Relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Württemberg, is singled out as the person who has most ably understood the movement and facilitated its spread. The collection of essays is a *Festschrift* in his honour.

Christian leaders from non-western lands have taken the initiative in developing new models as: (1) indigenous to non-western cultures rather than copies or transplants, (2) committed to effective integration, (3) manifesting spontaneous response to God's call, (4) sharply focused on the poor, an experiential knowledge of Christ, and aimed at social transformation, (5) products of those gifted to reflect theologically, (6) concerned for unity of the Body, (7) contributory toward a movement that God has brought together, and (8) reflecting a central theme of salvation in relation to history.

The book contains twelve essays and three supplements that intend to portray the nature of integral evangelism as it was expressed between the Lausanne meeting of 1974 and the Stuttgart Statement of 1987. In Chapter 3, Christopher Sugden of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (one of the organizational offspring of the movement), traces the development between these two events. Rene Padilla and Samuel Escobar triggered the explosion at Lausanne, says Sugden. The affirmation of social involvement as part of the church's mission was firmly implanted in the Lausanne Covenant. Other constructive consultations followed: Gospel and Culture at Willowbank, Bermuda in 1978; the Consultation on World Evangelisation in Pattaya, Thailand and the Simple Lifestyle Conference in London in 1980; the International Association for Mission Studies in Bangalore, India in 1981; the First Consultation of Evangelical Mission Theologians from the Two-Thirds World in Bangkok and the Consultation on the Relation between Evangelism and Social Responsibility at Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1982; the Wheaton Consultation on the Church in Response to Human Needs in 1983; the Second Consultation of Evangelical Mission Theologians from the Two-Thirds World in Cuernavaca, Mexico, in 1984; and, finally, the Stuttgart Consultation on Evangelism of 1987.

The conceptual developments identified by Sugden are represented in the essays that follow his historic survey:

1. The church needs to be closely related to culture, transforming and enriching it.

2. Culturally conditioned presuppositions such as those of the West need to be challenged.
3. People groups, not just individuals, need to be considered in the evangelistic task.
4. The total setting in which people live is the context of concern to evangelism; this includes political, economic and social situations.
5. Third world interests in holistic evangelism have often been circumscribed by a North American agenda.
6. Good works are a necessary fruit of and expression of faith in Christ.
7. Every evangelistic activity has a social dimension, and every social activity has an evangelistic dimension.
8. Social concern is a bridge to evangelism.
9. There is need of a two-thirds world evangelical theology and missiology.
10. Transformation is defined as "the change from a condition of human existence contrary to God's purposes to one in which people are able to enjoy fulness of life in harmony with God" (p. 42).
11. There is a need to overcome the dichotomy between the spiritual and material.
12. The traditional evangelical spiritualization of texts about the poor in scripture that made them refer to "all people in their spiritual poverty towards God " has been rejected (p. 44).
13. The poor should be the focus of evangelistic concern.
14. Evangelism can never be separated from justice.

The remaining essays flesh out some of these issues under such general themes as: critiquing current mission trends, gospel and culture, plurality and secularism, and ethics and ideology.

The critique of missions comes from Kwame Bediako of Ghana and the African-American evangelical William Parnell. Both are opposed to North American domination of evangelistic discussion. Bediako deplors the way evangelization is in the hands of specialists and para-church organizations with access to funds, personnel and technology, instead of local churches. The great victory of Lausanne in 1974, he continues, was a victory of theology over strategy in evangelization. Yet the victory was deflated at Pattaya where a "sociological construct" again dominated over a "full-orbed holistic and theological vision of the Christian mission" (p. 58). The right kind of people, not just the right kind of strategies, are needed for world evangelization, he asserts. The study of Christian mission history can develop such people more than the prevalent study of anthropology.

Though the chapters on gospel and culture provide little that is new, one contribution made by Vinay Samuel, general secretary of Partnership in Mission, India, provides for a conceptual link in the troublesome relationship between the

individual and culture. Religion, says Samuel, is the link, a unifying third level of study usually ignored by the secular scholar. Revelation in particular provides important themes such as the image of God in man, the Constitution of Israel, the People of God, the Church, the Kingdom of God, the World, the Incarnation, and the work of the Holy Spirit. Hermeneutics and communications also figure into the linkage.

David Gitari, Bishop of the Diocese of Mount Kenya East, discusses the nature of primary, or incarnational, evangelism among the Boran, Gabbra and Rendille of Marsabit District in Northern Kenya. Recognizing the past errors of evangelism wrapped in western culture, he sees the challenge as avoiding the same errors in this Anglican approach to unreached peoples. His essay is a combination of insight and confession that portrays Anglican reappraisal of the necessity of buildings, and the nature of church government, the priesthood and their model of episcopacy.

Essays on plurality and secularism also make valuable contributions. Reminding readers that the Bible account unfolds in a religiously plural environment, Michael Nazir-Ali of Pakistan, current head of the Church Missionary Society in Britain, presents the negative assessment which the Bible usually accords religious systems. Yet, he hopes for a theology of the Word that can bridge the systems. He proposes an agenda characterized by integral evangelism for each of several themes: salvation-history, church and state, morality, law, prophetic Christian witness, reciprocity, and tolerance.

Raymond Fung of Hong Kong, evangelism secretary of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches, draws on six years of residence in Geneva to discuss the re-evangelism of Europe. Using the parable of the lost son in Luke 15:11-31 as a model, he states: There are signs of people awakening to the falsity of secularism everywhere. When this happens, it will be crucial for evangelization whether the Christian church behaves like the father or like the elder son in the parable (p. 147). He goes on to recommend three elements of a strategy for Europe based on Isaiah 65.

Per Harling, secretary of evangelism for the Church of Sweden and also associated with the WCC, views music as "secularization's liturgy for interpreting life" (p. 156), and in a more narrowly focused essay shows how his church has profitably used this three-dimensional medium of communication consisting of music, lyrics, and more recently video.

Ethics and ideology provide another unifying theme for this volume. Showing the clear grounding of Christian ethics in revelation that embraces both creation and redemption, Ronald Sider, professor of theology at Eastern Baptist Seminary, Philadelphia, explores six implications:

1. Kingdom values are normative and possible for Christians.

2. Faithfulness, not short-term effectiveness, is the Christian's first concern.
3. The Christian community is always a disturbing counter-culture.
4. Christians should lead others in practising Kingdom values.
5. Christians summon all to Christ's standards but do not expect utopia.
6. Every part of Scripture is to be used in the further development of this Christian ethic.

Peter Kuzmic, principal of the Biblijsko-Teoloski Institut of Yugoslavia, speaking to the antagonisms, anathemas, prejudices and caricatures that have risen up in the Christian-Marxist encounter, wonders if these two enemies cannot meet. He offers an

Eastern European evangelical perspective with an ecumenical concern. While outlining basic principles and examining possibilities and limitations, he reminds evangelicals, who have been on the margins of dialogue, that they are in a unique position to offer something new in the Christian-Marxists dialogue, something missing from liberal agendas. That contribution is its quality of personal regeneration, dynamic Christian community, and living concern for the poor and needy.

Rene Padilla of Argentina, general secretary of the Latin American Theological Fraternity, in familiar fashion relates what he calls the political dimension of the kingdom of God to the political dimension of mission. This relationship shows that:

1. The starting point for Christian political involvement is God's revelation in Christ.
2. The Kingdom demands a revolution of values for the fostering of justice above security, and peace above economic growth, requiring the conscientization of citizens, the cross-fertilization of nations, and the transformation of all.
3. The church must be restructured as a community providing sacrificial service for the gospel rather than as a colonial left-over or a modern-day replica of transnational corporations.
4. There must be renewed spirituality that unites evangelism and social responsibility in the service of the Kingdom rather than merely promoting private religious experience.

This book can be a useful textbook for the study of evangelism in the modern context. Speaking beyond the usual North American agenda of church growth, discipleship and reaching the unreached, it considers the task in the broad complexity of our day. Written by authors who have deliberately set out to create a different agenda, it challenges the more conservative evangelical to risk involvement in new areas. Obviously seeking a middle ground on the continuum of evangelical-ecumenical concerns, the editors clear a position and call it integral evangelism. This reviewer was especially drawn to the contrast made between theology and strategy, the religious linkage suggested between individual and culture, the potential for change in church traditions, the proposal for the

re-evangelism of Europe, and the indication of dialogue taking place without conservative evangelical contribution.

John Stott concludes the essays with a helpful critique of the exemplary Stuttgart Statement. He reminds readers that "there is always something exceptional, even unauthentic, about a Christian witness which is either verbal without being visual, or visual without being verbal" (p. 209). While the Statement has its strengths (for example its call to the local church for evangelism), it seems to fall short of the balanced visual/verbal proclamation. As might be expected in this case, the shortfall lies in the verbal. Stuttgart did not spell out the gospel with the clarity needed. It contains "no unambiguous, forthright statement of Christ's uniqueness." There is no reference to the cross and the resurrection.

What is true of Stuttgart is true of this volume. The reader will conclude some essays still waiting for a definitive statement on the gospel. A void will be experienced. How can there be authentic evangelism--integral or otherwise--without a clear expression of the gospel?

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Forms of Marriage, Monogamy Reconsidered

by William Blum, *Spearhead Monograph 105-107*, (AMECEA Gaba Publications: Eldoret, Kenya, 1989) 317 pages, Ksh 300/=

***Forms of Marriage (2) Evangelising Polygamous Families:
Canonical and African Approaches***

by Peter M. Kanyadago, *Spearhead Monograph 116-118* (AMECEA Gaba Publications: Eldoret, Kenya, 1991) 230 pages, Ksh 240/=, \$10.00 US

Our Kind of Polygamy

by David G. Maillu, (*Heinemann Kenya: Nairobi, 1988*),
187 pages, Ksh 89/50

At the Catholic Bookshop in Nairobi, my eye was caught by the first two books mentioned above on monogamy/bigamy. I will review them separately, but let me first say that because the authors are Roman Catholics, they address some issues

differently than Protestants might, but all who call ourselves Christians must wrestle with the same core issue and can benefit from these books. Also, both books use the word "polygamy" (and the derived word "polygamist"), a term from social anthropology referring specifically to the marriage of one man to more than one woman.

Blum's book is dated 1989, but is based on his 1972 doctoral dissertation. The references have not been updated. Though the title may strike some as possibly advocating polygamy, the opposite is true, the title being a rebuttal to Eugene Hillman's *Polygamy Reconsidered* which argued for permitting polygamy among Christians.

The book is divided into three parts. The first is "African marriage, an anthropological study," comprising half the book. "In order to make any meaningful theological statements about polygamy, we must study it, as it is understood and lived by members of polygamous societies." This section is a very helpful discussion of the social and economic factors that can lead to the rise and maintenance of polygamy. It also lists some factors that are currently leading to the decline of polygamy in some areas. Blum also describes the new form of polygamy, where a man maintains a wife in his traditional home area and has another in the city where he is employed. Blum falls into the common pattern of citing a few examples, then (over)generalizing about "African patterns," a pattern also found in the books by Kanyadago and Maillu.

Part two of the book, "A theological study of polygamy and monogamy," wrestles with the question, "Does the Bible really teach monogamy, or is it merely the influence of Western values that leads us to interpret the Bible this way?" Blum comes to the firm, dogmatic conclusion that the Bible, in all its parts, teaches monogamy. "Monogamy is the form of marriage willed by God from the beginning, and...it is not simply a cultural institution, dependent upon the customs and conditions of a particular society. Monogamy is an integral part of the reality of marriage and not simply a law, which reflects a particular cultural understanding of marriage. Thus, in our planning of a pastoral policy, we must, first of all, recognize that monogamy pertains to the essence of Christian marriage."

His discussion of many Scriptural passages shows a strong belief in the authority of Scripture. However, his assumption of the documentary and late origin of the Pentateuch forces him into many complex discussions of the varying circumstances at the time of various alleged redactions.

Greek and Hebrew exegetes may be disappointed with this section, but Blum admits he does not aspire to give the final word on the detailed exegesis of passages cited. Rather, he does point out how (the assumption of) monogamy underlies many passages related to marriage and divorce.

The third section, "Baptism of polygamists as a pastoral problem," wrestles with the application of his Biblical exegesis to the problems of polygamy. It is here that his Roman Catholic doctrine of baptism leads him to struggle with slightly different questions (or at least to phrase his questions differently) than would many evangelicals. For Catholics, and some Protestants, baptism is a sacrament, very closely tied to a person's receiving salvation. Therefore, excluding polygamists from baptism is a very serious point. Some Protestants, on the other hand, will baptize polygamists, but bar them from leadership positions in the church. Blum dislikes such an approach, arguing "Such a policy seems to be unjust, and to imply that polygamist converts would not become full-fledged Christians." his proposal, on the other hand, is to allow polygamists to be long-term catechumens, baptism not being given until "near death." Catechumens are normally in a program of classes in preparation for baptism, but Blum points out "A catechumen is a committed disciple of Jesus Christ, even though he or she has not yet been fully incorporated into the Church by baptism."

Though I do not see many significant differences between the policy he rejects and the policy he proposes, his proposal is commendable in that it does attempt to do several important things. First, it provides for polygamous converts to be taught in the faith. Second, the proposal allows Christians to make a clear, public statement of the church's commitment to monogamy. Third, it confirms monogamous marriages as the Christian norm, giving children a clear model to follow. Fourth, it gives polygamous believers a clear place within the believing community.

As Blum himself points out, "The criticism of the inadequacies of the solution of baptizing polygamists is, in some ways, easier than the formulation of a solution." Whether readers (Catholic or Protestant) will agree with all of Blum's proposal, it is well thought out.

I turn now to Kanyadago's book. At the outset, let me clarify that I am not reviewing this book as a treatise on Canon Law and its application to marriage, which is his main intended purpose. Rather, I review this book chiefly for its relevance to evangelicals, who are not the intended primary audience.

The title was what first caught my attention. I thought this might be a useful resource in thinking about how to bring polygamous families to faith in Christ. However, I very quickly realized that some of the subtle differences between Protestant evangelicals and Roman Catholics are in definitions. The word "evangelize" in the author's Catholic use refers more to incorporating into the visible church, in contrast to the evangelical use which refers more to bringing about a change of heart in people so that they believe in Jesus Christ. The author is not primarily focusing on how to bring persons in polygamous families to faith in Christ, but whether and how the visible church should incorporate polygamists. That is,

"Can polygamists be baptized? If so, under what circumstances?" (An important point in understanding some of the author's discussions is that in the Catholic Church, Canon Law requires a polygamist to dismiss all but one wife in order to be baptized and take communion.)

Such questions are not new, and certainly not unique to Catholics! However, focusing on Canon Law, the author has an additional problem that most Protestants do not: Canon Law requires that a marriage be performed by a priest. Therefore, some Catholics have posed the issue as follows: "If a polygamist's marriages were not performed by a priest, is the person then not married in the sight of God, and therefore not a polygamist? Therefore is the person eligible to be baptized, even though he has plural wives?"

Wisely, the author begins with an introductory discussion of the indissolubility of marriage. He then presents several different African traditions for formalizing marriage. He then proceeds to ask uncomfortable questions about how to apply Biblical principles to these traditions. For example, in many African traditions, the payment of bridewealth is an integral part of the marriage process ("process" being a key word!). Is the marriage completed and indissoluble when the couple begin to cohabit, or only when the payment is completed? Is there a clear discrepancy between Biblical teaching and cultural traditions on this point? What about cultures where a marriage is only considered finalized when the couple produces a child? Answering these questions requires more than a superficial understanding of the local traditions. He argues for the validity of traditional marriages, but advocated that churches try to integrate both the traditional marriage practices with the church's rite.

The bulk of the book is a detailed discussion of the development and interpretation of Canon Law and church pronouncements on marriage, from as far back as 1585. Though few will be interested in the details, it shows a long-standing struggle to provide Biblically-based answers which could be applied in many different cultures.

The positions cited vary from those who advocate leniency toward polygamy in order that potential converts are not discouraged, to a stricter position requiring the divorce of the present wife to remarry a former (but first) wife as a qualification for baptism.

One point which will surprise some is the small number of Scriptures cited, less than five. It must be remembered that this volume is largely concerned with Canon Law, intended to be complementary to Blum's volume, which discusses many, many Scripture texts.

The book raises many provocative questions, but provides few answers. It calls for more study of local traditions and consultation. It does include some important suggestions (some cited from previous Catholic documents), such as the following:

- Men who have married more than one wife should bear some continuing responsibility for their children and wives if they separate from plural wives.
- Churches should try to find ways to more closely integrate traditional wedding practices and church weddings, so that the two are not seen as separate and unrelated.
- Churches should emphasize the essentials of marriage, and minimize "the secondary aspects, such as clothing or expensive receptions."
- Churches should concentrate on teaching young people about marriage, stressing Christian values and commitment.
- Those teaching youth should not over-emphasize freedom in the choice of one's partner, "in opposition to the senses of community that exists in Africa."
- Those who are already in polygamous marriages must be treated with sensitivity and compassion (without giving the church's endorsement of polygamy).

Kanyadago does not pretend to provide easy answers for a set of difficult questions, but will stimulate those who want to think through church policies and practices on polygamy. Though many will not want to study all the details of the legal cases presented, chapter 1 (Challenges of evangelizing customary African marriage) and chapter 4 (Evangelizing customary African marriage) will be of interest to those who are struggling with polygamy in their areas of ministry.

The books are well printed and well bound on good paper, with the only serious typo being the word "shepherd" spelled as "spearhead" in Kanyadago's book.

A careful reading of these books will help readers to think through the Bible's teaching and their own church's policies and pastoral practices in this difficult area. Blum's book is more basic and of interest to a wider audience. Kanyadago's book has a narrower focus. If I could only buy one, I would buy Blum's. The contents of both books are substantial, the printing is clear, and the bindings are sturdy. Priced at 300/- Kenya shillings or less each (about \$10 US), they are a good value. They will be helpful references to those grappling with the Church's response to polygamy. They belong in Bible school and seminary libraries, if their students can think critically.

In contrast to the above two books, Maillu's book is a defense of polygamy, though not from any particular religious or tribal viewpoint. It contains many of the same arguments that can be found in any informal discussion of the topic: polygamy is good because it helps provide more workers for the farming community, it allows

a man to always satisfy his sex drive, etc, etc. In this regard, the book provides very little new or useful for the study of polygamy.

For example, his understanding and explanation of the origin and functions of polygamy in a traditionally polygamous society is quite shallow, compared to Blum and Kanyadago. He claims that the number of women and men in African countries is almost equal, so that there cannot really be very many polygamous marriages in existence. Blum examines the same matter, but using census data shows that because of the fact that men usually marry at an older age than women, the number of men of marrying age is significantly smaller than the number of women of marrying age (pp. 87-95). Despite Maillu's claims to the contrary, there are many polygamous marriages in Africa, as many of us know from our experience. This sort of shallow research by Maillu does not help one to take him seriously.

On the other hand, one wonders if the anthropological approach, concentrating on *traditional* factors such as bride price and clan relationships, is overlooking some of the factors related to the maintenance of polygamy and concubinage in newer urban forms of polygamy as discussed by Maillu. For example, the strengthening of clan ties by intermarriage is not a factor in new, often urban, forms of polygamy. Even if Maillu does not adequately explain the origins of some of the social issues, he does help us understand how many people perceive and understand themselves and their actions. Maillu clearly believes that a first wife should have no right to object to a husband marrying additional women, it is clearly his right. Also, if a marriage has difficulties, he seems to assume that it is the wife's fault, the husband's involvement with other women is NOT seen as a problem.

Some of his section headings will give an idea of Maillu's topics and approach: Love and Polygamy, Faithful Husbands: Do They Exist?. Objections Based on Christian Religion, Toward Successful Polygamy, Wife Beating and the Use of Force, The Prospective Second Wife, The Advice of the First Wife, The Wife and the Concubine.

From the viewpoint of a polygamist, much of his advice seems useful, though his ethical bases for several points are not clear. He complains that any potential marriage counselor with academic training (social worker, pastor, etc.), is automatically biased against polygamy so that polygamists have nobody to turn to for advice, except elders and family.

His chapter 6, "Objections Based on Christian Religion," is a brief discussion of a few Scriptural passages. Though many of us will not accept his interpretations, it is good to be reminded how many people (mis)understand the Bible on these areas. His misunderstanding of Scripture is most clearly seen on the last three pages, where he argues that God's commandments regarding love and mercy override his commandments on adultery and marriage.

Maillu writes with an informal flowing style, easy to read. His use of proverbs illustrates many points well. (Many Christians wish they could write in such an interesting style.) Maillu's book is well printed and bound, but flawed by several typos, the only noteworthy one being a reference to kissing the Pope's "food," rather than his "foot."

The book will probably not be purchased by many individual Christians for their own study or marriage patterns, but would be useful for a seminary library or post-secondary level Bible school that wanted to include a broad range of books on the subject. That is, this is a very clear statement of the secular position on polygamy. The last section, defending concubines, (as well as some other passages) would also be a useful reference for a class in ethics, as Maillu discusses the pros and cons of keeping a concubine and whether a man should tell his wife about a concubine.

All three of these books require readers to think critically on complex issues.

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