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characteristics to animals. There are potential advantages for both medicine and animal welfare, but we do need to reexamine where the ethical limits are. It is important for Christians to be involved in deciding the future scope of the use of these techniques. We need to examine what type of society we are making for ourselves, and we as Christians should be moulders, not the moulded. It must be clear to all of us that science will not solve our social problems, but it is an important part of our management of the earth.

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Darryl Macer, Ph.D. in Biochemistry from Cambridge University U.K., has returned to New Zealand. p. 166

# **The Role of Political Change in the Advancement of the Kingdom**

Gail Law

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*In this article the author surveys the effect of unwelcomed political change on the advance of the kingdom of God among both Jews and Gentiles in the biblical records of the Exodus, in the Exile and in the early Church in Jerusalem, and in its implications for Hong Kong after 1997. In identifying common principles in each movement, Dr. Law calls on the churches of Hong Kong to prepare themselves for radical change. Most nations and churches are not given such a time-bound warning to prepare themselves. If the 1990s prove to be an era of radical change worldwide, as many predict, God's people need a clearer understanding on the Lordship of Christ and his kingdom over creation and human history. We need to prepare for the unbelievable missiological opportunities that God the Creator/Redeemer has in his plan for the redemption of mankind.*

Editor

On July 1, 1997, China will claim sovereignty over Hong Kong from the British government. This impending political change has given rise to a major emigration movement from Hong Kong. Thousands of Hong Kong residents have left or are leaving this British colony for other countries. Among them are many key Chinese Christian leaders. The Church of Jesus Christ is confronted with the need to interpret this current socio-political phenomenon from the Christian viewpoint. This article attempts to examine missiologically some major biblical events of unwelcome political change<sup>1</sup> which led to significant migration movements, with the view to explore how God's salvation activities were carried out in and through them.

## **THE GOD OF THE KINGDOM IN HUMAN HISTORY**

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<sup>1</sup> The reason for choosing unwelcomed political changes is to limit the paper to only those events which share similar features with the Hong Kong situation.

The conviction that God intends to offer his Kingdom to all humanity and that he is actively working towards that purpose gives impetus and enthusiasm to world mission today. Missiological interpretation of [P. 167](#) secular events sees God's hand behind political and social phenomena, leading to the redemption of His people.

### **Man's Need for the Kingdom**

The Bible begins with the proclamation of a Creator God who has absolute rule over the created universe ([Gen. 1](#)), being the object of worship for all creatures. At the Fall, man chose to surrender to Satan's temptation. Consequently, Satan, sin and death bind man in the Kingdom of Darkness, excluding him from the gracious rule of his Creator God ([Gen. 3](#) to [11](#)). Man cannot save himself nor is he aware of the need to be saved. Deliverance from the power of darkness, and return to the gracious rule of the Creator, has to come from God.

The call of Abraham reveals God's gracious initiative in offering his Kingdom to fallen humanity, extending to them the invitation to return to him and to honour him as King. The dominant theme which most aptly describes the drama that runs through Scripture from Abraham to Revelation is the Kingdom of God. God identifies himself as a King who always calls people into his Kingdom, promising the restoration of all things at the end-time.

### **God Reigns in the Kingdom**

The nature of God's reign in the Kingdom is to be distinguished from his absolute reign over the universe at Creation. The Kingdom of God always implicates the redemptive dimension for fallen humanity.<sup>2</sup> After the resurrection it is God who reigns in the person of Jesus Christ among his redeemed people.

Although the concept of the Kingdom of God is most explicitly expressed in Jesus' teaching and ministry in the Gospels, the idea of God's reign is not unfamiliar in the Old Testament. God called Abraham who was to forsake all and obey his instruction, and receive his blessings and promises ([Gen. 12:1-4](#)). The first commandment of the Decalogue given by God through Moses forbids Israel to have other gods ([Ex. 19:5-6, 20:2-3](#)). God claims sole kingship over his people. In the period of the kingdom, the kings of Israel and Judah recognized that their kingship was not absolute—the true King was Yahweh.<sup>3</sup> [p. 168](#)

Some scholars, including Otto Michel and Joachim Jeremias, regard the Great Commission in Mathew [28:18-20](#) as the coronation formula of Christ, the King.<sup>4</sup>

God reigns in his Kingdom, yet the Kingdom needs to be sought. Although the Kingdom was inaugurated by Jesus' ministry ([Lk. 4:16-21](#)), its consummation awaits his Second Coming. Living in this already-but-not-yet tension of the Kingdom, its citizens need to make conscious effort to seek it ([Matt. 6:33](#)), giving first priority to their King.

### **God Extends his Kingdom to All Peoples**

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<sup>2</sup> Wilson Chow, 'An Analysis of the Progress of the Kingdom of God', *Chinese Churches Today* (Aug. 1988), 39-41.

<sup>3</sup> The story of Ahab's frustration at failing to acquire Nabob's vineyard is a good illustration of this point. See [1 Kings 21:1-4](#).

<sup>4</sup> Richard R. De Ridder, *Disciplining the Nations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971), pp. 170-172.

God does not only reign in his Kingdom, but also extends its boundary to those outside the faith. His concern is never one family, one race or one nation, but all peoples and all nations in the whole world. He progressively offers his Kingdom to peoples of increasingly diverse cultural and ethnic origins. This action stems from the missionary nature of the Godhead.

When God elected Abraham he had his eye on the nations. Not only would Abraham be blessed, but 'all peoples on earth will be blessed through you' ([Gen. 12:3](#)). Through the election of Israel, God was paving a way toward achieving his world-embracing goals. Israel was to lead a lifestyle reflecting God's character, pointing the nations to the true God. Where she gravitated towards gross social injustice and idolatry, replacing true religion with former cultic observances, prophets, like Amos, lashed out their indictment against her subversion of God's gracious intentions for the nations.

God's election of Abraham and Israel concerns the whole world. He deals so intensely with Israel precisely because he is maintaining his claim to the whole world.<sup>5</sup>

The last command before Jesus' ascension is consistent with God's missionary intention revealed in the New Testament. The explicit instruction to make disciples of all nations leaves no room for doubts and ambiguity about this in the mind of his followers ([Matt. 28:18-20](#)).

### **God Acts In and Through History to Advance his Kingdom**

God is actively working towards his redemptive purpose for humanity. He involves himself in a project of joint partnership with his people. **p. 169** Since man's response to God's calling is realized in the concrete arena of history with its social, economic and political options, God's invisible hand always leaves its imprint in many secular events. Therefore missiology sees God's work both in and through human history, moving the world forward towards his redemptive purpose.

This is the appropriate point to turn to the examination of the three major migration movements resulting from political changes.

### **POLITICAL CHANGE AND KINGDOM ADVANCE**

If the consistent will of God is to extend his Kingdom to peoples and nations of this world, and if he actively engages himself towards his redemptive purpose, will he use political change and migration this way? If so, how will he do it? The missiological questions to ask are: What strategy, method and leadership will he use? How will he use them? This section attempts to seek answers for these questions from the Bible. The focus is on biblical patterns involving political change and migration for the extension of God's Kingdom. It will take a 'broad stroke' approach examining only the more dominant features and will not dwell on the finer details, deviations and differences.

All of the three events studied (namely the exodus from Egypt, exile of the Jews leading to dispersion and the persecution of early Christians in Jerusalem) did contribute positively to the advancement of God's Kingdom. A pattern of three particular features is discerned. First, each event led to a major breakthrough in the authentication of the migrants' faith in God and in its expression. The people of God finding faith real and authentic grew in conviction. Second, the development in each case gave rise to a new approach of witnessing for God with fresh vigour and enthusiasm in the new land which

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<sup>5</sup> J. Verkuyl, Dale Cooper tr. and ed., *Contemporary Missiology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), p. 92.

the migrants adopted as 'home'. Third, in the process, a new kind of leadership emerged, which was instrumental in shaping and sustaining the new movement. The following sections elaborate on the observed pattern and the way the Kingdom was advanced.

## **The Exodus**

The Exodus was the foundational event of Israel as a people. She traced her peoplehood to this event. A nation was born through this trauma.

### *1. Authenticating in Faith*

The Exodus from Egypt and the Covenant at Sinai made Israel a people *p. 170* whose faith was based not on abstract theological ideas or moral principles, but on the memory of a crisis event in which God's intervention put her trouble as well as emotional and physical trauma to an end. Before this event, Israel knew her God as 'the God of our fathers'. But after this event, he became intensely real and lively. Their faith in God had been proven real and authentic. God was the mighty Deliverer who delivered her from desperation in slavery and oppression. He was the God of Covenant who chose her for his own possession. Her election was pure grace ([Deut. 7:7-9](#)). The Decalogue given in suzerainty treaty form also bound her in relationship to God as vassal to overlord. God was her king, with whom she maintained a covenant relationship. Her duty was to be faithful and obedient to him.<sup>6</sup>

The memory of her divine encounter with God was translated into visible symbols of worship with an elaborate system of priesthood, sacrifices, festivals and Covenant laws. They guided Israel to lead a lifestyle which reflected Yahweh's grace and mercy, and justice and holiness. Thus, a new witnessing community was established first in the desert and then in Canaan.

### *2. Advancing in Witnessing*

Israel witnessed for God mainly through her Covenant lifestyle. Nowhere did Yahweh instruct Israel as a people to launch aggressive witnessing campaigns. Instead, she was to attract Gentiles to her midst.

Sure enough, the peoples of the land would be attracted to Israel's lifestyle, especially its concern for widows and orphans, slaves and the resident aliens. Burnett describes it as 'shalom lifestyle',<sup>7</sup> which was the key element in the 'centripetal' approach to mission, in contrast to the 'centrifugal' or 'go' approach in the New Testament. Alan Richardson defines 'shalom' as follows:

'Shalom' is a comprehensive word, covering the manifold relationships of daily life, and expressing the ideal state of life in Israel. Fundamental meaning is 'totally', 'wholeness', "'ell-being" 'harmony', with stress on material prosperity untouched by violence or misfortune.<sup>8</sup> *p. 171*

The religious practices were familiar and meaningfully enlightening to the peoples, for Israel absorbed them selectively from the local cultures and skillfully infused them with new meanings which were in line with her faith in Yahweh. Festivals of nature religion, e.g. the Feast of Unleavened Bread and Ingathering, became celebrations for Yahweh's

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<sup>6</sup> John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), p. 149.

<sup>7</sup> David Burnett, *God's Mission: Healing the Nations* (MARC Europe: 1986), p. 71.

<sup>8</sup> Alan Richardson, *A Theological Word Book of the Bible* (London: SCM Press, 1950), p. 165.

mighty acts toward Israel. They were now not just cyclical in conception, but commemorating past redemption. Animal sacrifices were never considered as food for God. Though the worship of Yahweh was a brand new religion to the peoples of the land, it posed little barrier for Gentiles to convert to faith in Yahweh.

### *3. Excelling in Leadership*

The prominent leader guiding and shaping Israel in faith and witness was Moses, whose insight, brilliance and capacity far exceeded that of his contemporaries. He was a man of God, appointed by him to lead his people. Apart from God's intervention Moses' personal history also contributed to make him the man he was. Born as a Hebrew to Hebrew parents, brought up in Pharaoh's palace as an Egyptian prince, and forced to mature in the wilderness in Midian as a shepherd, Moses embodied three cultures in one person. This rich heritage gave breadth to Moses' horizon, discernment to his wisdom, and practical skills to his leadership, making him the most brilliant man who not only could appreciate and understand God's revelation, but could also interpret it meaningfully to his people who also had Egyptian and Hebrew tradition in the background, but had to learn surviving as the People of God in the wilderness.

## **Exile and Dispersion**

The Exile was God's judgment on his rebellious people. But the judgement was intentionally restorative. The restoration of Israel's faithfulness to God, through leaving much to be desired, was manifested in the organizing of synagogues and the widespread proselytizing activities in the Diaspora. So the Exile and the Dispersion have to be considered in one package.

### *1. Authenticating in Faith*

Jews in exile went through a conversion experience. The trauma and humiliation of defeat and deportation brought them from rebellion to penitence and yearning for God ([Ps. 137](#)). Painful as the experience *p. 172* was, surprisingly it was actually very liberating. The uprooting from Jerusalem and the Temple emancipated them from their erroneous narrow past. Their faith was transferred from the 'temple-centred cult in Jerusalem to individual-centred faith of universal validity'.<sup>9</sup> King Nebuchadnezzar came to know God as 'God of gods and lord of kings' ([Dan. 2:47](#)). Earthly kings like Cyrus were but God's instruments ([Is. 44:28-45:4](#)). Whereas the Jews knew God as the 'God of Israel' before the Exile, now they knew him as 'God of heaven' ([Neh. 1:4](#)). He was not bound to one place, nor one people.

To maintain their existence and faith as a people against hostile external influences in the Diaspora, the Jews developed Jewish colonies and planted in them synagogues which served many functions. Though synagogues never took the place of the Temple in Jerusalem, which was the centre of their faith, they nonetheless were of tremendous importance to the Diaspora Jews. Religiously, they were centres for worship, prayer, Scripture reading and public instruction. There God's word was heard. Socially, there were many activities, such as the manumission of slaves, hospitality to travellers, conferring honours upon Gentiles and many others. The Jews went into captivity as a nation, but emerged from the Exile as a religious community. Mission takes precedence over nationality.

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<sup>9</sup> De Ridder, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

## 2. Advancing in Witnessing

In this period, probably upon the Return to Jerusalem, proselytization was actively pursued by a segment of the Jews in the Diaspora. The synagogues became centres not only for the Jews, but also for those Gentiles attracted to the Jewish religion. There was much adaptation to the needs of foreigners and the Jews born and raised outside of the homeland. Translators were used in Scripture reading for the benefit of those who did not know Hebrew. The Scriptures were translated into the Greek language. The Babylonian Talmud showed that the 'Holy Books' were also translated into Assyrian, Coptic, Old Hebrew, Median, Iberian, Elamite, Aramaic, Syriac, Armenian, Arabic and Persian languages.<sup>10</sup> Propaganda materials were produced in a variety of forms for proselytization purposes. Gentiles soon found that the God of all men could communicate to them in their own languages. Many Gentiles did become adherents in various forms to faith in God. *p. 173* The success of the proselytization movement explains the presence of proselytes and god-fearers in the synagogues of the New Testament. The intensity of the proselytizing activities is attested by Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees in [Matt. 23:15](#):

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much as a son of hell as you are.

Jesus was not accusing the Pharisees because of their proselytizing activities, but because of what they made out of the converts. Proselytizing was not only instrumental in preparing the Gentiles to accept Christ, but was a noble effort in its own right. Proselytism was motivated by a noble purpose: to make known Yahweh's sovereignty over all the world and over the whole life of all men.

## 3. Excelling in Leadership

The proselytizing movement never became a generalized movement of the Jews in Diaspora, though the impact was very widespread. The impetus to proselytism did not come from Jerusalem, but lay within each synagogue community. It was in fact a lay movement of Jews and true proselytes who were brought up and lived in the larger world of the Diaspora. Living in a Hellenistic world, they were not only exposed to the moral decadence of nature religion, but also imbibed the Hebrew religion of the one True God through the synagogues. These were people who had experienced both worlds, and found the world under God to be far superior. Small wonder that the ablest missionary leadership (e.g. Paul and Barnabas) of the early church also originated from the Diaspora.

### Persecution of the Early Church in Jerusalem

The persecution of the Early Church in Jerusalem in [Acts 8](#) opened a way for the development of Gentile Christianity. It emancipated the Hellenistic Christians<sup>11</sup> from the relatively more conservative mould of *p. 174* the Judaistic Christian<sup>12</sup> in Jerusalem. Away

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<sup>10</sup> Jacob Salmon Raisin, *Gentile Reactions to Jewish Ideals* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1915), p. 163. Quoted by De Ridder, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

<sup>11</sup> The term 'Hellenistic Christians' is used to refer to those Greek-speaking Christians in Jerusalem, who most probably had returned to Jerusalem from the Diaspora, and gathered in synagogues more often than in the Temple.

<sup>12</sup> The term 'Judaistic Christians' is used to refer to those Aramaic-speaking Christians in Jerusalem, who still adhered to the Temple for prayer and worship. It is also noted that Hellenization being so widespread

from Jerusalem, their faith matured and liberated a missionary movement which swept swiftly across Asia Minor to Europe.

### *1. Authenticating in Faith*

The Early Church began with active manifestations of the Holy Spirit, such as tongues, healing, signs and wonders ([Acts 2:4](#); [3:1-10](#); [5:12, 16](#)). Conversion was not simply a cool, cognitive and objective matter. The first few chapters of Acts show that many Christians in Jerusalem were filled with the Holy Spirit, and engaged in a lifestyle which worshipped Christ as King. Authentication of faith among the Christian in Jerusalem came into being with the descent of the Holy Spirit. However, this new-found faith in the resurrected Christ became the cause of persecution launched against them by the Jewish authorities in the city.

The persecution did not affect the apostles who were able to remain in Jerusalem. It is obvious that the Hellenistic Christians were the primary target of their oppressors. The persecution was precipitated by Stephen's defence before the Sanhedrim. He relativized the importance of the Temple and Mosaic law through a review of Israel's history, and was probably one of the first who could interpret the Old Testament from that perspective, a direction leading toward the development of Gentile Christianity. However, he was rejected by the Jewish leaders and met his death in martyrdom.

The persecution sent the Hellenistic Christians out of Jerusalem, the stronghold of Judaism, to places where Gentile Christianity was given a second chance to emerge. This did happen as more Gentiles and Hellenistic Jews came to Christ outside of Jerusalem, and especially in Antioch. It shared the same faith in the resurrected Christ with Judaistic Christianity, but did not require the believers to be circumcised according to the Mosaic law. At the Council in Jerusalem ([Acts 15:1-35](#)) it won legitimacy. Gentile Christianity began to sink its roots in rich Gentile soil in the Mediterranean world.

Thus in the early church there developed two kinds of Christianity, differing from each other in outward expressions, but united in one p. 175 faith in Jesus Christ. Judaistic Christianity was contextualized to the Hellenistic culture. Christ was the bridge between the two.

### *2. Advancing in Witnessing*

Unlike the Diaspora Jews whose proselytizing movement came long after the Exile (migration), the early Christians experienced almost an immediate release of a tremendous amount of energy for evangelism away from Jerusalem, leading to the establishment of many churches in Judaea, Samaria and Galilee ([Acts 9:31](#)), and in Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch ([Acts 11:9](#)). It seemed that the Hellenistic refugees not only shared the same kind of courage and boldness for the Lord as Stephen, also a Hellenist, but they also passed on their enthusiasm to their converts. Through them the strong Church of Antioch was planted, which eventually gave birth to an extraordinary missionary movement which swept across the Mediterranean world.

The approach of their witnessing was characterized by aggressive proclamation, preaching, and sharing of the good news of the resurrected Christ, and by the lively witness of the community life of the new churches. As the Book of Acts closes, the Gospel of Jesus Christ had crossed ethnic lines from Jews to Gentiles, cultural lines from Judaistic culture to Hellenistic culture, and geographic lines from Palestine to Asia Minor and to Europe.

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that even these Judaistic Christians were not barred from their influence. So they are more Judaistic in a relative sense as compared to the Hellenistic Christians.

Political changes and migration in the Bible often led to scattered communities whose members have had their faith authenticated and their lives transformed. In the case of the Exodus and the Exile and Dispersion, political changes and migration were part of the process in faith authentication and life transformation. In the case of the persecution of the Early Church, political change and migration scattered the congregated community whose faith was already authenticated and whose lives were already transformed.

### *3. Excelling in Leadership*

The outstanding letter for the missionary movement was the Apostle Paul. Next to him was Barnabas. For Paul, his miraculous conversion experience drew him close to Christ and provided him with the fuel for his missionary endeavour. The Holy Spirit guided his itinerary. As with Moses and the proselytizers of the Diaspora, the contribution of Paul's personal history towards the man he was cannot be dismissed. He was born in the Diaspora university town of Tarsus, and was educated in Jerusalem, at least for a period of time, under the best teacher, *p. 176* Gamaliel. He had imbibed deeply in both Judaistic and Hellenistic cultures. This biblical perspective developed early in the life of Paul and gave him the freedom and the breadth to be all things to all men. Not only so, he was sufficiently informed by both cultures to lead in the contextualization of the Christian faith in the Hellenistic culture (e.g. [Acts 15:1-2](#); [Gal. 2:11-21](#)).

Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith ([Acts 11:24](#)). He was also a bicultural person. Born in Cyprus as a Diaspora Jew, he assumed a leadership position in the church of Jerusalem which had obviously gravitated towards Judaistic culture. Later, ministering in Antioch with mainly Hellenistic and Gentile Christians, he was also tremendously successful. His leadership demonstrated that he also had the freedom and capacity to minister to groups with diverse cultural and ethnic origins.

## **SUMMARY**

The above study of the three biblical events with political changes resulting in major migration movements shows that there was a definite pattern which facilitated the advancement of the Kingdom—the authenticating in faith of the migrants, advancing in witness in a new land, and excelling in leadership of a multi-cultural kind. So three elements are necessary to sustain the movement of migrants from trauma to victory and from identity to outreach. Is there any conclusion we can draw?

Unwelcome political changes resulting in migration always bring emotional and psychological trauma, among other things. However, such crises often prove to be the best occasions for God to confront men in their weaknesses. Facing God in 'naked faith' and humility leads them to the discovery of God's sufficiency. Then faith becomes real, and strong conviction develops. Crises turn into opportunities for growth and maturation. This seems to be the case for Israel in the Exodus experience. In the Exile, God's judgement on the nation occasioned the authenticating of faith. The humiliated Jews came to know God as the One who could not be slighted, but had to be honoured and glorified. Thus, proselytizing began with the purpose to glorify God. In the Early Church, hope in the resurrected Christ and the active work of the Holy Spirit made the Christian faith authentic, personal, real and lively.

No matter how the authenticating of faith comes about, it always provides God's people with strong conviction and a sense of mission. These eventually lead to practical ways of expressing their faith, both *p. 177* as God's people (identity), and in the style of witnessing (outreach). Identities such as the Covenant People of Yahweh, the Chosen People of the God of Heaven, and the People of the Resurrected Christ are strong and

powerful identities when authenticated through real faith experiences with God. They provide God's people with dignity, meaning and a sense of destiny. Values and priorities will change. External behaviour, largely determined by internal values, will be different. The People of God go through a life-transforming experience. Their heart, soul, mind and might will increasingly be more in tune with God. The final result is the expansion of God's Kingdom. Such Christians can hardly contain Christ within themselves, but have to proclaim him, just like the refugees from Jerusalem and the proselytizing Diaspora Jews.

God can bring about a turning point in his people single-handedly. Yet he always uses leaders. In the case of migrating or migrated people, the leaders he uses are men of God, full of spirit and faith, like Moses, Paul and Barnabas. They also have a wide spectrum of exposure to and experience in diverse cultures, among people of different ethnic origins. Such experiences equip them to give new answers to old questions as the people of God move from one context (region, culture, nation, etc.) to another. They lead God's people in grappling with their identity in a foreign land and in contextualizing their faith in God in a new context. In so doing, the People of God find dignity and meaning in their adopted homeland. The message they bring is understandable and meaningful. The way Christian faith is expressed, in word, in deed and in lifestyle, is acceptable and palatable to the local people.

## **MISSIOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR HONG KONG**

The finding in this paper raises possibilities for Christian communities in Hong Kong. With the near advent of 1997 and the ongoing migration movement, is God laying the foundation for future expansion of his Kingdom? If so, how will insights gained in this study find application to Hong Kong?

As China claims sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997, Hong Kong Christians are 'migrating' to China socially, culturally, economically and politically, though not having to emigrate physically. One can also say that China is 'migrating' to her. For Hong Kong, it is a kind of involuntary migration into a 'foreign' culture with unfamiliar values, political and ideological systems, and strange practices of many kinds. It will also be a traumatic experience. The finding in this article [p. 178](#) indicates that there is the need to equip Hong Kong Christians to face God in 'naked faith' before that time comes. Should they experience God to be real and faithful, and faith become authentic to them, they would emerge as Christians with strong convictions and a sense of mission. Difficulties become challenges. God is always ready for us. Are we ready for him?

There is also the need to find appropriate ways for Christians to express their Christian faith and identity as God's people in a way which is attractive and meaningful to China. In other words, the Christian faith needs to be contextualized in Chinese soil. Special approaches in witnessing should be pursued to attract the millions in China. The meaning of holding a Chinese passport is to be explored. As China's diplomatic relationship with the outside world evolves, there may be open doors leading to the Muslim, Hindu and the atheistic worlds in Asia, where the major blocs of unreached peoples are found.

Chinese Christian leaders with multi-cultural background, and given to theological and missiological reflections like Moses and Paul, will have an important role in shaping and sustaining the movement. They will do well to begin 'rubbing shoulders' with those who have already migrated to Hong Kong from China, and learn from them. The content of the Basic Law and its religious implications need to be heeded. The advent of 1997 should be considered as a missionary challenge where God takes our hand into a country in which resides the largest population in the world yet to be reached for Christ.

## Book Reviews

Lesslie Newbigin

[\*The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society\*](#)

Review by Roger E. Hudlund

Max L. Stackhouse

[\*Apologia: Contextualization, Globalization and Mission in Theological Education\*](#)

Review by Dr. Graham Houghton

Darrel L. Guder

[\*Be My Witness: The Church's Mission, Message and Messengers\*](#)

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## Book Reviews

### THE GOSPEL IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

by Lesslie Newbigin

WCC Publications, 150 route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave. S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49503 (1989). 244 pp.

Reviewed by Roger E. Hedlund

On the eve of his eightieth birthday, Lesslie Newbigin—the former bishop of Madras and active ecumenical leader—has written a penetrating analysis of the contemporary pluralistic world in which the Christian mission takes place. Newbigin is essential reading for evangelicals who, for the most part, have had little to say to the proponents of a philosophy which appears a front-running heresy for the Church entering its third millenium. The issue is pressing for Church leaders in America and Europe, where plurality of alien cultures and non-Christian faiths is a startling recent phenomenon. Eastern religions have come to the West, and are engaged in vigorous missionary propaganda. It is no longer the ‘missionaries’ problem’ or the ‘situation for the Church overseas’. Globalization has brought Hindus and Buddhists next door; temples and mosques punctuate the landscape of American and European towns and cities.