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# Some Theses for the Spiritual Renewal and Revival of Theology, The Church and World-Responsibility

Rev. Volkhard Scheunemann

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Sunand Sumithra, with permission.*

*These theses were not written in a systematic academic manner, but have been developed during a period of ten years' missionary work, when the author could look at his own European culture from a distance. From this perspective, he realized the seriousness of the spiritual state of his own people. Though the theses are primarily relevant to Europe, they are equally applicable to other countries where the Church, under the constant threat of materialism and secularism, is in dire need of spiritual renewal. They complement the foregoing theological discussion by Dr. Swamidoss with a needed pastoral and prophetic caring of the Church.*

*Sometimes the expressions are exaggerated, but the relevance of the truth they contain can by no means be underestimated. The author appeals beyond the method of scientific analogies to a spiritual interpretation of the Bible. Some Bible references have been omitted.  
(Editor)*

## I. CONCERNING THE OVERCOMING OF THIS-WORLD-ORIENTATED AND MATERIALISTIC THINKING

1. Spiritual renewal and revival are God's gracious shocking of man out of his spiritual bondage and death. It is a liberation of man, made possible by God himself, out of his spiritual insensitivity and intellectual erring and confusion which he has brought upon himself.

2. Modern man needs a change of emphasis from matter to spirit, from the visible to the invisible, from the autonomously rational to the spiritual, from self-confidence to God-confidence; this is the only way for out of the curse into blessing and out of spiritual adultery, by which all the other lapses have been caused.

3. Just as the book of Romans was resorted to at the time of the Reformation, so in our time the book of Hebrews must be resorted to, to restore the meaning of faith, as found in [Hebrews 11](#).

4. According to the Scriptures, the earthly visible world is made from the invisible spiritual word. Hence, the spiritual has primacy over the material. [p. 208](#)

5. Just as the sun is the source of light for the earth, so is Jesus Christ the source of light for the world ([John 8:12](#)). The divine light was there even before the earthly light came into being and will continue to exist even when the sunlight is quenched.

6. Jesus is the source of life. Biological life in all its richness is only a symbol of it.

7. Jesus is the source of time; he is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; the earthly time is created, it is only an image of eternity.

8. Man too is only an image, a mirror and a container, not the source of life ([Gen. 1:26](#)).

9. It is this great lie, to replace brightness with darkness, the original with the image, the source with the container which opened the way for the European man into a

materialistic, this-world-orientedness, threw him back into a deep new paganism, made him a puppet of demonic inspiration and chained him to a self-destroying idolatry so that he served and honoured the creature rather than the Creator who is to be praised for ever. ([Rom. 1:24–25](#)).

10. Such a belief in this worldliness is an essential characteristic of the contemporary European man which makes the people of Asia and the Third World shake their heads in wonder.

11. Behind the veiling of the spiritual by the material is the attempt of fallen man to define, and hence have access to, the glory of the indestructible God, so that he eventually exchanged the indestructible, eternal source of all things for an image, an illusion, and his God-view was transformed into a picture (through the application of the principle of analogy) of God according to the understanding of man.

12. This *first great lie* is the watershed of all concepts of God both in ancient and modern theologies and worldviews in which the fallen man creates God according to his own image.

13. The shaming of the body and the loss of human worth was already to be seen in those perverted theologies and religions which transformed God's truth into a lie.

14. The devaluation of man on the basis of a faith in evolution and the categorization of a man as a mere consumer on the basis of a materialistic and ideological manipulation, has opened the way to anti-Christ. Anti-Christ is the one who has vegetated to the level of an animal and hence, as Revelation says, is a beast out of the earth.

15. Winning back the lost spiritual dimension by way of repentance and conversion has an inevitable precondition namely, a renewed sensitivity to the spiritual realm, even if it should be quickened through the coming of eastern religion and cults. [p. 209](#)

16. The fallen man who is choked in the lie of material, earthly superiority unconditionally needs an encounter with Jesus, the only Spirit-born and the living one who alone can bring a spiritual revival.

17. Just as the Son is the glory of the Father, so also may man again become the glory of the Son of man.

18. Only through the contact of the spiritual world in faith and only through the indwelling of the spirit of Jesus in our spirit by way of repentance, conversion and new birth can we take part in the movement from above. Only in this way is the fulfilment or the realization of the meaning of life possible.

19. True theology can be done only by those who have been caught up in this movement from above, who are sent; God gives such his spirit without measure.

20. Only the lamb which takes away the sin of the world (including the sin of the fall, and of the idolatry and of the demonic fall of modern man) is the centre of all things, yesterday, today and for ever. All sources are in him. But outside are the idolatrous, and everyone who loves the lie and does it.

## **II CONCERNING THE RENEWAL OF THEOLOGY AND THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION. (PS. 126:1 & 4)**

21. When our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ says 'repent', he means that our total life including our thinking should be a permanent repentance and permanent transformation.

22. Human reason/thinking excludes repentance and hence rejects the seriousness of sin and of the fall, but emphasises so-called intellectual integrity as a possible good work (paganism, idealism).

23. An exclusion of repentance from human thinking rejects and therefore also nullifies the Cross of Jesus as the end of all such human integrity in doing and willing, and especially in thinking; for, before the Cross of Jesus all human honesty is exposed as a lie.

24. An exclusion of repentance from human thinking has thrown Europe into terrible idolatry and the worship of the intellect, as well as of scientific technological discoveries and inventions. Eventually, this leads to the worship of man himself.

25. Every form of idolatry has an occultic background. That is why repentance in thinking is necessary, for it denies and releases man from the spirit of lie.

26. According to [1 Timothy 3:16](#), He who is revealed in the flesh can be justified only in Spirit and not through scientific research, for spiritual things are to be judged only in *Spirit*. That is the only legitimate p. 210 and hence sufficient approach to the understanding of the Scriptures. Everything else is only a trespass, or just a religious activity according to one's own imagination.

27. It is this attempt to justify the revealed one scientifically, that is, in the way of the flesh, which has brought Europe into a terrible state: justification by works in thinking. Because of this, the cardinal principle of *Solus Christus, totus Christus* and finally also *sola gratia* have been sold for the cheap coins of scientific recognition.

28. Through a false understanding both of revelation and incarnation (as if the One who was revealed in flesh ceases to be 'logos' and 'kurios', and therefore he is now to be grasped or thrown away in fleshly thinking), the mystery of evangelium is betrayed.

29. The secrets of the kingdom of God are not accessible to anyone and everyone, but only to those who are in Him, and who love Him.

30. The attempt to justify Jesus scientifically (in flesh) has, since the 18th century, led numerous theological treatises as well as unnumbered New Testament and Old Testament studies to terrible mythological imaginations.

31. In [1 Timothy 4:7](#), the essence of myth is represented as 'bebēlous' which is accessible to everyone, is unspiritual, profane and desacralizing as well as *graōdeis*, that is fables, superstitions and madness.

32. He who has lost his basis in God resorts to such myths, ideologies and superstitions. The Scriptures demand that such myths, and the superstitions of the historical critical method be exposed as useless and twisted. It does not mean that today we must go back to the prehistorical critical research methods, but that this method is inadequate and unsuitable and hence to be given up for the study of the Scriptures. Christ himself and his Spirit will be the door to the right understanding of the Scriptures, but no other human methods can do that job.

33. Every theological work which does not go through the door, Jesus Christ, robs and steals what belongs to Jesus. It is to be blamed for the condition of the churches; but the sheep do not hear the voices.

34. The giving up of a genuine spiritual approach to the understanding of the Scriptures and of the world has led to a slackening of the office of watchman in both church and theology. The church, which is called to be a watchman of truth, has become a seduced seductress, a blind leader of the blind.

35. Thanks to the current wave of sex (the undressing of the body) and group dynamics (the undressing of the soul) the shamelessness and the consequent defencelessness of the European man has p.211 become absolutely unbearable. New rules and legalisations twist the order of creation into a lie and increase the creaturely insecurity of man into the new erotic realm; 'only one is the law-giver and the judge who can both save and condemn; who are you who judges another?'

36. The denial of the function of the Church as a watchman for right thinking and action has led Europe to the contemporary moral landslide. The church dare not free

herself from this main responsibility. God will require the blood from her hand ([Ezekiel 3:18](#)).

37. The cause for the lack of authority of the church and for her negligible influence on public opinion lies in the fact that she has not encountered the demonic power of our time with 'thus says the Lord', 'It is written'.

38. Since modern theology has opened and committed itself not only to the Spirit of God but also to the spirit of Greek philosophies it has emptied the Word of God of its power and has become spiritless; for the spirit of God does not compromise itself with pagan, demonic spirits ([1 Corinthians 10:20-22](#)),

39. Modern theology does not have the ability to subdue the world (which includes also the sciences, the logic and thought-forms of our times). On the contrary, it has become subject to the world. Theology, the queen of sciences has been thrown down, made powerless, raped; it has become a whore whose crown is in the dust, trampled by swines and dogs.

40. The fall away from the Spirit of God has led the nation of Israel to idolatry; the result: the loss of the glory and presence of God ([1 Samuel 4:21](#)) the glory of the Lord is gone ([Hosea 9:11](#)), the loss of genuine growth because of the lack of witness and the power of conviction ([Hosea 9:11-12](#); [14](#)), the lack of a sense of direction, and finally a sense of lostness.

41. The decorated and veiled thinking referred to in [II Corinthians 3:14-16](#) has brought upon itself the judgement of God, the talk of the 'spirit of intoxication and sleep' in [Romans 11:8](#), of seducing spirits, of the teachers of Demons in [1 Timothy 4:1](#) and of the evil spirit which came upon Saul ([1 Samuel 16:14-23](#)) show the dimension of the demonic fall and the demonic threat to theology and church.

42. Where there is no vision the people perish ([Proverbs 29:18](#)). We must go back to a theological education which is informed by the spiritual God-given worldview and to a corresponding teaching and witness in this world. Pure scientific work is poor. It does not stand against the demonic fall of our time. Yes, it is sin, because what is not of faith is sin ([Romans 14:26](#)). Flesh and blood cannot save man at the gate of hell ([Matt. 16:17-18](#)) nor do they bring the kingdom of God as [p. 212](#) an inheritance; spirit is to be encountered only with spirit, spirits yield only to *the* spirit—the Holy Spirit.

43. We must go back to the place where we have lost the Spirit, where he has forsaken us, to that place of our fall, of our pride. We must go back to the desert and to the sermon at Jesus' Baptism ([Matt. 3:1-12](#)).

44. Humility—humility and once more humility. Only in humility are we safe against the tempting of Satan; only in a childlike trust in Jesus are we defended by the fire of the Spirit. 'This is the one I esteem, he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word', ([Isaiah 66:2](#)).

45. Only repentance and confession of our misdeeds and of their damnable consequences, only through a calling upon the deepest depths, through waiting upon the Lord, through turning to His face, through his gracious handling, can we still be helped; only so can the Babylonian captivity of our theology and church be corrected. Lord, bring back our prisoners ([Psalm 126:4](#))!

46. What does it profit the European man if he wins the whole world but loses his self ([Matthew 16:26](#))? Without the Spirit of God, man is a vegetating being, seduced by various spirits, enslaved in his own passions, away from God and the meaning of life, without the worship of God, empty and blind, a fading flower, a thorn bush ([1 Peter 1:24-25](#); [Gen. 2:18](#)). Without the Spirit, everything is sick—family, marriage, friendship, vocation, body and soul. Only he who is revived from God can heal the family, state and the church.

47. A day of repentance, a week of repentance, a year of repentance! As was once in Israel, ([Joel 2:12-17](#)) or in Nineveh ([Jonah 3:5-10](#)) before the destruction which comes upon us! The patience of God is not endless ([Romans 2:4-8](#)). 'Sir, leave it alone for one more year' ([Luke 13:6-9](#)). Everyone should start with himself, so that judgement can be withheld, so that the hovering summit of divine support and majesty may once more be seen through the poisoned and misty climate of our contemporary time ([Psalm 121](#)).

48. What shall we do? 'If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and will heal their land' (II Chronicle [7:14](#)). 'How much more then, will the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciousness from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God'. ([Hebrews 9:14](#)). p. 213

### III CONCERNING THE SECRET OF AUTHORITY:

49. The sources of authority lie beyond the realm of flesh and blood. They are shot through and through with God's intervention into our miserable flesh and blood, through the divine person-oriented revelation.

50. God has various means to open our eyes, to bring us out of 'flesh and blood' to be the spirit-born ([Galatians 4:29](#)); through suffering, the shattering of our hopes, through humiliations, through direct callings, (prophets, disciples and apostles) ... Whichever means he uses, in the end it is that Christian who has a disciple's ears who hears who obeys ([Isaiah 50:4-5](#)). Jesus says, my sheep hear my voice ([John 10:27](#))—that is the true sheep the shepherd has.

51. Mere knowledge of God puts us into the realm of theory, into powerlessness and spiritlessness; it is a sign of Christians who live only on the principle of 'hear and say'. 'I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my own eyes have seen thee' ([Job 42:5](#)). That is an experienced revelation.

52. The question of authority stands or fails with one's personal experience of God's calling, anointing and sending.

53. Authority is evidenced in Spirit and power ([Luke 1:17](#)); anointing is to be understood here as a divine calling and equipping for one's office.

54. The Cross of Jesus is a watershed for all the spirits in this world and in our life. There is no authority without the experience of the Cross as judgement and as the liberating grace.

55. The Spirit is holy; in His holiness His power is also to be found. Therefore the result of every kind of compromise at the spiritual level is nothing less than the retreating of the Holy Spirit and of His authority.

56. The Spirit of God does not mix Himself with human pride (flesh)—([Romans 8:7-8](#)); he does not associate Himself with human knowledge or actions, just as he does not mix Himself with pagan spirits and does not compromise with demons.

57. Therefore, we need the Cross. Before the Cross we are poor; 'sell what you have!' We sell also the ideals, the spiritual goods. Before the cross all our goodness comes to nought. Through the cross we are revealed, we are judged to be right, we are justified. Only the judged is the justified—this is biblical justification. Through the Cross we are redeemed from the curse and the claim of spirits upon our lives, from our personal as well as inherited guilt. Through the cross we are reconciled with God, we are forgiven.

58. Thus the Cross makes it possible for God to dethrone the p. 214 powers of darkness in the kingdom of the Son. He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the



promise of the Spirit. Henceforth, only the ungraspable word of the Father is valid: 'everything what is mine is thine'. 'God gives his Spirit without measure'.

59. Only as we are poor, as we depend on the Father as children, and are guided daily, do we have power over demons, sin, death and Satan ([Luke 10:19-22](#)).

60. It is since the Enlightenment that childhood and poverty before God and in Spirit have become menaces against Christ (II Corin. [11:3](#)); they have been confused with intellectual immaturity. In this confusion lies the root of current perversions.

61. The historical critical research of the Bible as a method is a child of the enlightenment and as such, it gives greater allegiance to the Greek philosophies than to the biblical spirit. It is a bastard in theological cloths. Actually, because of this method the concept of Scripture as the temple and place where God lives and speaks is lost. Scripture has been made a desert.

62. The so-called scientific theology has erected altars to the Baal of this 'deserted holiness' and has for generations given the sacrifices of philosophy. This is the root of the theological impotence of our times.

63. Therefore it is impossible in such a situation to come to a spiritual renewal and a spiritual authority in the churches, so long as these altars to the Baal of 'deserted holiness' are endured and even repaired! As at the time of Gideon and Elijah, these strange altars must be destroyed and the broken altar of the Lord must once again be built up. The fire of the Spirit falls only on the reconstructed altar of the Lord, only upon the altars and men who are sanctified by God himself.

64. Here there is only an either-or: either the Spirit of God or the Greek spirit. How long do we hang on to both the sides? If the Lord is God then turn to him, but if Baal is God then turn to him. The touchstone is therefore the question of authority, the fire of the Spirit.

65. The disciple of Christ lives because he does the will of God just as the Son lived because he did the will of the Father and completed His work.

66. To work other than the work of God and to will other than the will of God excludes us from participation in the kingdom of heaven and makes us evil doers. To will the will of God and to work His work is the precondition of power and authority.

67. The recognition of doing of the will of God is closely related to: the humility of a broken spirit which has learned to yield to the Word [p. 215](#) of God, the dedication of life as a living sacrifice to the Lord; the love of God—total, complete, fulfilled. It is also a wholistic (comprising the total man) and not just a noetic intellectual act. It is rather an act of the *heart*.

68. It is the authority of Jesus which lifted his teaching above that of the Scribes. His words were fulfilled; they were powerful, even creative. He transmitted not just knowledge but life, yes, the Spirit. Therefore the goal of our preaching and proclamation should not be the transmission of knowledge, but rather authority must be evidenced through the release of spiritual power and in the building up of life.

69. The spirits yield to the Spirit. The coming of the Spirit in the world and into the realm of the spirits signals the outbreak of the kingdom of God. This coming and this outbreak happened in Jesus. He is the bringer of the Spirit as well as of the kingdom of God.

70. Without being intimately related to this dimension of the spirit, without living in it we are authorityless and powerless, even lifeless. We do not at all belong to, but stand outside of, the kingdom of God.

71. Jesus gave his authority to his disciples, and even today they receive this authority from him, the head of the Church.

72. Authority must prove itself. Times of wilderness and direct confrontation with evil serve such a purpose of proving authority. Authority is strengthened through prayer and fasting, through voluntary isolation from work and appointments. Only he who can fast can feast!

73. The Spirit is pure and gentle as a dove. It is quite easy to drive him away. Especially through dead and empty, killing and loveless words. These lazy words have the smell of destruction around them and transmit destruction; whereas an authoritative word is a spirit-filled and life-filled word; it is truth in love.

#### **IV CONCERNING THE RIGHT RELATIONSHIP OF GOD'S SPIRIT WITH THE HUMAN SPIRIT**

'The grace of Him that dwelt in the thorn-bush' ([Deut. 33:16](#)). 'He who boasts let him boast in the Lord' ([I Corinthians 1:31](#)).

74. The Spirit of God and the spirit of man are not identical. Since the triumph of idealism the effort is made repeatedly to equate the human with the divine spirit. Man cannot become God. The fallen man whose light is quenched, the natural man who is dead in himself, cannot understand the spirit of God ([I Corinthians 2:14](#), [Ephesians 2:1](#)) Therefore the equation of God's Spirit with man's is a heresy, a lie.

75. Since the fall of man, attempts were made time and again to [p. 216](#) enlighten man through strange altars and fires; this was also Cain's way and it is also the attempt of all religions to this day. Cain's altar was rejected, it was the altar without blood, without forgiveness and without the cross. The fallen angels, as the angels of light ([II Corinthians 11:14](#)) do not shy away from the Holy One; on the contrary they make use of, usurp and pervert the longing of man after the Holy One, after the true light. No man is excluded from their seductions.

76. Only the Cross (as the concretization of everyone's legitimate altar) cannot be imitated by the demons ([Leviticus 17:7-9](#)). Only the Cross prepares the way towards the Father ([John 14:6](#)); only at the cross are our fame and self-righteousness judged; only at the Cross has the holy blood of Jesus supplied ransom for us against demonic seduction and ownership of our spirits; only at the cross is the quenched light again re-kindled, purified, and only at the cross are we led back to God in repentance and redemption, forgiveness and new birth.

77. All other altars, temples and fires stand under the verdict of [Leviticus 17:9](#). It is the fate of Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, who brought their own strange fire to the altar of the Lord and brought upon themselves the fire of the Lord for their destruction.

78. The Biblical witness speaks of the spirit of man, calls him a lamp of the Lord which is lighted up by the fire of the Spirit of God, knows of his quenchedness and consequent darkening of his mind, testifies to the meaning of the coming of Jesus in terms of the ability to give sight to the blind and the blinded, and in the kindling and the reviving of the human spirit in close relationship with his participation in the redeemed, forgiven humanity in the revival and the resurrection of Jesus.

79. Human reason needs the enlightened leading of the human spirit, otherwise it works goallessly and meaninglessly.

80. The revival of the human spirit through the touch of the divine spirit in new birth, the birth from above, restores the human spirit to its former position to take a leading role over reason. 'Yes you make my lamp brighter, the Lord my God makes my darkness light'. ([Psalm 18:29](#)).

81. The Bible knows a dualism between flesh and the spirit, but not between reason and spirit. According to [Proverbs 8:12](#), both these aspects exist together in man. The spirit



does not incapacitate reason but inspires it, enables and equips it. Wisdom and cleverness, spirit and reason contain wealth and honour, health and salvation ([Proverbs 8:8](#)). So is man saved: that man is to be praised who demands wisdom of the spirit, wisdom of Jesus ([I Corinthians 1:30](#)).

82. The Bible presents clear priorities: the priority of the spirit over [p. 217](#) reason, and warns against a fatal twisting of it which results in the sick, psychosomatic phenomena of our time.

83. God's spirit is creative, life-giving. With the help of the Spirit and having been enlightened by Him, the spirit of man can scrutinize and understand all the areas of his life.

84. Only the Lord can understand the deep things of the human heart ([Jeremiah 17:10](#)). It is all his right; all psychoanalysis and psychotherapies, if they are not filtered through Jesus as the door and the light, and enter into the human spirit, rob, steal and murder ([John 10:7-10](#)), because they are emptied of the creative, healing spirit, and therefore become only theoretical, analyzing and eventually powerless and helpless procedures.

85. Only he who believes understands ([Romans 14:23](#)); *Credo ut intelligam* (I believe, therefore I understand). Only he who loves can understand, only he who is recognised by God and is called by him by name can really recognise others ([I Corinthians 8:2-3](#)). Therefore every act of recognition must be wholistic, integrated action including the whole of man and God, an act of the heart and not of the mind. One can see good only through the heart. Love is the key to the secrets of the heart of God.

86. The 'healed' man in whom the lamp is burning and the guiding of the divine reason is given, has the duty to subdue the earth, subdue all the areas of knowledge ([Genesis 1:28](#)). True faith can never be friendly to the so-called scientific methods but it places all the areas of life and knowledge under the liberating, redeeming and inspiring obedience of Christ ([II Corinthians 10:5](#)).

## **V CONCERNING THE WORLD-RESPONSIBILITY OF THEOLOGY AND FAITH**

87. The earth is the Lord's and all that is therein ([Psalm 24:1](#)). The creation story in the Bible is an owner's statement; what God has created is his property.

88. Therefore all research in all areas, especially in the areas of physics and more recently in the area of biology and biochemics, must be constantly aware that they are not autonomous, because all these areas belong to God as His property; nature and her powers are God's property and they are at the disposal of the prayerful, thankful man.

89. This means that man is a guest of God on this earth and he must behave himself correspondingly. All research must take place in the response of faith to the owner, the Creator. He who does not respond in this way does not do research, but robs, forfeits his right of dwelling on God's property. [p. 218](#)

90. The Word of God clearly testifies that he who spoils the earth him will God spoil ([Revelation 11:18](#)), he who kills man will be killed by man himself ([I Corinthians 3:17](#)), especially in the area of liberalization of abortion laws and of gene manipulation methods. It must be seen that they stand under the judgement of God.

91. How terrible therefore are some of the European theories of evolution, which dissolved man's responsibility before his creator! Thus, even in the light of the ecological crises of our times it can only mean: repent! The axe is laid at the root of the tree ([Matt. 3:10](#)).

92. For 200 years we have been talking in the poisonous intellectual smoke of German theology and science; and now we have realized that it is the cup of God's wrath ([Isaiah 51:17-23](#)) and a cup of God's judgement; because we thought ourselves wise, we have been choked by the German creations ([I Corinthians 1:29](#)). 'I testify for them that they are zealous for God, but without understanding'.

93. Only through a refreshing spiritual wind instead of these powerful dust and snow storms, can the 200 year strong intellectual 'ice-age' in Europe be overcome and the ice melted for the use of man ([Psalm 147:8](#)). He sends his word so that the snow melts. He sends his wind, so it works. The intellectual gifts which should have brought us to maturity have brought us to a fall, because they have stayed in the place of God, the only giver of all good things ([James 3:17](#)).

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Rev. Scheunemann studied theology in Tübingen, Göttingen and Kitzingen, and served as a missionary with WEC in Batu, Indonesia, as an evangelist and teacher at the Indonesian Bible Institute, Batu. [p. 219](#)

# The Gospel as the Prisoner and Liberator of Culture

Andrew F. Walls

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*Covering the broad span of Church history the author surveys the tension between the indigenising and pilgrim principles in the gospel's encounter with culture. He raises important questions about the future of Christian theology and African theologies in particular. This article is based on Prof. Walls' lecture at 1980 VI Symposium of the Victoria Institute of Great Britain.*

## IS THERE A 'HISTORIC CHRISTIAN FAITH'?

Let us imagine a long-living scholarly space visitor—a Professor of Comparative Inter-Planetary Religions perhaps—who is able to get periodic space-grants which enable him to visit Earth for field study every few centuries. Let us further assume that he wishes to pursue the study of the earth-religion Christianity on principles of Baconian induction, observing the practices, habits and concerns of a representative sample of Christians, and that he exploits the advantage he has over any earthbound scholar by taking his sample across the centuries.

Let us assume his first visit to be to a group of the original Jerusalem Christians, about 37 AD. He notes that they are all Jews; indeed, they are meeting in the Temple, where only Jews can enter. They offer animal sacrifices. They keep the seventh day punctiliously free from work. They circumcize their male children. They carefully follow a succession of rituals, and delight in the reading of old Law books. They appear, in fact, to be one of several 'denominations' of Judaism. What distinguishes them from the others is simply