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A table of contents for the *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_ajet-02.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_ajet-02.php)

## BOOK REVIEWS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Several strengths of Schreiter's model may be noted:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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