THE URBAN FACE OF MISSION

MINISTERING THE GOSPEL IN A DIVERSE AND CHANGING WORLD

HARVIE M. CONN
AND OTHERS

EDITED BY
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Introduction

Manuel Ortiz with William S. Barker
and Samuel T. Logan Jr.

There are so many things to recognize and celebrate about Harvie Conn's life and his contribution to the church, but one thing that was extremely important to him was God's concern for the poor. He taught, preached, and lived in such a consistent manner that it seemed to be a high calling for him. The city was not just a place where people lived; it was also a place that housed many disenfranchised people, especially here in the United States. The city was not just a place or a topic for sociological discussion; it was where many of those who were ignored lived, and Harvie was concerned that we not ignore the people dear to the heart of God. This was a priority embraced by my brother. Justice was at the forefront of his thinking. His concern for globalization was not just a matter of religious pluralism and multiethnicity; it had to do with the poor who were moving into the cities and the need for ethnic and socioeconomic reconciliation.

As a missionary in Korea, he worked with prostitutes in the red-light district because he knew that women were being oppressed, and they were usually the ones who were poor and powerless. He continued to remind the church of its treatment of women, and at times this caused him some deep heartache and conflict. As many of us know, Harvie did not like confrontation, but it seems that his calling to proclaim justice and justification brought him many uncomfortable and sleepless nights.

As I reviewed his papers and letters, I noticed numerous letters to the president and the dean of the seminary about raising money for minorities, particularly African-Americans and Hispanics. He wanted to provide theological education that would equip our brothers and sisters in the city to be more effective ministers. Contextualization was not just a theme to be discussed in mission circles; it had to do with reaching the unreached, especially in our urban and poor communities. Harvie realized that systemic evil existed in Christian institutions, and he wanted to bring the gospel to bear on the hearts of administrators and faculty. He knew that racism and sexism were sins against creation and the gospel, and it was no small thing to him.

Harvie found that the best way to confront injustices and instill compassion for the poor was to write books and articles on this subject, to lecture at the invitation of churches and educational institutions, and to live in community with his family. His many books and articles unreservedly promoted conviction, repentance, and transformation.

Another important aspect of Harvie's life and work was his love for the Word of God. In all his work, both writing and teaching, he pursued exegesis along the lines of Westminster Seminary's tradition. Much of his work concerning the city came out of his exegetical work in the gospel of Luke. Dr. Conn realized how important this New Testament text is to understanding the city. Here the good news flows from Galilee to Jerusalem. His thinking and writing was always in submission to the authority of Scripture.

This volume is intended to communicate some of Harvie's concerns for world evangelization. It is integrative, and therefore the themes of justice and the poor may be highlighted more in one essay than in another. As Dr. Baker and I started to assemble the authors for this volume, we looked particularly for those who were friends and colaborers in this march toward justice and mission. Matching the basic themes with the right authors was not an easy task, and we found ourselves missing a few authors who could not participate. We thought that the major themes listed in the table of contents would both bring honor to Harvie's work and provide stu-

dents ministering in the city and in mission with a helpful and useful text for ministry.

I am writing this on the second anniversary of Harvie's death, and my wife and I have been thinking about him and how he loved my children and wanted to see them before his death, especially Elizabeth. Early this morning, Erik Davis, the comptroller at Westminster, was also reminded of Harvie's farewell, and he sent us a reminder through the Internet. I have included it here in order to provide another picture of this wonderful servant of God:

> Friends,
>
> Today I enjoyed some delicious fresh tomatoes, as many of us do at this time of year. Sometimes the mind is interesting when it comes to loved ones, as memories surface when one least expects them. As I savored the flavor of a tomato tonight, I remembered how every year Harvie would share his exquisite Wayne Avenue tomato harvest with the Westminster community. He would come into each office, short of breath, with armloads full of huge tomatoes in paper bags. They were the kind of tomatoes you could bite into like an apple, no need for salt or pepper. With his Harvie chuckle, he would tell us how he and Dorothy would never be able to eat all of them, so he wanted to share them with us. It was part of every August until a few years ago.
>
> As I reflect on it, I realize that this story is symbolic of Harvie's life among us. He was a prolific harvester of souls, never content to keep his Lord to himself, eager to share the bounty of the Gospel with anyone, and always with that trademark laugh. Harvie understood the need to multiply himself, as a seed, so that future generations would carry his torch of Christ's love for the poor and the cities of this world. His zeal for the Kingdom was as infectious as his laugh. None of us who knew Harvie will be the same again. I miss him especially tonight. Wow, it'll be two years tomorrow that Harvie left us. Let's thank the Lord again for His work through our friend.
>
> Erik[1]

In order to provide yet another window into the life of Harvie Conn, I have also included a Christmas letter from Harvie to Dr. Edmund Clowney and his wife, which Dr. Clowney forwarded to me for use in this volume. It reads as follows:

Dear Friends,

Almost two thousand years ago, John gave the world his news bulletin: "The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us" (John 1:14). And, with John, we still add our own personal amen: "We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son."

The 1980s are almost gone. The Swaggarts and the Bakkers come and go. Papers herald the end of the Cold War. But the glory of the one and only Son does not fade.

Two hundred and eighty-nine million new Christians in these past ten years, with a projected figure of 308 million more to appear in the next ten years. In the past decade we have seen what the scholars predicted: there are now more Christians in Asia, Latin America, and Africa than in the Anglo-Saxon world. More Christians speak Swahili or Spanish, Hindi or Chinese, than English or French or German.

And our life continues on, far less dramatic, far more mini-textured—chronicling the history of the church around the world; sticking in a few warning pins here and there; continuing to teach and write and stir; enjoying worship in a multi-ethnic church. Children to remind us we're getting older, students at Seminary as excited as ever about what God can do in His world.

With the joys and frustrations—bodies that no longer do what they did five years ago; churches that still major in minors and minor in majors; a drug epidemic that sweeps the neighborhood in which you live. Not enough progress in sanctification, not enough time for neighbors and friends, not enough of "enough."

And in it all, God still says, "I'm not finished with you yet." The mighty Lord of Calvary who turns Europe's history upside

down in a month still has time to handle our washing machines that don't work and our tempers that don't cool. Old friends touch our lives with a phone call or a card at Christmas. And our lives stop for a minute for perspective. After all the sermons are preached, all the articles written, all the meals prepared, the bottom line is the same: Our God reigns.

May you know His reign in a special way this coming year.

The Conns—Dorothy, Harvie, and "the children"[2]

The first essay of this book is a lecture by Dr. Conn on the importance of integrating theology and mission. He was vehemently opposed to what he termed "academic apartheid"—separating the two disciplines into different academic departments. He reminds us that missions is the mother of theology. This selection should be helpful and insightful for those who are serving in higher education, training Christians in local communities.

Finally, William Barker, the former academic dean at Westminster, and Samuel Logan, the president of Westminster, share their thoughts about Harvie.

Harvie as a Teacher—
Words from William S. Barker

Serving as academic dean at Westminster Seminary after 1991, I was privileged to know Harvie Conn as a teacher through my meetings with him and through student feedback during his final eight years of classroom instruction. During the preceding five years, I knew him as a faculty colleague. But my memories of him and his unique manner of communicating go all the way back to when I was a university student and he was a seminarian assisting in an Orthodox Presbyterian church in New Jersey. Back then, in the 1950s, he was a lanky redhead whose smile and laugh were already unforgettable.

My impressions were renewed a decade or two later, when I heard him lecturing at Covenant College, describing his unusual experiences in Korea. Humor and seriousness were blended as he modestly used the second person in order not to call attention to himself,

but rather to the Lord's work through the gospel: "You are in the red-light district in Seoul. . . ." Some years later, I played a part in having him speak at an urban missions conference at Covenant Seminary, where he emphasized the need for contextualization in cross-cultural communication. In addition to his own vivid stories, he was not afraid to use contemporary cinema to stimulate thought and discussion, as all the participants in that urban missions institute attended Martin Scorsese's film *Taxi Driver* with him.

Harvie was indefatigable in his care for his students. Even in the year after his retirement from full-time teaching, before his death from cancer, with the burdens of his own treatments, of his limited eyesight, of his wife Dorothy's failing health, and of his continued reading and writing projects, he made great efforts to meet with students, counseling them spiritually as well as guiding their research. His students' course evaluations reflected his special sensitivity to African students, Koreans, women, and ethnic minorities in the United States. As African-American pastor Wilbert Richardson said at Harvie's memorial service, his teaching manifested the joy of the Lord, humble prayer, and theological knowledge.

Often wearing bib overalls and punctuating his lectures and chapel messages with his memorable laugh, Harvie could surprise some listeners with his theological insights. His faculty colleagues recognized him as one of the most brilliant intellects in their company. This was demonstrated in his editorship of the Westminster faculty volume on *Inerrancy and Hermeneutic,* which included his introductory essay and a chapter on "Normativity, Relevance, and Relativism,"[3] and in his participation in the periodic meetings of the faculty's hermeneutics discussion group. He readily handled the difficult issues of interpreting Scripture, but uppermost in his heart was the gospel's application. He began his time on the faculty of Westminster as a professor of apologetics in 1972, but concluded it in 1999 as professor of missions, teaching a variety of subjects, including the Korean-language section of preaching. If his retirement period had been longer, he would have written on the evangelization of Muslims and on the care of Alzheimer's patients.

Harvie could become impatient with church squabbles and administrative or academic controversies, just as he was impatient with

any efforts to honor him with recognition. In one of his final published pieces, he commented on the death of two outstanding students headed for the mission field who were killed in an automobile crash caused by a drunken driver. Referring to Moses' words in Psalm 90, Harvie commented: "Moses is praying for an awareness of how few are the days of human life. Psalm 39:4 comes close to his intention: 'Show me, O Lord, my life's end and the number of my days. Let me know how fleeting is my life.' " He then spoke of Henry Martyn, a nineteenth-century missionary to India, who died at age 31 after only six years of missionary work and Bible translation: "In his diary were these words written upon his arrival: 'Now let me burn out for God.' "

When he was dying, Harvie said, "Soon I shall walk by sight; now I have been walking by faith." A missionary colleague from Korea, Ted Hard, commented at Harvie's memorial service that Harvie's sight was weak, but his faith was strong. So also were his hope and love, love for his Lord and for all for whom the Lord died and rose again. I trust that Harvie Conn will be unforgettable to those of us who knew him as a teacher because he reflected in word and in deed the Master, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Harvie's Significance as a Missiologist—Words from Samuel T. Logan Jr.

What does it mean for the American church that there are now seven times as many Anglicans in Nigeria as Episcopalians in the United States? What does it mean for American Presbyterians that there are now four times as many Presbyterians in South Korea as in the United States? What does it mean for all Christians that we make up approximately 30 percent of the world's population? What does it mean for all Americans that we are 6 percent of the world's population, yet control 59 percent of the world's wealth?

These are the kinds of questions that Harvie Conn brought to the table—or, more accurately, to faculty meetings—at Westminster Theological Seminary. This institution, perhaps more than most American theological seminaries, is intensely aware of its past and its heritage. We are confessionally defined by documents written in the

middle of the seventeenth century. We are institutionally defined by ecclesiastical events of the late 1920s. How do we sing the Lord's song in "the strange land" that is now the twenty-first century? How do we take appropriate account of where and when we are without compromising the "old, old story of Jesus and His love?"

Harvie Conn, more than any other individual that I have ever known, pressed these questions upon me in both personal and professional ways. He continually insisted that it is necessary, but never sufficient, for God's people to seek to understand "the unchanging Word." It is always required that we bring that Word to bear upon our "changing world," and that we start this process with ourselves. Although Harvie regularly teased me about my admiration for Jonathan Edwards, no one in my acquaintance better exemplified Edwards's famous dictum, "No light in the understanding is good which does not produce holy affection in the heart."

And no one in my acquaintance ever embodied in life more fully than Harvie the things of which he spoke and wrote. Shining the light of the gospel on dark places of all sorts was Harvie's specialty—in the classroom, on the written page, in the neighborhoods of Philadelphia, on the streets of Seoul. He was passionate about bringing *every* thought captive to Christ, including (perhaps especially) those thoughts which had become part of this or that theological tradition. And he *did* it . . . in his life, as much as in his words.

In all of this, Harvie Conn was the paradigm of what a missionary / missiologist should be. He labored tirelessly toward the goal of seeing all people everywhere bow before Jesus, rather than before any human creation—even if that creation was modified by the adjective *theological.* He went personally to the people whose knees were defiant—from Seoul prostitutes to seminary professors—and challenged them lovingly to recognize the sweet lordship of Jesus.

That is the purpose (and I believe the accomplishment) of the essays in this volume. Voices from around the world call all of us to think again about what the unchanging word of Scripture really does say about the changing world in which we live—a changing world in which the center of Christianity has shifted dramatically (10 percent of the adult population in Scotland attends church regularly, while 70 percent of the adult population in the Philippines attends

church regularly) and in which white, male, American assumptions about the world (most of Harvie's colleagues at both Westminster and in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church were white American males) are increasingly being challenged by evangelical Christians who are different in one or more of those categories.

This book is, therefore, part of Harvie's legacy to the church of Jesus Christ. There is always more light to spring forth from the infallible and inerrant Word of God. We all need to become *more* like the Savior whose name we bear. The Lord used Harvie Conn in mighty ways to spread the sanctifying power of the two-edged sword of Scripture. It is my confident hope that he will do the same with these essays that are dedicated to the triune God in thanksgiving for the life and ministry of Harvie Maitland Conn.

1

Mission, Missions, Theology, and Theological Education

Harvie M. Conn

Editors' note: The following is a previously unpublished manuscript of a lecture Harvie presented at McMaster Divinity School in Ontario, Canada, on February 4, 1992. It is included in this volume in order to give the readers at least a small sense of where Harvie's heart and mind were leading him on these important issues.

Suppose with me, for a minute, that you are a missions professor at Urbana, a situation equivalent to a chocolate lover being hired as a food taster at Hershey's. You are talking to a university student who is serious about overseas ministry. He is asking about the missions program at your seminary. "Is your program theoretical or practical?" he asks. "I mean, how much time will I spend in the classroom? Do you have an internship program? I'm not interested in learning about missions. I want to do it." At this point he adds, "Can I major in missions? I'm not much interested in theology or church history or that kind of stuff. I just want to get some basics in how to do missions."

How would you answer?

Suppose with me, for another minute, that you are sitting at the lunch table in the dining hall of a large seminary. You have come to give a special lecture on missions in the classroom of one of your friends. The purpose of your presence is unknown to the others at the table.

The conversation at lunch is an animated carryover from previous class experiences of the morning. The Anglo-Saxon students at the table fill the air with magical theological words like *hermeneutic, redaction criticism,* and *narrative theology,* and big names like Gutiérrez, Fiorenza, and Gadamer.

Finally, one of the students notes your silence, introduces himself, and inquires as to your presence. You respond, "I'm a teacher of missions; I'm here to give a special lecture on the missionary challenge of the twenty-first century." The silence at the table is deafening. Students search desperately for something pleasant to say. "Are you giving a slide show?" someone asks with a chuckle. Everyone laughs and the conversation returns quickly to the "reality" of the classroom.

What has happened?

I see these conversations as suggestive epiphanies, clues, tip-offs to a kind of non–South African academic apartheid: the isolation of mission from theology, of theology from mission, of church from world. I see my task in this presentation as threefold: (1) sketch out why there is this apartheid, (2) suggest some current modifications going on now, and (3) offer some practical suggestions to encourage the process of modification. Please note my modesty in all this. I deliberately use words like *sketch, suggest, modify, encourage,* and *process.*

Academic Apartheid: The Heritage of the Past

Both table conversations I have described suffer from the same historical problems—the compartmentalization of mission and theology and a misunderstanding of both. We will now look briefly at both.

Mission Marginalized

In the pre-Constantinian centuries of the church, the dialogue between mission and theological formulation was an invigorating one. *Dialogue,* in fact, may not be the best word to describe the relationship. Even a term like *interaction* may create too many barriers. Theology's agenda was shaped by the church's mission in the world. And a mission motivation to reach the Greeks drove what we now call the church's theologians to in-depth study of Christology. Was Justin Martyr's apologetic to the Jews a missionary theology or a the-

ological mission? Should one call the interplay of Origen and Clement of Alexandria with Greek philosophy mission or theology?[1]

The church had not yet become a world-conquering majority; it did not even possess the Empire's Good Housekeeping seal of approval. The missionizing, minority church found itself in what David Bosch calls an "emergency situation."[2] In this situation, mission was "the mother of theology."

In the years that followed, the two began to drift apart. As Europe became Christianized and Christianity became the established religion in the Roman Empire and beyond, the "regions beyond" horizon of mission began to recede and theology restricted itself to the church or, at most, Christendom. Missions increasingly looked like the religious arm of politics, the bearer of power and culture. And theology lost more and more of its "on-the-road" quality.

There were exciting interruptions to these tendencies. The springtime of missions in the thirteenth century saw the formation of the Franciscan and Dominican orders and their missionary thrusts into places like Mongolia and China. At the end of the fifteenth century, the sea routes to India and the Americas were discovered. "Gold and God" drove explorers and evangelists into an alien and larger new world.

Protestantism's response to an enlarged world was mixed also. While Calvin continued to restrict his understanding of mission largely to the church and Luther railed too often against Jew and Muslim "Turks," the Anabaptists broke through the links between church and society and sought to liberate once more the outsider orientation of missions and theology. Lutheran Pietists and Moravians followed that same direction in the seventeenth century.

I have called these directions "interruptions" in the marginalization of mission. A second historical factor diminished their significance. That second factor was the shift that took place in theology.

Theology Abstracted

Edward Farley, in his 1983 book *Theologia,* sees a massive historical change in our understanding of theology. In its earliest form, theology was seen as the reflective wisdom of the believer, a self-conscious habit or disposition, a *habitus,* of the human heart.[3]

But, he continues, with the coming of the universities in the twelfth century, that definition began to change. A new emphasis began to grow: theology as *scientia,* as a theoretical discipline. The practitioners of theology began to narrow: from believer to scholar, from lay people to clergy. And with this emerging paradigm of theology, the gap between theory and practice began to grow.

I myself suspect that the roots of this change lie deeper in time than Farley underlines. The dialogue of the early church with Greek philosophy left its mark on more than the Greeks:

> Clement of Alexandria came to Christianity by way of philosophy. Could one expect such a man to see easily the Christian as anyone other than "true Gnostic"? Origen was a professional philosopher. Like a dentist who looks at faces and sees mouths, he looked at Christianity and saw the *paideia* of humanity, Greek wisdom at the bottom line of divine providence.[4]

Can we trace at least the partial beginnings of theology as a scientific discipline to these earlier days? Theology already had begun, however faintly, to search for essences untouched by the realities of the cultural and social context. The goal of theology was emerging as a rational display of the Platonic ideal. The Latin Fathers, with their legal training, reinforced this perception. The Cappadocian Fathers, Basil of Caesarea and the two Gregorys, in the second half of the fourth century, carried it on. In the language of Werner Jaeger, "They . . . think of theology as a great science based on supreme scholarship and as a philosophical pursuit of the mind."[5]

True theology has begun to take on the shape of *scientia,* the liberating search of the mind for essence, core, unhindered by any kind of historical, geographical, or social qualifier. Theological pursuits are freed to become the Platonic search for abstract, rational principles.

According to Farley, the Enlightenment structuralized and modified further the two definitions of theology. And, in doing so, I would add, it reinforced further the apartheid isolation of theology from mission. Theology as cognitive *habitus,* as the individual quest for the wisdom of redemption, became the practical know-how necessary to ministerial work. Theology as disciplined *scientia* became a

technical and specialized scholarly undertaking. Farley labels this "systematic theology."[6]

The institutional setting in which this occurred was the university. And the schooling model that it left was what Farley calls the "four-fold pattern" of Bible or text, church history, systematic theology, and practical theology or application.

Under the influence of Schleiermacher in the nineteenth century, this pattern triumphed in Europe and eventually North America.[7] "'Practical' theology became a mechanism to keep the church going, while the other disciplines were examples of 'pure' science." The two elements were held together by what Farley calls the "clergy paradigm."[8]

Isolationism and Redefinitions Sealed

This grossly simplistic history leaves us with our present frustrations over the identity of both theology and mission. The operative definition of theology with which I suspect most of us realistically function is that of an academic discipline that is clergy-oriented. And there are other dimensions that sound like caricatures without the nuances I cannot provide now: a church-centered theological agenda whose horizons are often limited still by a flat world—European, North American; a form of schooling whose socializing process is largely middle- and upper-class; a search for some theological bottom line of biblical Essences (with a capital E), without attention to the social and cultural dimensions that led us to that bottom line; a cognitive struggle for truth that marginalizes the missiological demands of that truth.

In the same vein, mission has been touched and even reshaped by this history. The passage of the gospel from its Western base across oceans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has underlined the geographical border-crossing character of the church's mission. And, in reflection on that history, mission is often called missions. In more recent history, its place as an academic discipline has been recognized with a new title, missiology. But even this term is restricted by its recent geographical history. For many, missiology remains a science of and for the foreign missionary.

Its place in theological education remains debated. For some, the study of mission is appended to one of the existing four disciplines of the school. Following the lead of Schleiermacher, this is usually

practical theology. Others, following the tradition stabilized by Gustav Warneck, see it as a theological discipline in its own right and speak of missiology. A third approach, followed mainly in Britain, "was to abandon the teaching of missiology as a separate subject and expect other theological disciplines to incorporate the missionary dimension into the entire field of theology."[9]

But, in spite of all these approaches, by the 1950s mission or missions or missiology still sounded too often like some forgotten, marginalized, and peripheral "department of foreign affairs" for the seminary. In the United States in 1950, the Association of Professors of Mission came into existence. But, argues Pierce Beaver, its appearance was "not as an expression of the old missionary triumphalism but as an attempt to build a lifeboat for floundering brothers and sisters."[10] In 1956 there appeared the "Study of Theological Education in the United States and Canada." It was commissioned by the Association of Theological Schools and directed by H. Richard Niebuhr. It excluded missiology as a subject field.[11]

The second half of this century began, then, with theology and mission still appearing to function as very distant cousins in the theological encyclopedia. And mission particularly, in that relationship, was a colorful extra, still looking for its place in the theological sun. European studies may underline its theoretical side, North American research its pragmatic dimension, but it still sounds like an overnight guest shuffling around in bedroom slippers in the palace of the theological seminary.

Encouragements for a New Understanding

I am hopeful this situation may now be changing. From the missiological side, there are those like Norman Thomas describing the present moment as "a *kairos,* a critical time, for missiology."[12] David Bosch sees characteristics now coming together for the emergence of a new, postmodern paradigm in missiology.[13]

From the theological side, there are hints at reinvestigation. Edward Farley's continuing study of the nature of theology[14] appears to be stimulating a new look at theological study. And there is Max Stackhouse's 1988 book, *Apologia*.[15] The work is a summary of more

than five years of ongoing theological dialogue at Andover-Newton Theological Seminary. The interaction has revolved around the themes of contextualization, globalization, and mission. The nature of theology itself and its relation to truth and justice have been opened to fascinating scrutiny by the seminary. And by us.[16]

"Outside" Realities

The partner, the discussion stimulator, in this new ferment is no longer simply metaphysics or philosophy alone, as in the past. New partners are shaping a new dialogue.

The reality of a global church is intruding on North American theologizing. A shift in the Christian axis has occurred within the last two decades. And the new center of ecclesiastical gravity has moved from the Northern to the Southern Hemisphere. To modify slightly the language of Gerald Anderson, the old centers of male, Anglo-Saxon theological influence and church growth in Europe and North America are becoming the new peripheries. And the new centers of vitality and creativity in theological construction are now coming from women, the African-American community of North America, Asia, Africa, and Latin America.[17]

Theological and missiological ferment flows from this new reality. New names bombard our curriculum—feminist theology, black theology, liberation theology, minjung theology, African theology. The world we had relegated to the missiological has spilled over into the theological.

There are the sociopolitical dimensions that also bring theology and mission closer together. Questions like power and powerlessness, the oppressor and the oppressed, are not only expanding the horizons of mission; they are shaping the theologies of Jürgen Moltmann, Rosemary Radford Ruether, and James Cone. Theology and mission are turning to one another as new questions require combined wisdom. How do we live and witness to our faith under conditions of racist oppression and sexist authoritarianism? What do we do in the face of Muslim strictures against baptism and church building? How should Christian discipleship face the suppression of human rights, the ecological crisis, secularization? Does the Bible demand we be Sandanistas or Contras? Or neither? Is liberation a

neglected biblical category for interpreting the Atonement in an African-American context?

The vast scale of human poverty in traditional "mission fields" presses mission and theology alike. Can missions alone address the intolerable fact that two-thirds of our human family go to bed hungry every night? What will our theology say and do about an alleged 15,000 people who starve to death every day? Will it be theology or mission that deals with the 20 percent of the human family said to control 80 percent of the world's resources?

And what of growing apathy in the U.S. toward the homeless? Estimates of that number have ranged from 300,000 to three million.[18] The *New York Times* reports that "Americans are beginning to turn away from the outstretched hands, numbed by the severity of the problem and confused about how to respond."[19] Missionary compassion no longer demands border crossing; theological reflection can no longer be done from the balcony at a safe distance.

Another outside reality is the awesome size of the world's non-Christian population. In Jesus' time, it numbered 250 million. In 1992, out of a total world population of 5.4 billion, it is estimated that 3.6 billion are not Christians—over thirteen times as many non-Christians as when Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount.[20]

Forty years ago, this statistic would have been quoted in a New Hampshire congregation's foreign missions conference. Now we say it in the shadow of a Sikh temple in British Columbia, in the face of a Muslim community of over two million in the U.S.

And we say it in the face of the increasing secularization of the Western world. In Canada's Protestant denominations over the past forty years, there has been a drop-off rate in church attendance of 35 percent, 40 percent in Roman Catholic parishes. In Canada, argues Glenn Smith of Montreal, "The moral consensus of a society increasingly bypasses the traditional values of the church"[21] in national debates over social policy and morality.

In response to this situation, mission statespeople like Lesslie Newbigin have returned from a lifetime in India to now ask, "Can the West be saved?"[22] They call for a new thrust in mission that will unlock the geographical "elsewhere" character of that concept and develop a domestic missiology for North America, "mission in

reverse." And they are not afraid to question the role that theological education has played in hindering the development of a "hermeneutic of the gospel." Newbigin observes, "We have lived for so many centuries in the 'Christendom' situation that ministerial training is almost entirely conceived in terms of the pastoral care of existing congregations."[23] If I read it right, the book *Apologia,* by Max Stackhouse,[24] comes partly as a response to these realities. And one of the centers of its interest is the role of theology and theological education in this new situation.

"Insider" Reflections

Out of this context, the study agendas of mission and theology are converging in perhaps a new way. And the questions they ask together have a strong element of self-introspection. They give off loud whispers that the questions can and may lead to new self-understandings, to new mergers and tighter connections between mission and theology. We will now discuss two of these agenda issues.

One is *contextualization*. The topic, we note, was thrust on the church by the new realities of its truly global mission character. And, significantly, the word first appeared in studies of the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches in 1972.[25] Mission and theological education were brought together by a joint issue—the emergence of local theologies spawned by the mission of the church.

In study circles associated with missiology, evangelical contextualization discussions have moved in directions that might be expected—the relation of the gospel and culture,[26] church planting appropriate to the setting,[27] and communication issues.

Within the North American, Anglo-Saxon, conservative-evangelical movement, these discussions have often been controlled by the fear of syncretism. Will the gospel core be lost? Can theology become so local that its universal element is sacrificed? The question is a legitimate one. But the danger in dealing with it is that contextualization can become a platform for an apologetical dialogue on Western issues of the past—for example, liberalism versus this or that.

Discussions then are sidetracked from creative theologizing and the impact of contextualization studies on our own self-understanding. We return, in the name of contextualization, to earlier indigenization

discussions, to questions of appropriate worship patterns and styles of leadership. In those instances where the debate on hermeneutics has been reopened, sometimes one feels the answers proposed are not really touched by the implications of contextualization, and that we have moved very little.[28] One also senses that North American discussions in such circles are frequently imprimatur debates on some "foreigner's" theological proposals.

Some of this is understandable. The past isolation of mission from theology has left missionaries and missiology with little enthusiasm for theological discussions in Africa or Korea or Indonesia. The pragmatic focus of North American missiological education has kept us closer to the how-to-do-it area of church planting and administration. And the isolation of North American white churches from Hispanic and African-American communities has kept us from listening to the creative theological formulations now emerging from these minority sources.

To some degree, I am not encouraged either by the attention paid to this issue from the theological side of white North America. Feminist and liberation theologies are gaining attention in mainline circles, far less so in ours. Theological developments from the so-called Third World appear even more rarely. Academic writing that networks between Christianity and non-Christian religions is proliferating. But again it is often the object for study of a selected few on faculties. And those selected few are too frequently in the growing academic dumpster called "practical theology." Farley's response would be, "I told you so."

Again, these directions are understandable. The isolation of theology from mission has left theologians with the sense that many of these issues are missiological issues, or even ethical topics, but not "real" theology.

At the same time, contextualization is there to collapse both sides of our watertight compartments. In my judgment, it has yet to force our Western church worlds into the richer dialogue that I had hoped for in an earlier day.[29] But I remain optimistic when I hear theologians like Tite Tiénou combine both worlds and say that "a theology that communicates is always missiological."[30] Or when Raimo Harjula speaks of theology as "the critical reflection on, articulation and

translation of God's self-disclosure . . . in and for a given historical and cultural context."[31] In these functional definitions I hear something more than theology as the result of some missionless study. Theology begins to sound like something more than the "production of theological goods which are marketed to consumers."[32]

In the last decade especially, another discussion has intruded into North American theological circles that may impact further this isolationism of mission and theology. I speak of *globalization.*

In one sense, globalization is intimately linked with earlier contextualization discussions. Like them, its impetus has come from theological education, specifically the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). Like them, it seeks also to pay serious attention to a world context. It recognizes the interdependency of the human community in the twentieth century and the pain of that world community—the realities of hunger and homelessness, oppression and spiritual lostness.

Like them also, it would appear to recognize the failures of the Western church in the past—the dominance of Western culture over the church; the effort of the Anglo-Saxon church to occupy a center seat in the world church community.

With contextualization discussions also, it seeks to promote a holistic dimension. The ATS offers a fourfold typology for globalization:

> For some, globalization means the church's universal mission to evangelize the world, i.e., to take the message of the gospel to all people, all nations, all cultures, and all religious faiths. Second, there is the idea of globalization as ecumenical cooperation between the various manifestations of the Christian church throughout the world. This includes a growing mutuality and equality between churches in first and third world countries. It involves a new openness to and respect for the great variety of local theologies that are springing up within the church in its various concrete situations. Third, globalization sometimes refers to the dialogue between Christianity and other religions. Finally, globalization refers to the mission of the church to the world, not only to convert and to evangelize, but to improve and develop the lives of the millions of poor, starving, and politically disadvantaged persons.[33]

Can globalization contribute to a new understanding of the interconnective roles of theology and mission? I believe it can. Having an agency as significant as the ATS place it on its accrediting criteria will not let it slip away quickly into faddism.

But there are problems it will have to overcome in the process. The ATS regulations allow a large measure of flexibility to its member institutions to incorporate one or more elements of its fourfold typology into their own self-definitions. Will the element of integrative holism that can tie mission to theology be lost in this freedom? Will we make theological education "global" by simply "adding to our curriculum courses on ethical questions around the world, questions of justice and peace, global outlook and world Christianity"? Will the totality of our curriculum be penetrated by the global dimension?[34]

Second, unlike contextualization discussions that originated in the Third World, globalization is chiefly a North American concern. There are Third World church leaders who already fear that these geographical roots will make it difficult for us to break free from any "ideological captivity" of too many of the theological undertakings here in North America. From whose perspective will mission and theology be globalized?[35]

Third, how seriously will the North American theological school link together overseas concerns with those of the minority communities of North America? David Schuller, until recently the associate director of the ATS, notes in a 1986 survey that most theological schools make no such division.[36] We are more skeptical, based on our own limited perceptions. If I am right, can globalization become another in-word for Anglo-Saxon parochialism? Will globalization find room for the missiological and theological context of North America's underrepresented constituency?

Fourth, can globalization reinforce contextualization's potential for a new look at the nature of mission and theology? Farley's warnings against the fragmentation of theological education into isolated specializations have power, no matter how we modify and correct them. Will globalization surrender again to its power? Will that possible surrender leave us once more at the starting gate?

Some Practical Suggestions

In closing, I offer a very few tentative trails to explore for change. There are many to try. Mine are unoriginal, often expensive, too simplistic, or even too radical to explore. Much depends on your own preunderstandings of the nature of theology and of mission. Even globalization is a blurred word and has multiple meanings in multiple communities of discourse.[37]

First, I suggest that we seek to diversify the student body ethnically, socially, and religiously. Enlarge the enrollment of non-Anglo-Saxon students. Especially, find ways to welcome the multicultural perspectives that are already part of North America's unique heritage.

A third of my institution's students now come from such backgrounds, with a very large segment from American minorities. And, when they participate in classroom discussions, they ask questions many of us in our narrow conservative-evangelical circles have not heard before.

"What is church?" has a different agenda when asked by a house church leader from the People's Republic of China. An African-American student suggests that our white Christologies place too much emphasis on the deity of Christ to be of functional use on the suffering streets of the black ghettos. "That kind of Jesus ain't got no feet," he argues. "He's a Gnostic Jesus, something for our trophy cases. He won't make out in my neighborhood." An Indonesian student struggles with the functional absence of the world of spirits from our discussions of the kingdom of God. In the Sudanese context, those concerns are paramount. In our theological world, they are peripheral.

Seek for ways to listen to those marginalized by poverty. Graded tuition scales, scholarships may open such doors. Better yet, joint classes with a theological institution serving the needs of the poor, your students in the minority, can promote conscientization. A book like James Cone's *A Black Theology of Liberation*[38] indicates that systematic theology will not remain untouched by such an encounter.

Dialogue with people of other faiths needs to be explored as a regular part of the regular theology classroom experience. Imagine the impact in a class on the doctrine of God with four members of Krishna

Consciousness sitting in the front row, interacting with the professor. Or six Muslims auditing a course on Christology, or a course on canonical studies.

Second, struggle with the composition and formation of your permanent faculty. Visiting scholars from the Third World and faculty exchanges will stimulate. But time does not always allow any visiting faculty, either from North America or not, to rethink already prepared lectures from a new context or reflect on the new context after they have returned. Visiting scholars, no matter where their base, can be theological tourists.

Other avenues may be more fruitful. How much non-Western, nonwhite experience is represented on your faculty? How "colorful" does your full-time faculty look? How much training and experience does he or she bring from outside the Anglo-Saxon world? What should be the role of such study and experience in evaluation for promotion and tenure? Do sabbaticals and faculty research projects show engagement with a world that the recipient would recognize as not one's own? Are joint writing projects with those from another socioeconomic context encouraged?

Third, encourage exposure situations for long-term faculty and student participation in other social and cultural settings. Short, intensive experiences offered outside the "ordinary" can be useful, even dramatically worldview-changing. But these opportunities are not deeply, ultimately incarnational. Nothing usually promotes long-range change and sensitivity better than living and doing and being in a cultural setting that you perceive as "foreign" to yourself. Ask any foreign missionary.

How do we find this experience? I commend to you the urban communities of the poor. In the city as resource, you will see the struggles of the world not as an observer, but as a participant. Power's temptation seems clearer to the powerless. There those marginalized by ethnicity and economics can offer a faculty member or student living there a new way of creating an agenda, not only for mission, but for theology also. In the city, the line between action and reflection will blur.

Fourth, encourage full participation by all faculty and students in joint reflection on these experiences. Reflection, after all, is the major

task of the theological seminary. Avoid isolating the global dimension into one part of the school curriculum, whether Christian ethics or "practical" theology or missiology. Consciousness-raising should have an integrative purpose: theologian stimulating, even irritating, missiologist; missiologist stimulating and irritating theologian.

The totality of our curriculum must be penetrated by the questions of global solidarity, mission, and justice. To use the language of Miguez-Bonino, "The battle for global solidarity in theological education is fought and won or lost in the teaching of the Bible, in the teaching of Church History, of Systematic Theology, of Pastoral Theology. If it is not fought at that level, all that we add in terms of other more fancy things will not help very much."[39]

Conclusions

Will this change the models for theology and mission from our long past that structure our understanding? I cannot say. I began this lecture with a more easily reached goal—"to encourage the process of modification."

Should specialization disappear? I would hope not. There is too much to learn and there are too many voices to hear for everyone to listen to all the same messages. A disenchanted critic of annual church gatherings and conventions once said to me, "At such church assemblies, everything has to be said—and everyone has to say it." I do not recommend this method of operation for church assemblies—or theological seminaries.

David Bosch follows Hans-Werner Gensichen and suggests another direction that may need some expansion. He argues for a dual function of missiology within the broad framework of theology. There is a dimensional aspect to missiology and an intentional aspect.

The dimensional aspect of missiology highlights its relevance to the world. It permeates all disciplines and is not primarily one "sector" of the theological encyclopedia. It infuses the entire curriculum; it dialogues in free partnership with other disciplines. It works at retrieving the good news universality that is at the heart of biblical, theological, historical, and pastoral studies. It reminds its colleagues in the curriculum that theology must always be "theology on the road."[40]

At the same time, missiology has an intentional aspect. It has its own proper task as a discipline to perform. Part of that task will be to introduce the church in the Western world to the Third World and to prepare "specialists" to go and work there. Another equally important part of its task will be to introduce the wisdom and experience of the Third World to the West. Issues like evangelism, enculturation, dialogue, liberation, poverty, and absence of faith are not only problems for the Third World. They are also challenges to the Western church in its own context. The globalization theme that is at the heart of missiology cannot be limited to Third World concerns. The clientele of missiology will be found in Timbuktu and Toronto, Marakesh and Memphis.[41]

Adding to Bosch's agenda, I would suggest that theology also needs its dimensional and intentional aspects. The dimensional aspect of theology highlights the need for critical reflection on the church's self-understanding of its calling in the world. God's divine revelation has been encumbered with a history of hermeneutical concerns and trails shaped by past history and our cultural place in that history. Theology's task is to constantly reexamine that global, missiological history in the light of the Scriptures and how we have shaped it by our theology and our history from the past. Mission without this theological dimension becomes only action. Theology without the mission dimension becomes only abstraction.

Theology, like mission, also has its intentional aspect, its legitimate role as a discipline to perform. It is a critical companion of the Christian mission, not a luxury of some world-dominating church. To a church engaged in mission between the already and the not-yet, the here and the there, theology says, "Reflect, repent, renew."

In mutuality and comradeship, theology and mission say together, "The mission of God is our concern; the global mission of the church is our life."