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become more and more unified on this point. There are certainly no significant words of the prophets, of the Apostles, or of Jesus, which point in any other direction than the prophetic text, 'beat your swords into plowshares'. I ask you: if we listen to God's word of reconciliation and if we look to the way of Jesus' cross, must there still be a parting of our ways? No! Nor should this be the case when our encounter with this prophetic word is similar to what Mark Twain once wrote: 'It is the Bible passages which I understand that give me a stomach ache, not those that I don't understand.' 'Beat your swords into plowshares'—that is easy to understand.

Prof. Hans Walter Wolff is Professor of Dogmatic Theology at Heidelberg University, West Germany. **p. 53**

The Evolution of Evangelical Mission Theology since World War II

Arthur F. Glasser

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With his vast experience and expertise in missions and missionary theology, Arthur Glasser traces the major phases in the development of Evangelical Missiology in the last half century in a convincing manner. His concluding challenge—'If evangelicals are to develop an adequate Trinitarian Mission theology based on the Kingdom of God, they must face up to the implication of the Ecumenical problem: What must we do with those whose confession of Jesus Christ we must take seriously yet, whose perspectives on the christian mission differ markedly from our own?'—will shake up any conscientious reader. The article is particularly beneficial as it gives insights concerning the historical development of a particular area of theology.

Editor

Howard Snyder stands taller and sees further than many evangelical writers today. Having been a missionary in the third world (Brazil) gives him considerable insight into the contemporary scene. Not only is he biblical through and through. His theologizing is disciplined reflection on the total witness of the Bible on the basic issues facing the church in our day. As a result, what he writes I read, and when he speaks I listen.

In 1983, at a Conference at Colorado Springs, Colorado, I heard him discuss the significance of Jesus Christ's preoccupation with the kingdom of God. Snyder then went on to relate this to the present need of the church. I was fascinated. But it was his initial statement that particularly grasped my attention. Without qualification he introduced his presentation with the following judgment: 'The recent partial recovery among evangelicals of the kingdom of God theme is surely one of the most significant theological developments of this decade—perhaps of this century.' This brought me to a full stop. But I heartily agreed!

In this article I shall seek to show the defensibility of this statement. I shall do this by tracing the post-war evolution of evangelical perspectives on the theology of the Christian mission. 'Evolution' of evangelical theology? You know how tricky it is even to attempt a definition of 'evangelical'. And when have evangelicals ever admitted that their theologizing reflects 'evolution' (that very bad word!)? From [p. 54](#) Tübingen's Olympian heights Peter Beyerhaus discerns at least six different kinds of evangelicals (Bosch 1980:30). But even he would be hard put to judge where the midstream of their theologizing exists, whether among the separatist dispensationalists, or the traditional orthodox, or the neo-evangelicals.

Hence, while I beg your indulgence, I shall attempt to indicate successively the shifts in thought and emphasis that seem (to me, at least) to have characterized the evangelical debate on mission theology since 1947, when, according to Max Warren, those who met at Whitby (International Missionary Council) were hopeful 'that the most testing days of the Christian mission, at least in our generation, lay behind us' (Goodall 1953:40).

AFFIRMING THE GREAT COMMISSION (PLUS 'FOLLOW-UP')

The only significant student gatherings on the mission of the church in the first decade after World War II were triennially convened by the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) at the University of Illinois (Urbana). In the late 1940s and early 1950s their mission theology had but one burning theme: the Great Commission ([Mt. 28:18-20](#)). Even though the worldwide political scene drastically changed during this period, none of the leaders of these gatherings saw fit to broaden this biblical focus. Colonial empires were breaking down, communists were triumphing in East Asia, and the Korean War was trying the West, but no matter. And this despite Max Warren's solemn warning (at the International Missionary Council gathering in Willingen, 1952) that 'we know with complete certainty that the most testing days of the Christian mission in our generation lie just ahead' (Goodall 1953:40).

However, evangelicals remained unmoved. Whereas they sought to heed Jesus' word not to be alarmed by deteriorating world conditions ([Mt. 24:6](#)), they did not respond to his injunction to be creatively responsive to 'the signs of the times' ([Lk. 12:56](#)). They also largely perceived the missionary task in terms of evangelism. So far as they were concerned, the world had yet to be fully evangelized. Their personal, liberating encounter with Jesus Christ gave them but one desire: to share him with all those making up their generation. Furthermore, Jesus' final wish, expressed as a command, was that they 'make disciples of all nations'. I can still recall how the Bible addresses at those IVCF student gatherings were largely taken up with personal discipleship, not with anything approximating a comprehensive mission theology. And as for the revolutionary changes upsetting the status quo of the world, the typical comment was: 'So what, hasn't the [p. 55](#) world always been in a mess?' Then would follow the clincher: 'What Christ has commanded we must obey! No disciple of his can be indifferent to the missionary mandate!'

Nothing seemed to catch the imagination so much as the individualism reflected in Edward M. Bounds's memorable salvo: 'Men are God's method. The church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men' (1963:5). Obviously, an elaborate theology of mission was not felt necessary. What counted was personal discipleship: the sort of devotion to Christ that made one a faithful witness to his gospel, particularly in those places where he was largely unknown.

This emphasis on discipleship was greatly strengthened and popularized by the Navigator emphasis on 'follow-up'. During the war many American service personnel

came under the spell of Dawson Trotman and this movement. When Billy Graham increasingly began using Navigator personnel and methods in his crusades to establish new converts in the faith, it became increasingly apparent to even his most relentless critics that permanent results were indeed being achieved. However, this rigorous Navigator additive only confirmed to many the truncated and individualistic nature of evangelical Christianity. Something else was needed.

DISCOVERING CHURCH GROWTH (PLUS THE ANTHROPOLOGISTS)

My own missionary experience as a member of a large, multinational and interdenominational society (the China Inland Mission) from 1945 to 1951, and followed by four intense years teaching a growing number of missionary volunteers (Columbia Bible College) from 1952 to 1955, were largely shaped by the emphases just described. Our preoccupation was with ardour rather than method, and the texts we used stressed Christology and soteriology, rarely ecclesiology. In China my evangelistic activity was initially among the Chinese and was only marginally related to the deliberate outreach of local congregations. I never heard anyone discuss the need for devising plans to increase the membership growth of existing congregations or to multiply the number of congregations in populous areas. Such strategizing would have been regarded as unspiritual. Our concern was to focus the energies of Christians on their own spiritual development that they might be vigorous and authentic in their witness to Christ. We did not critically evaluate our work; our ministry was indifferent to measurable results. After all, God alone gave what increase we enjoyed ([1 Cor. 3:6](#)). **P. 56**

Later, I found myself in the midst of a tribal-people movement in which the emergence of new congregations was a significant reality. But no one suggested that we analyze the reasons for this phenomenon. All were agreed that it too was totally of God.

Donald A. McGavran called a halt to all this in 1955 with his epochal work, *The Bridges of God*. Slowly at first, but increasingly, evangelicals began to talk of ‘church growth’. This stimulated the beginnings of evangelical theologizing. True, many had read Roland Allen, Johannes Bavinck, Robert Glover, A. J. Gordon, Arthur T. Pierson, and others, but it was McGavran who pressed us to ‘think church’. He argued that the key to worldwide evangelization was the multiplication of churches, not the multiplication of evangelists. Yet, even though he eventually made a massive impact on evangelicals worldwide, as late as 1976 his perspectives were still struggling for acceptance. In that year *Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective* appeared, written by a highly respected evangelical, J. Herbert Kane. It soon became a widely used text in evangelical schools worldwide, although only ten pages are devoted to the role of the church, and even these pages are devoid of any specific discussion of its essence, structure, or functions in terms of mission outreach.

Those who began to listen to McGavran, however, started to concentrate on the growth and multiplication of local congregations. This was God’s will: a chief and irreplaceable element in mission praxis. At first the focus was almost entirely methodological, but eventually this stimulated the beginnings of a reflection on the church as a reality in its own right. The new thesis was: when any particular church ceases to grow in an area where other churches are growing, something fundamental has been lost in its very essence as the people of God in the midst of the nations. Increasingly, the closing clause of the Great Commission came into focus. Converts must not only be ‘taught to observe’ all that Jesus had commanded. They must be baptized—and this pointed in the direction of their entrance into the life, worship, witness, and service of the local congregation.

Evangelicals both within and outside the conciliar churches (World Council of Churches-oriented) flocked to hear McGavran. The Church Growth movement began to take shape and multitudes began to struggle with the new terminology: homogeneous units, Class II leaders, people movements, transfer growth, resistance-receptivity axis, redemption and lift, harvest theology, and so forth. The list keeps growing.

A new stream of input came into the midst of this church-growth ferment, through a journal subsidized by the American Bible Society [p. 57](#) called *Practical Anthropology*. Growing numbers of evangelical anthropologists began using it as a vehicle for promoting cultural sensitivity and exposing the mono-cultural stance and culture blindness of the missionary movement. Charles Kraft, Eugene Nida, Kenneth Pike, William Rebyburn, William Smalley, and many others slowly awakened missionaries to the possibility of receiving help from the social sciences in their efforts to understand the nature of culture, cross-cultural communication, leadership selection and training, revitalization movements, and the like. Looking back, one can confidently affirm that in the three decades since *Bridges* appeared, evangelicals have been increasingly using these insights to probe every aspect of the church—its decay as well as its growth.

Indeed, since 1955 a significant literature has been produced on church growth as well as mission anthropology. Some missionaries even began to tackle the task of developing an integrated mission theology that was consistently biblical. Johannes Blauw gave unexpected impetus to this with his 1962 survey of the biblical theology of mission: *The Missionary Nature of the Church*. But it took Charles Van Engen's massive study, *The Growth of the True Church* (1981) to convince evangelicals that a biblical ecclesiology could be married to church-growth theory. The writings of such evangelicals as Peter Beyerhaus, Harry Boer, David Bosch, Orlando Costas, Richard De Ridder, John Stott, and Johannes Verkuyl helped along the way.

CHALLENGED BY ECUMENISTS (AND BY THE CHINA WITHDRAWAL)

At the beginning of the 1960s evangelicals were only marginally interested in the ecumenical movement. The dwindling commitment of its member churches to evangelism as biblically defined, and to mission as traditionally understood—'where there are no Christians there ought to be Christians, and where there are no churches there ought to be churches'—made evangelicals less than curious as to what was emanating from Geneva. Furthermore, the radicalization of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in the 1960s, paralleled by signs of the growing vigour of evangelicals, confirmed to many that they were on the right track. But were they taking the full measure of what was happening in the world? I was personally baffled over the lack of interest of many in the sober lessons I thought God was seeking to teach arising from the missionary encounter with communism in China and our subsequent withdrawal from that country. Not a few in mainline churches seemed to care, although I became impatient with those conciliar churchpeople who wrote off the whole China mission [P. 58](#) as a massive failure—nothing less than the judgment of God. But what provoked me more was their suggestion that the whole missionary movement come to an end, the sooner the better.

In the midst of the growing radicalization of the 1960s, evangelicals began to receive new insights, and these came from surprising quarters. Pope John XXIII and Vatican II shattered the long-held stereotype that Rome was incapable of change, and that it will never grant its members the freedom to study the Scriptures. On the other hand, the radicalization of the WCC (Geneva 1966, Uppsala 1968, and Bangkok 1973) confirmed the darkest thoughts we had of the future of the WCC.

Yet not entirely. Believe it or not, many evangelicals are not solely activists. Many read. Although the probability is that their own publications are largely read by their own constituencies, many evangelical leaders are likely to be up on the literature of their opposite numbers in the WCC. They know something about such writers as Wilhelm Andersen, Gerald Anderson, José Miguez Bonino, Ferdinand Hahn, Johannes Hoekendijk, Kosuke Koyama, Paul Loeffler, Hans Margull, Paul Minear, Stephen Neill, Lesslie Newbigin, Eugene Smith, Bengt Sundkler, John Taylor, George Vicedom, and Max Warren. And they are somewhat knowledgeable of such Roman Catholics as Gustavo Gutiérrez, Hans Küng, Aylward Shorter, Thomas Stransky, and others. These lists are merely representative. But it was through these authors that some evangelicals began to sit up and take notice, for not a few of the authors wrote with genuine evangelical concern. Furthermore, they often showed themselves remarkably at home in the Scriptures, and the passages they used were often those that evangelicals tended to overlook. A case in point: when the WCC's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism delegates met in Melbourne (1980) under the rubric 'Your Kingdom Come', they used passages from the synoptic Gospels. When evangelicals met a few weeks later in Pattaya, Thailand, their motif was 'How Shall They Hear?' And their focus was on the Pauline epistles. This dichotomy and polarization seemed strange. Was it theologically necessary? Actually, during the 1960s some evangelicals were beginning to wonder whether they were really listening to the total witness of Scripture, or not. Had they been preoccupied with an 'evangelical canon' within the larger corpus of revealed truth?

STRUGGLING FOR A HOLISTIC GOSPEL (AND LISTENING TO THE MENNONITES)

When I joined the faculty at Fuller Theological Seminary in the fall of p. 59 1969, I found the atmosphere anything but tranquil. War in Vietnam, the Civil Rights movement, and the confrontational tactics of the students, all challenged evangelical preoccupation with evangelism, discipleship training, and church growth. Among those who welcomed me was one who conveyed the 'official' suggestion that I do what I could to 'get some Bible into that Church Growth movement!' Although administrative duties largely absorbed my time, I felt I should review all that evangelicals had written on mission and social responsibility. This largely drew a blank. The evangelical 'right' was fearful of publishing anything that might be interpreted as even a whiff of the long-discredited 'social gospel'. (An innocuous article that I wrote in *Freedom Now* [January 1969], stressing the importance of evangelical social concern, was dismissed as 'favourable toward this deadly menace' by the then chairman of the Board of Trustees of San Francisco Baptist Theological Seminary [*Faith*, May/June 1974, pp.7-9].)

Understandably, evangelicals had long since dismissed the old liberal ethic as bankrupt. Its political and social philosophy had not stood the test of time. It had proved itself both naive and impractical. Its mission theory reduced the gospel to a social message and the church to a mere social institution. This resulted from its nonrecognition of the fall and its unwillingness to accept the absolute necessity either of Christ's vicarious atonement or of the new birth—if one is to see, much less enter, the kingdom of God (see Walhout 1963:519-20).

The only consistent breath of relevant evangelical insight into social responsibility seemed to be coming from the public witness and hardworking pens in the Mennonite tradition. The Mennonites alone seemed to have escaped an encapsulated, individualistic evangelicalism as well as the reduction of the gospel to a vapid 'Christian' humanism. But why did not the writing of Guy Hersherberger, Paul Peachey, and John Howard Yoder

include creative approaches to evangelism and church growth, at home and abroad? Only later, with the appearance of *Mission Focus* in 1972, did we begin to sense the breadth and depth of their missionary concern. In contrast, the writings of Reformed theologians stressed the Lordship of Christ over all of life yet seemed only marginally concerned with the urgency of the unfinished evangelistic task.

At this point, evangelicals here and there began to fall back on what proved to have acceptable missiological credentials, if one was to judge by the standards of Gustav Warneck (1834–1910). He believed that the *Kulturbefehl* should have a central place in mission thought and practice (see Kasdorf 1976:54–67). Among others, I had been preaching and writing on my growing understanding of this theme p. 60 ('The Cultural Mandate', e.g., Horner 1968:178–88), contending that evangelicals were remiss in their handling of Scripture if they neglected what it had to say about life in this world. The Bible is not solely a revelation of redemption. Actually, two streams of obligation course through its pages. One is rooted in the creation story and reflects God's concern for this world—all its social patterns and political institutions. To participate in the renewal of human civilization and to seek the amelioration of all its destructive tendencies is pleasing in God's sight. The other stream of obligation is rooted in the redemptive concern that comes to a climax in the salvific work of Christ—his death, resurrection, issuance of the Great Commission, and sending of the Holy Spirit. Both of these mandates are clearly stated as response to the question, What does the Lord require of his people but 'to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with ... God' ([Mic. 6:8](#) and [Mt. 23:23](#)).

At first it seemed that the acceptance of responsibility for both mandates provided evangelicals with a holistic gospel. But in the early 1970s some began to realise that this neat equation did not solve the issue of priority. Which came first, evangelism or social responsibility? Then came Billy Graham's massive 1974 'Lausanne Houseparty' (the International Congress on World Evangelization, consisting of 4,000 guests). It wonderfully affirmed the validity of both mandates in its Covenant (especially paragraph 5), but evangelicals almost immediately thereafter began to divide over the issue of priorities. To some the answer was obvious. Others disagreed. This debate continued throughout the 1970s.

LISTENING TO THE 'THIRD FORCE' (AND MAKING YOUR MISSION THEOLOGY TRINITARIAN)

One of the great signs of hope during the entire postwar period has been the growing vitality and size of the 'Third Force' (Henry P. Van Dusen's phrase). Until the 1970s Pentecostals and the mainline charismatics tended to pursue their own goals for world evangelization. They largely ignored the evangelicals despite the high level of theological agreement and personal commitment they had with them. Unfortunately, certain segments within evangelicalism either openly criticized their exegetical conclusions or despised their social roots. Then these ardent spirits started to invade evangelical seminaries. Fuller's provost, the late Glenn W. Barker, used to say: 'Twenty years ago we were not sure they would make it; now they are running away with all the prizes!' The charismatics began doing what evangelicals P. 61 could only envy. They were not only multiplying churches all over the world but bringing significant renewal to mainline congregations. Here was something separatist dispensationalists thought impossible.

Moreover, these joyful Christians were initiating all sorts of lay evangelistic movements and launching a variety of significant mission societies. Although unashamedly evangelical in their high view of Scripture and their enthusiasm for evangelism and church growth, they tended to draw back from involvement in

interdenominational evangelical enterprises prior to the 1970s. Following Lausanne (1974), however, they came into their own, and caused many non-charismatics to sit up and take notice. Stereotyped impressions and entrenched prejudices began to give way. In no time at all new light was being gained on the previously baffling and divisive question of mission priorities. It came about because of their introduction of the subject of spiritual gifts.

By the mid-1970s Pentecostals and other charismatics had everyone talking about spiritual gifts, their diversity, and their exercise in ministry. A distinct and impressive literature began to appear as the Society for Pentecostal Studies began to function. Eventually Paul Pomerville produced a Ph.D. dissertation on the Pentecostal contribution to evangelical mission theology (1982). He raised the question whether Pentecostal perspectives constituted either a distortion or a correction to mission theology, and then went on to show that if one focuses on the kingdom-of-God motif, not only is the role of the Holy Spirit within a trinitarian view of mission clarified, but the essentiality of the kingdom of God to mission theology is wonderfully established.

The sheer diversity of spiritual gifts listed in various parts of the New Testament ([Rom. 12](#); [1 Cor. 12](#); [Eph. 4](#); [1 Pet. 2](#)) cannot but mean that God does not force his people or their congregations to adopt any one 'authorized' agenda. Spiritual gifts make possible a congregation's Obedience to both the cultural and the redemptive mandates. Since all Christians are the recipients of the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence and enablement for confessing Jesus Christ before non-Christians, each congregation must be seen as primarily a confessing presence in society. But in the full exercise of the gifts Christians have individually received, there will always be those involved in the apostolate, serving as God's envoys to the non-Christian world. There will always be others involved in the prophetic calling, reminding churches and Christians of their societal responsibilities. And there will always be those whose concerns are pastoral, assisting local congregations in their worship, nurture, study, and mutual helpfulness ([1 Cor. 12:28-31](#)). What this means is that one cannot establish biblically the thesis [p. 62](#) that evangelism should be the priority of all Christians although all are under obligation to bear witness to Jesus Christ.

A case can be made (in part) for what the Reformers, and many others subsequently believed—that the Great Commission was primarily given to the first apostles. In [Acts 1:2](#) Luke pointedly states that prior to the ascension, Jesus gave this commandment 'through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen'. This means that in their leadership of the emerging church, they were particularly responsible to see that the constant focus of all congregations must be on making disciples of all peoples. And so ever since. Because of the 'sentness' of the church, all Christians must be reminded by their leaders to give a high priority to the sending forth of those gifted for evangelism and outreach to the regions beyond, where Christ has yet to be named ([2 Cor. 10:16](#)). God is concerned that his people be constantly reminded of the need for apostolic advance into neglected areas and among unreached peoples. And significantly, there has yet to emerge a vital mission-oriented congregation whose pastor has been indifferent to the central priority of the Great Commission.

REAFFIRMING THE KINGDOM OF GOD (AND ENTERING THE ECUMENICAL DEBATE)

How can the church be liberated to evangelize this generation? If it confines itself to maintenance activity, to 'churchly' affairs, it becomes preoccupied with religious behaviour and with its own kind of people. It feels itself threatened by the world and retreats from positive interaction with it. But when it becomes kingdom-oriented a

buoyancy of spirit takes over. The priority becomes broad, for kingdom activities include all human concerns and this world as well. As Howard Snyder correctly affirms:

When Christians catch a vision of the Kingdom of God, their sight shifts to the poor, the orphan, the widow, the refugee, the wretched of the earth, to God's future—to the concerns of justice, mercy and truth. Church people think about how to get people into the church; Kingdom people think about how to get the church into the world. Church people worry that the world might change the church; Kingdom people work to see the church change the world ... If the church has one great need, it is this: To be set free for the Kingdom of God, to be liberated from itself as it has become in order to be itself as God intends. The church must be freed to participate fully in the economy of God [1983:11].

Evangelicals here and there are increasingly coming to sense that the [p. 63](#) kingdom-of-God motif provides what Johannes Verkuyl has called 'the hub around which all of mission work revolves' and adds, 'If it be true that we who practice mission must take the kingdom of God as our constant point of orientation, it is imperative that we pay close heed to the whole range of burdens and evils plaguing mankind' (1978:203). If God's tomorrow means the end of exploitation, injustice, inequality, war, racism, nationalism, suffering, death, and the ignorance of God, Christians must be 'signs' today of God's conquest of all these 'burdens and evils' through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. No longer can evangelicals confine themselves to the single priority of proclaiming the knowledge of God among the nations and settle for the status quo of everything else. Of course, Christians shall not establish the kingdom, much less bring it to fullness. Any trinitarian theology of mission worth its salt will show that God alone will accomplish this. The consummation of human history and the manifestation of the kingdom in power and glory will be the work of God alone. But this does not mean that Christians today dare indulge the luxury of indifference to the moral and social issues of today. Only those are 'blessed' who are the merciful, the peacemakers, the persecuted for righteousness sake: 'Theirs is the kingdom of heaven' ([Mt. 5:7-12](#)).

One theme remains. If evangelicals are to develop an adequate trinitarian mission theology based on the kingdom of God, they must face up to the implications of the ecumenical problem: What must we do with those whose confession of Jesus Christ we must take seriously, yet whose perspectives on the Christian mission differ markedly from our own? Are they to be consigned to outer darkness—excommunicated or ignored—because they 'know' only 'in part' and 'see through a glass darkly' while we possess all truth in perfect balance?

The tragedy is that no Christian's life embodies in fullness the understanding of truth that the person claims to possess. And evangelicals should never forget that the truth they possess is not for them alone but for all the people of God. This means that evangelicals have no alternative but to enter the arena of public debate on the mission of the church in our day. They must expose their insights to the scrutiny of others. They must listen as well as speak. Only thereby will they make any significant contribution to the maturity of the church in our day. To retreat from this obligation is to impoverish themselves as well as others. It goes without saying that such encounter is essential to the renewal of the church. And where in Scripture are Christians told to separate from other Christians simply because they disagree with those others?

One final word. After almost forty years of wilderness wandering, [p. 64](#) evangelicals convened Wheaton 1983: their first international conference on the nature of the church. And they made sure that the keynote address was on the kingdom of God! Were they now ready to enter the Promised Land? Many hope so.

Evangelical Theology in the Two Thirds World

Orlando E. Costas

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Parallel to Glasser p. tracing of evangelical mission theology, Orlando Costas traces the development of the two-thirds world evangelical theology. He argues that while the western theological development was more or less exclusively shaped by the formal principle of Reformation (the Sola Scriptura), the corrective from the two-thirds world is to use also the material principle of Reformation namely, salvation by grace through faith. Though one may not agree with all of Costas' interpretation, his conclusion, that 'The ultimate test of any theological discourse is not erudite precision but transformative power' cannot be sounder.
Editor

The last decades have witnessed a resurgence of evangelical theology and action. Indeed, one could argue that evangelicals have ceased to be a marginal sector of Protestant Christianity, and have moved into the mainstream of contemporary society. However, we err if we assume that the so-called 'evangelical renaissance' (Bloesch) is just a Euro-American phenomenon, or that it is theologically, culturally and socially homogeneous. As Emilio Castro, General Secretary of the WCC, has stated in a recent essay on 'ecumenism and evangelicalism': 'In the past ... evangelical perspectives on spirituality and [theology] Came basically from theologians in the North Atlantic region'; today they are coming from all over the world (p. 9). He also points out that evangelicalism is going through the same process and change which the ecumenical movement has experienced in the last decades, because of the diverse socio-cultural settings of its adherents. Castro's comment is verified by the published reports of several world gatherings during the last decades and by a growing body of publications.

It is my contention that while evangelicals around the world share a Common heritage, their theological articulation is by no means homogeneous. To be sure, evangelicals in the North Atlantic world have had an enormous influence in what I like to call the 'two thirds world'—that planetary space which is the habitat of most of the poor, powerless and oppressed people on earth, which are to be found in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, the Caribbean and continental Latin America. One cannot deny the strong presence and pressures exercised by Euro-American p. 66 evangelicalism on the Two Thirds World through the missionary movement, literature, the electronic media and theological institutions. Notwithstanding this reality, however, there seems to be developing in the Two Thirds World a different kind of evangelical theology which not only addresses questions not usually dealt with by evangelical mainstream theologians in Euro-America, but also employs a different methodology and draws out other conclusions.