

theological education elsewhere. Should other Churches in other parts of the world find themselves needing to prepare to face the challenge of Communism, they will find their best preparation in a deep study of the Bible, a knowledge of Communist theory and practice, the development of a warm and close Christian fellowship, an understanding of the purpose of God in history, and a complete dedication of themselves to Christ. In the attaining of these the new missionary has a full part to play.

Here is a challenge as great as any with which earlier missionaries had to deal. It is all too easy, it must be admitted, for a missionary to be swamped with routine administrative work ; the rut being as familiar a place overseas as it is at home. But for those with eyes to see and with ears open to hear the voice of God there is still the call to " turn the world upside down " .

The Importance of the United States in the Missionary Movement To-day

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I

NOT long ago I was reading in Mr. G. Kitson Clark's book *The English Inheritance* the section in which he discusses the importance of the missionary movement in the 19th century. After pointing out that with the trader and the pioneer the missionaries penetrated everywhere, he proceeds to sketch the background against which their activities must be set. " In this century," he says, " the rest of the world lay at the mercy of Europe. Her arms were more powerful, her ships were larger and swifter, her commerce more highly developed than those of any other portion of the earth. That she would use this power to enrich the life of her own inhabitants was, and is still, historically inevitable and possibly historically desirable, but in what ways her power was likely to affect the lives and happiness of non-Europeans was, and is still, a question of the greatest importance, about which unfortunately a great many Englishmen have always refused to think without prejudice. In the last century European expansion was too often viewed with bland self-confidence and on occasion supported by an exuberant patriotism that could itself be the tool of some very ugly forces. Nowadays the pendulum has swung to the other end of its beat but not divagated into truth. The words which slip from the pen are ' exploitation ' and ' imperialism ' . Each word has at least two meanings and they are not normally used honestly. Exploitation can mean development of a territory for the advantage of its primitive inhabitants and the world or its enslavement simply for the purpose of gaining profit for certain Europeans. Imperialism can mean the extension of the rule of a foreign power over other men's territory

simply to secure that enslavement, or it can mean, as it has often meant, its reluctant extension to prevent worse evils, among which exploitation in its worst sense by Europeans has ranked very high".

As I read this paragraph, it occurred to me how easy it would be to substitute the word 'America' for 'Europe' wherever it appears in the quotation and to regard this as an account of the mid-twentieth century instead of the nineteenth. Obviously the parallels are not exact. I do not think Americans generally view their expanding influence with 'bland self-confidence' nor do they desire to establish any form of political imperialism in the territories over which they exercise a certain control. Moreover, the situation is very different in this century in that America has a rival such as Europe never had to face in the nineteenth. Nevertheless it is quite clear that America cannot escape the problems which accompany any possession of preponderant power in the affairs of men. One of her own theologians has recently written a book entitled *The Lust for Power*, and the question which Kitson Clark asks about the nineteenth century can surely be asked of the twentieth. "Given the lust, given the opportunities, given the arms, what would have happened without Christianity, without indeed the organized exuberant Christianity of the nineteenth century?" His answer for the nineteenth century is that "in awakening the conscience of the country and in keeping it awake the various religious agitations at home, from the anti-slavery agitations on, were all important. And so were the missionaries who instructed those agitations at home and tried to serve in the field the interests of many who were certainly not strong enough or vocal enough to help themselves. In fact, the real question is not what these people did wrong, but what would have happened if they had never existed". If we are prepared to assume that the same temptations will assail American expansion in the twentieth century as assailed European expansion in the nineteenth, then we may begin to estimate the potential importance of American missionaries in the present world situation.

However, when this is said, certain doubts and questions immediately spring to mind. In the first place, American expansion in the twentieth century is a far more subtle and impersonal phenomenon than was European expansion in the nineteenth. Then personal agents went forth into other parts of the world to trade, to explore, to open up new territory, to administer new regions: missionaries could work alongside these personal agents and could meet them on roughly equal terms. In accordance with their own Christian principles, they could support or denounce their policies as the case might be. But to-day the forces which extend American influence are vast and intangible. Air bases have been established in all parts of the world; commercial and passenger airways encircle the globe; such projects as Marshall Aid and the Four Point Plan operate swiftly and almost mechanically; the voice of America is constantly being heard through the regular channels of radio transmission. What can a handful of missionaries do to keep this vast impersonal machinery under surveillance and criticism? How can the missionary dissociate himself from these techniques of communication which appear to carry the official

messages of his own country? Leaders of Christian life at the home base may still raise criticisms in the Press or may bring some slight pressure to bear in Congress ; but even they find it hard to wield any effective criticisms of policies and plans which operate on a world scale, and the missionary may be forgiven if he feels that his only task is to preach the Gospel faithfully, leaving all other matters to work themselves out as best they may.

In the second place one is bound to admit that a large proportion of twentieth century American missionaries have little or no desire to entangle themselves with the political or economic problems of their own or of any other country. Certainly they have no intention of interfering in the political affairs of the country to which they have committed themselves for missionary work. Few principles are so tenaciously held by American Christians as that of the absolute necessity of the separation of Church and State. This is particularly true of the more sectarian bodies, and it is these who are responsible for a large part of the overseas missionary work of American Christianity. A common pattern is to be found in a single congregation or a small group of congregations sending a representative overseas to preach the Gospel and to establish a congregation similar to that of the home base in the foreign land. There may be a slight reference to the political power in that passport and visa regulations have to be met, but it is seldom that these create any difficulties. The much more significant link with the secular society is to be found in the use of American dollars to support the missionary and to assist him in his work. But there has never been the same feeling about relations with economic power as there has been about links with political power : free enterprise in the realm of missionary endeavour and free enterprise in the sphere of economic organization seem to have a good deal in common. Thus there is often astonishingly generous giving on the part of a small congregation to finance its representative who goes forth into parts unknown, the pattern being not unlike that of the company of shareholders in a small business who send out their agent to promote their interests in other parts of the country. But so long as the dollar retains its secure position in the world market few questions are likely to arise about relations with the secular power. At the present, then, it seems that much of American missionary activity will be carried on by congregational or sectarian representatives who will on principle avoid any involvement in political affairs and will find no reason to ask questions about economic puzzles so long as the dominance of their own currency persists.

Thus, in spite of certain outward parallels to the 19th century situation, there is little indication at present that American missionaries will play as significant a role in this era of American expansion as European missionaries were able to do in the period of European expansion. Partly this is due to the nature of the forces which are not at work, partly to the firm determination of most American missionaries to avoid all entanglements in secular affairs. To say this is not in any way to undervalue the sacrificial giving and devoted living of hosts of individual Christians in the U.S.A. and of scores of individual missionaries in the overseas fields. But it is not easy to see any way in which

they are exercising their influence within the great world responsibilities to which their country is now committed.

III

What then can we say of a more positive kind? First, it has to be admitted that in the one area where American Christianity has played its largest part culturally, educationally, theologically and in matters of organization, the door is now closed to any immediate further activities. There was a time in the colonial period when American eyes turned eastwards and her ships sailed across the Atlantic to seek for treasures from the East Indies. But since the beginning of the 19th century most eyes have turned *westwards*, out to the great open spaces, out to the frontier, on to the Pacific ocean and even beyond the Pacific to China and Japan. To think of Europe and Africa was in a sense to turn backward and India was Britain's preserve. Missionaries did indeed go to India and to Burma and Ceylon, to the Middle East and Africa.¹ But China became the real focus of American missionary activity. It was there that the great Christian colleges were established: it was there that the Episcopal Church established new dioceses: it was thence that students came flocking to American colleges and seminaries. With all their national differences there seemed to be a certain *rapport* between the American and the Chinese. It is true that on a smaller scale Christian cultural activities also flourished in Japan, Korea, and the Philippines, but one cannot escape the feeling that China was the real centre of the most significant American missionary influence.

Now, all this is changed. We need to try to imagine that all British missionary activities in India had been forcibly stopped in order to gain some idea of the blow which American missionary societies have received through recent events in China. Even this would not be a true parallel, for Anglican missions in particular have always had a vast sphere of responsibility in Africa. America, however, has no such obvious second field of endeavour. For this reason it seems to me that there must be every sympathy with American missionary leaders as they seek to adjust themselves to the new situation and to reorientate their activities towards other parts of the world. For the moment the Chinese Church must stand alone in relating itself to the new situation. Perhaps it has been too dependent upon American dollars. For a period it may react with excessive violence against the country which has done so much to make available to it the treasures and traditions of the Churches of the West. Meanwhile the American Churches must wait and pray and hope.

In Japan America has been in the embarrassing position of exercising political power and the Churches have been reluctant to avail themselves of any special advantages that such a situation might offer. The attitude of responsible Christian leadership in the U.S.A. seems to be to encourage Japanese Churches to stand on their own feet, though assistance will still be given in areas of special need. It is significant,

¹ In the Middle East, in particular, the remarkable contribution made by the American educational institutions played a significant part in the Arab awakening and the beginnings of nationalism in this area.

for example, that the Episcopal Church has not looked with favour on an American accepting Episcopal responsibility in the Japanese Church, despite the fact that it is still providing considerable assistance in the field of theological training. In Korea, some of the finest American missionary institutions have been destroyed and at present the societies have to concern themselves with relief work. In the Philippines work goes steadily forward and the responsibility of the Episcopal Church has been greatly increased since the Philippine Independent Church was received into communion with it. Thus although the future of missions in the Orient is dark and uncertain, it seems evident that their trusteeship, as it were, will devolve mainly upon the American Churches. It is highly unlikely that within any reasonable period there will be any large scale return of *European* missionaries to the Far East. But America is determined to stay in the Orient for its own security's sake. While the political power keeps the lines of communication open, it is unthinkable that the Churches will fail to do all that is in their power to support their brethren in those areas where so much of their own earlier work has been done.

IV

Now that the main field of missionary activity is closed, what alternatives are open to the American Churches? This is a large question which I have no competence to answer in detail. I will therefore confine myself to the Episcopal Church and seek to outline its main objectives as it looks to the immediate future. Its work in Africa has never been large. The diocese of Liberia was established in the 19th century, but the Mission has had its ups and downs and seems never to have caught the imagination of the home Church in the way that missions in the far east have succeeded in doing. Under the leadership of its present bishop the diocese is making real progress, but there is little prospect that the Episcopal Church will extend its activities in Africa in the immediate future. A more romantic field of endeavour which *has* caught the imagination of the Church is Alaska. Here the Episcopal Church has taken the lead in missionary activity and under the guidance of its youthful and adventurous bishop it is likely to go from strength to strength in this strategic area, which may in time become one of the States of the Union. But Liberia and Alaska are comparatively limited fields and the question remains still to be answered: With the possibility of expansion westward almost ended, with the possibility of expansion eastward unlikely to be contemplated, in which direction will the Church now look? The obvious answer and the one which seems likely to prove correct is *southward*. The possibilities of expansion in Latin America are taking on a new importance and the Episcopal Church seems to have a field of opportunity in this area without parallel elsewhere. Its diocese in Brazil has recently been divided into three and its seminary there is about to reopen, while in Central America and certain of the West Indian dependencies the prospects for expansion are very bright. Indeed, we may say that if Protestant missionary activity is to be carried on in Latin America in the future it must, in the main, be done by missionaries from the

U.S.A.; and further, that the general temper and tradition of the people in these areas seems often to dispose them more favourably to the ministrations of a Reformed Catholicism such as is found in the Episcopal Church than to any other body.

When this is said, however, we are still left with one of the greatest problems facing the missionary leaders in the U.S.A., a problem which has its bearing on almost every aspect of the situation we have discussed. This problem is that of the growing power and influence of the Roman Catholic Church in the whole of the Western Hemisphere. There is no sign of any diminishing of the missionary zeal of *this* Church, and there is no slackening of its efforts to influence the official policies and activities of the American government. It is strong numerically and it has won favour in the eyes of the general public by its vigorous opposition to Communism. Thus the Protestant Churches are in the difficult position of having to be on guard, not only against abuse of power and influence by their own government in the world at large, but also against attempts of the Roman Church to induce the government to adopt as official policy its own Holy Crusade against Communism. Moreover, the Roman Church has already shown that it will not sit by and allow the free activity of Protestant missionaries in Latin American countries, and it is reasonably certain that any attempt to extend operations there on a large scale would arouse implacable opposition. Altogether the situation is most complex, for whereas few can withhold admiration for those missionaries of the Roman communion who have stood to their tasks in the Far East in the face of almost certain death, few would be prepared to condone the attempts of the hierarchy to increase the power and influence of the Vatican by bringing political pressure to bear wherever and whenever the opportunity occurs. The Protestant Churches have no central policy-making organizations comparable to those of the Roman Church and any concerted opposition is liable to be termed 'intolerance'. When all these factors are taken into consideration it becomes clear that it will be no easy task for American Protestant Missions to fulfil the same significant role in the century of their own nation's growing influence such as was fulfilled by European Missions a century ago.

In conclusion, I return to the title of this article. That the American Churches have an important part to play in the missionary movement at the present time goes without saying. They have economic resources far greater than those of other Protestant communions: they have possibilities of free movement in the world which are denied to many other peoples: they are the inheritors of a noble tradition of missionary enterprise, a tradition which they will not lightly forsake. But missionary activity has to be carried on in new ways in this 20th century world, and it is not yet clear that American missionary leaders are fully alive to this fact. It is, for instance, nothing short of tragic that so little has been done in the distribution of Christian literature throughout the world. To-day in India Communist literature is available everywhere in attractive form and at a cheap price. Here indeed was a field for American enterprise, but next to nothing has been done. So in regard to the radio and other means of communication.

It is true that nothing can take the place of the personal agent and I have little doubt that the stream of young Americans ready to devote themselves to missionary service will not soon dry up. But even personal agents must be strategically and effectively used. Can this be done, however, when so many of those who go overseas go as representatives of small sects or of isolated congregations? Can any concerted policies be framed? Can any true Church-consciousness be fostered? America certainly possesses material resources and is not lacking in dedicated lives. Can these be used to the fullest possible advantage in this day of America's destiny and unparalleled opportunity?

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