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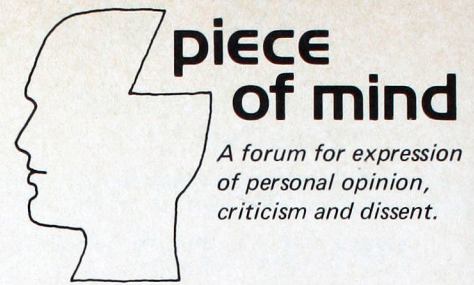
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by C. Leslie Miller

I Don't Believe in Prayer Meetings



Before you lay down your cloaks at the feet of a modern Saul of Tarsus and prepare to stone me for blasphemy, please permit me to speak in my defense.

I do not believe in the *traditional* meetings that some churches call prayer meetings. From what I have observed, there is little effective prayer and even less meeting of minds and hearts. Many claim the prayer meeting is the powerhouse of the church. It may have been, but where is the power today?

Picture with me a traditional meeting where habit rather than purpose prevails:

Sister Carlson requests prayer for her Aunt Samantha who suffers from an ingrown toenail. Brother Peterson (always the first one to pray) tells the Lord how to run His universe (he's been giving the same instructions each week for the last 20 years) and then casually reminds God about Samantha's toenail. And he, and most of the other intercessors promptly forget about Samantha's problem until they see her hobble into church on crutches with one foot amputated. Piously they all conclude that, "It just wasn't God's will to help poor old Aunt Samantha."

And of course, the next Wednesday evening, the broken record starts all over again when the Pastor mechanically intones, "Does anyone else have a prayer request?"

Brother Sullivan speaks up, "We should remember our missionaries." Someone adds the request to his prayer, "Now, Lord, bless our missionaries. . . those *dear ones* across the seas serving You as they save the sin-sick souls of the heathen."

The next week, the Pastor reads a cable from a missionary family, the Smiths, telling of the tragic drowning of their little daughter. Brother Sullivan hurriedly looks up the family in

his *Alphabetical Missionary Facts Handbook* and exclaims, "Oh, they're in Korea. . . I didn't know they had a child. Why look here. . . they have, er, had three."

And the next week it is the same routine.

Now before you hurl that stone, permit me to describe the meeting I would like to see. The function is to provide fellowship—fellowship *with* the saints and *about* the saints, fellowship with Christ, and fellowship in the Word. Let me illustrate:

It is Wednesday evening and almost 7:30. A surprising number of children and young people mingle with the older people. Each person is handed a prayer request form as he enters.

Everyone knows *when* the service will begin but only the Pastor knows *how*. It may start with the narration of an amusing little incident, or with a song, or a prayer or the recitation in unison of one of the Psalms.

The Pastor uses a tiny transmitter with a cordless microphone. He can roam all over the sanctuary, greeting people, asking or answering questions, and everything said is picked up by the public address system.

Sharing time is sometimes humorous and always relevant. Everyone may participate but no one is permitted to dominate. Here is fellowship. Laughter and tears are intermingled frequently.


Prayer requests are presented but the praying is done at home. When a request is made, at least five people raise their hands and thereby covenant that they will write down the request and pray each day of the week for that request. The person giving the request understands that he will be expected to give a progress report at the next fellowship service. No longer is prayer a "hit or miss" or "request and forget" game, but a serious and intelligent system with a follow-through element,

where prayer changes to praise.

This is a fellowship meeting. Frequently special music of Sunday morning quality is included in the program. At other times, the entire audience may be divided for four-part harmony and learn to sing new hymns which in turn are used in the following Sunday morning worship service.

The fellowship in the Word consists of Bible discussion—nothing that even approaches a lecture. The emphasis is always upon life-relatedness, audience participation and the involvement of the Scriptures in contemporary experiences. It is exciting and at times approaches controversy. Argument is never permitted. People go home from such a study to dig into the Word to discover what it has to say to them. The divine Word and human problems and experiences become closely related.

Here there is fellowship, one with another—a fellowship based upon people and their Lord, not upon a repetitious program. There is fellowship in the Word—a dynamic approach, where human experiences, needs and problems are brought into the clarifying light of the Scriptures. And all this leads the worshiper into the exciting presence of Jesus Christ.

Of course I believe in the midweek fellowship service. Look in our church bulletin. There it is—"Wednesday evening at 7:30. Come, meet God and His family." 

Veteran of missionary service in the Republic of Congo, C. Leslie Miller is presently serving as pastor of the North Hollywood Evangelical Free Church in Southern California.





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readers' right



China's Present and Future

Sir: You may know of my great interest in your recent article "Understanding China" (March, 1971), and it was so very well written on such a very difficult subject. You know how my heart goes out to that land where so many good years of my life were spent, and how very many of my old friends are now residing in China—that is the mainland where I can send or receive no word. I can see nothing of good in the present regime and it is my firm belief that were it to be allowed in the United Nations, it would be the death blow. In this I concur with my old friend, Walter Judd—whom I saw mentioned in the last issue of your magazine. It will certainly come eventually, I admit, but not before there is a change in not only the personnel but of the entire regime itself. That last paragraph is what we should all pray for, and will.

James L. Howe, Jr.
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Permission Granted

Sir: Your January 1971 copy of World Vision Magazine presented an editorial theme that we would like to use for our missionary convention. Frank Farrell wrote an editorial on the theme "Time and the Task." We would like permission to use this as the theme for our missionary convention and also to use the editorial in a bulletin.

We think that the theme is a terrific one. Six or seven churches will be sharing in this missionary convention with the Rev. J. Phillip Hogan, our National Director, as keynote speaker.

Rev. Eugene A. Born
Bethany Temple—Assembly of God
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Sir: Your magazine gets better all the time. The students here speak highly of it. This is surprising to me. It speaks highly of your "with it" editorial policies, that a magazine about mission should be so often quoted by supposedly anti-mission younger generation students. Congratulations.

Sydney Allen, textbook writer
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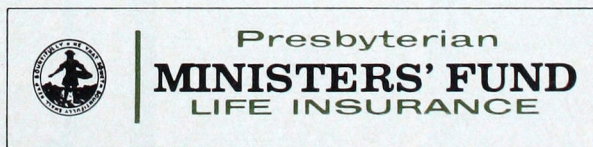
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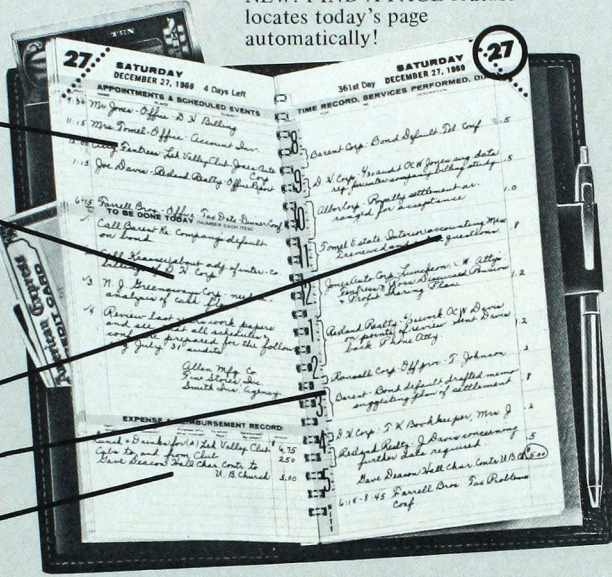
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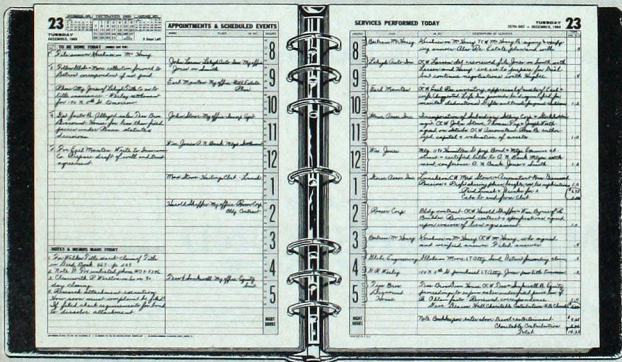
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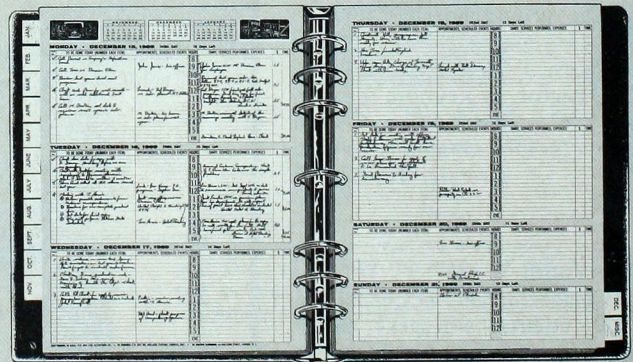
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Faith and flux in Latin America

Transition. . . . Change. . . . Crossroads. . . . Growth. . . . Ferment. . . . Flux. . . . Crisis. . . . Revolution. . . . These are words commonly used to describe Latin America today. They overshadow the lyric descriptions of Peru's precipitous Andean peaks, Argentina's superb grasslands, and Uruguay's glorious beaches. One hears more about socialist takeover in Chile, communism in Cuba, military dictatorship in Brazil, guerrilla warfare in Guatemala, and radical social changes throughout Latin America as rural migrations crowd into the cities. There is ample historic precedent for current flux. Paraguay had 39 heads of state from 1870 to 1954. Bolivia had 179 changes of government in a period of 126 years. And Venezuela has had more than 100 revolutions in 150 years.

Today the winds of change and liberalization blow strongly even in the Roman Catholic Church, long a bulwark for the status quo in Latin America. And to reflect the tremendous growth of and considerable ferment in Protestantism in this part of the world one needs but to invoke such terms as Evangelism-in-

Depth, education by extension, social action, and Latin American theology.

This special issue of World Vision Magazine has sought to capture for its readers "the evangelical now" on a variety of significant fronts in fast-changing Latin America. Simon Bolivar, who himself liberated five nations, said in the 1820's: "We have seen the light and it is not our desire to be thrust back into darkness." It is the conviction of your editors that the evangelicals of Latin America are carriers of a spiritual light and freedom which are ultimately vital in the struggle to cope with the tenacious forces of reaction on the one hand and the threatening forces of revolution by violence on the other.

The Editors



**"We are in the midst of the most
challenging and decisive
period in theological education
in Latin America."**

new day

by *Ruben Lores*

8 **A**t long last theological education is beginning to keep pace with the fast-moving Latin American developments. The picture is not rosy by any means but there are many clear indications that amidst the multiphased crises that theological education faces, there are enough signs which indicate we are beginning to face the problems from the right perspective. There is a new awareness of the true dimension of the problems and some people are beginning to try to find realistic answers to them. There are new forces from within—both from the younger more educated missionaries and from the undomesticated nationals. Congresses, consultations and pastors' retreats have decisively contributed to this significant change.

Let me make two observations: First, in Latin America, like in many other areas of the world, the term "theological education" has become a catchall designation for every type of training for any form of the ministry. It encompasses everything from the most elementary Bible training institutes to the most sophisticated theological communities and includes theological education by extension. Second, most comments referring to the entire area of Latin America with its more than 20 republics and its multiplicity of races and cultures tend to be generalizations whose value may be very difficult to ascertain. Beware of the experts on Latin America. Usually the expertise is just a matter of degrees of ignorance! This author has traveled widely in Latin America and is acquainted firsthand with most of the situations on which the observations are based. But you are advised to read critically.

The latest *Theological Education Fund Directory* lists 114 institutions in Latin America dedicated to the training of workers for the church. Many of these are on the Bible school level, but quite a number offer a seminary program and grant Bachelor of Divinity degrees. Probably not more than 10 Protestant schools offer a Masters' degree. There are no Protestant doctoral programs.

It seems that in the Christian church, particularly among foreign missionary circles, we must have one big thrust of some sort to keep us going. Maybe this points to a crisis of relevance and meaningful involvement or to the always present need of keeping our constituency interested. Some movements, however, seem to have the unmistakable seal of God upon them, like Evangelism-in-Depth and Church Growth.

Another movement seemingly blessed is theological education by extension. Pioneered by the Presbyterian Seminary in Guatemala in 1962, theological education by

Cuban-born Ruben Lores has been involved in evangelistic work most of his life. Recently he visited 14 countries explaining Evangelism-in-Depth. He is now serving in Costa Rica as Assistant General Director of Latin America Mission.

extension has already made its way throughout Latin America, Africa, Asia, and even Europe. From a small beginning of five students, the number reaches now as high as 2500 in Latin America alone.

Readers of this magazine have been treated to firsthand information by some of the main exponents of the seminary extension approach. Undoubtedly, this is a key development in the new day for theological education in Latin America. Some of the more detrimental aspects of the transplanted patterns of theological education have been replaced by more positive approaches. I refer to such things as the recognition of the natural leaders, the criteria for curriculum based on the need of the students rather than the requirements and authority imposed by the institution, the offering of multiple levels of education by one institution, and the opportunity for education for a greater number of people rather than for just a privileged few. There are many other strategic and pragmatic considerations which are so evident that one does not have to be a prophet to anticipate that theological education by extension is not only here to stay but it may become an even more significant factor in the years to come.

It may be too early yet for objective evaluation. Some may discover one day that this was not the panacea they thought it was. I have the confidence, nevertheless, that because the basic principles are right and the program in general is sound, education by extension will continue to be a most useful means for particular denominations to meet their leadership training needs.

But along with our high expectations for this new approach, the new day imposes on us the responsibility of looking beyond the "success" considerations to the more subtle, more basic, decisive long-range implications. Let me put these concerns in question form:

1. Will our "success mentality" lead us to neglect the higher, more solid training of those who should achieve that level of education in order to meet the churches' need for top leadership? Example: I know of a case where it is practically impossible for a young person who wants to train for the ministry in a resident seminary to obtain a scholarship unless he first studies by extension for a number of years. Some may consent to that but if the most promising young candidates are not willing to submit to such a plan, no one has the right to complain if they are lost for the ministry of the church.

2. Is the extension curriculum oriented to the renewal of the church or is it bound to perpetuate the outlook and forms of the ministry of the traditional patterns only on a lower level and on a serve-yourself basis?

3. Will the training convert the natural leader into a

mobilizer of his people in order that the whole church may engage in ministry or will it simply enhance his position as a "strong man"?

4. Are we not in danger of making the lay pastors feel that they are second class citizens unless they are recognized by the church as full-time paid pastors?

5. Is anyone doing hard thinking and planning to involve nationals at the beginning stages of the program at the decision-making level? In programmed teaching, clerical work may assume many different names. Beware of high-sounding titles such as "President of the Extension Seminary" which carry no power with them.

6. Can extension education with practically no library and a minimum time for reflection and interaction produce theologians? Unless something is done about this, the faith mission-related churches particularly are predestined to be molded by well-intentioned missionaries who cannot help but theologize in foreign categories and out of a foreign context. By all means we must avoid the danger of preserving the theologically underdeveloped *status quo*.

7. Will it not be easy to find a thousand reasons why it is more strategic to spend \$1000 to train 25 people by extension than to spend \$3000 to send a promising candidate to a resident theological institution?

While theological education by extension extends its frontiers and grows in respectability, the traditional theological seminaries are finding it much harder to justify their existence. In a good number of cases, the crisis is centered around the lack of students and its concomitant problem of maintaining such costly undertaking. This crisis affects a good number of institutions.

It is risky to assess the situation critically but in trying to understand this problem, I have formulated the following considerations:

1. There may be some relationship between the alarming lack of students and the fact that most theological institutions continue to be dominated by foreign mission personnel. With the rising college entrance requirements, educated young people for the most part are eligible for theological training. The spirit of nationalism is more present in the younger generation.

2. We have come to the place now where the majority of candidates for theological training are second generation Christians. For them the Christian life is not primarily the hope for the world beyond, but is something that should function here and now—something which has to be articulated in categories they accept and in language they understand. One wonders if there is enough understanding of this problem on the part of church leaders. *continued*

3. There seems to be a cultural gap between those who, though evangelical Christians, would like to express the Christian faith and worship and witness in terms of their own culture; and those, both foreign and nationals, who are committed to the perpetuation of the cultural transplants which dominate in much of Protestantism. Seminaries could be in the forefront of this liberation process but usually they are not.

4. There are basic problems related to finances. On one hand is the high cost of operating well-staffed institutions of higher theological training. One may ask if this is not more a question of priority than of a scarcity of funds. On the other hand we have the problem of the limited expectations for a decent salary. The problem is not just economic. It has to do also with the inequities of the system and the outmodedness of the structures.

5. We seem to be caught between those who show not enough social concern and those who show too much. A better way of putting it may be to say that attempts at a Christian interpretation of political ideologies either from the right or from the left dominate the situation. The result is that in some cases, well motivated young people are repelled by the political obscurantism of their spiritual leaders. Others remain unchallenged to spiritual motivation and commitment by those who advocate political activism and relegate the ministry of the church to a second plane.

I am convinced that basically this is not a theological problem, but rather a cultural and political one. To a great measure, from the standpoint of human analysis, success and relevance of a theological institution will be determined by the ability to keep the right balance in this difficult matter.

In spite of the crises we face, and in some cases because of them, we are in the midst of the most challenging and decisive period in theological education in Latin America. Theological reflection is no longer connected solely with the seminary classroom and the pastors' study. There seems to be a new awareness that every Christian activity must come under the judgment of the Word and theology. It is true that the focal point seems to be the theological basis and limitations of the social implications of the gospel. But in our context this issue is so interrelated with all the spheres of life that we dare to say that no one can seriously engage in theological reflection in Latin America except in this context.

This theological ferment is taking many forms. Several theological consultations have taken place recently and a number of others are planned. Regional theological fraternities have been organized. The number of books written by Latin Americans is increasing. Mimeographed papers are circulating profusely among those who are engaged in this

field. New publications are being planned. It will be interesting to watch developments in such a dynamic situation.

As one who is deeply involved, I believe these are some of the issues that we must face honestly and creatively:

1. We must watch that we do not become the victims of the professional manipulators, whether they hide in pietistic clothing or in ecumenical garb. Nothing can be more detrimental to true theological reflection than the imposition of prefabricated answers to confirm the prejudices of interested parties.

2. We must keep always in mind the missiological imperative to which all theological reflection should lead us. We are not called to establish the truth for truth's sake. Our particular task cannot be defined in terms of defending any particular mode of theology, such as Reformed theology, Arminian theology, or conservative theology. Our basic responsibility this day is not just to find out what other men in other times in other cultures found relevant in the Word of God to serve God in their day and in their culture. We must profit by the great heritage of the past, but it is our duty and privilege under God to find His word for us this day. We must not construct a new system of theology, but learn to serve God more effectively this day.

3. Theological reflection must be conducted in honest, open dialogue—perhaps with all our brethren or especially with those with whom we differ in basic issues. It is unethical, to say the least, to accept financial backing from those who would impose their criteria for inclusion or exclusion of participants in consultations as a condition.

4. We recognize that in a revolutionary situation like ours there is a great danger in allowing our theology to be molded by anthropological, sociological and political categories. But we are in no less danger when we allow our theologizing to be limited to the cultural, historical and religious developments that have shaped the traditional theology that has been transmitted to us. We may find that to be faithful to the Word of God will be more costly and more difficult than anyone has imagined.

5. I dare to affirm that it is just as heretical to speak of a Latin American theology as it is to speak of a Latin American church. It is our responsibility and privilege to be the Church of Christ in Latin America—not just a carbon copy of some other church somewhere. The church should spring forth and develop in its own cultural setting. And more than rehashing the doctrinal controversies of North America and Europe, theology in Latin America must answer the questions the Latin Americans are asking—in a language that can speak to their minds and hearts with the living, eternal message of God.



Some
acute questions
on the relationship of the
gospel and society
become alive
and relevant for
Latin American
evangelicals.

Look ahead

by Samuel Escobar

“**e**vangelicals here will have to prove that they are not only good for singing and preaching, but also for helping those in distress,” challenged Dr. Guiseppe More. The Italian missionary made this statement last June in Peru, voicing the expectations of many evangelicals, shocked by the earthquake that killed more than 70 thousand. There was a desperate need for prompt and intelligent assistance.

The impact of the disaster created a cooperative spirit which momentarily overcame the sad divisions that afflict the tiny Peruvian Protestant community. Unfortunately, a few months after the earthquake, tensions among the evangelicals are endangering the possibilities of a united answer to the challenge. Are evangelicals really able to do more than sing and preach? Are they able to practice, even among themselves, the love of which they speak so much? This is the valid and relevant question that many Latin Americans are asking today.

Every aspect of Latin American life shows the desperate needs that go hand in hand with underdevelopment. One would have to be blinded by pharisaic selfishness, to forget that those who preach the gospel are challenged daily by God to do something about so many needs—in other words, to *live* the gospel they preach. As I look to the future I see a threefold challenge before us. *continued*

First, to pool evangelical resources. Reproducing the extreme individualism of Protestantism in Anglo-Saxon countries, Latin American churches have not yet found ways of realistic and efficient cooperation. With very few exceptions, Protestants form a small percentage of the population in Latin American countries. From a Christian viewpoint their potential is unlimited. But in order to answer some of the most urgent needs, Latin American evangelicals must find a way to put their resources together, learning to serve as a united people. They must study and determine the many areas of need, choosing those in which they can do the most with their limited material resources. Otherwise we will have many inefficient, isolated denominational projects which would have only a token value. Whatever else this would be, it would not be good stewardship.

Second, a change of mind. On a national and regional level, I think that we are far from having made all possible efforts to find positive ways of united evangelical action, though I do share the evangelical concern for biblical truth that prevents many from joining certain ecumenical enterprises.

Yet, very often sinful jealousy and personal rivalries are covered under the garment of "doctrinal differences." The lack of adequate knowledge and teaching of evangelical truth allows for the erection of separation walls on the basis of minutiae. If, as a modern translation puts it, "repentance" is a "change of mind," may God send us a spirit of repentance!

Third, infiltration of non-Protestant agencies. A false idea of "separation" from the world prevented our communities from making a real impact upon national life. Today, when many governments are trying to update their social assistance programs, evangelicals have a chance to reevaluate their notion of presence and proclamation, in order to intelligently infiltrate governmental agencies, for example.

There is a special opportunity for youth here. For instance, in Peru, Chile and Brazil the governments are trying to mobilize youth in order to serve needy areas. I know of no instance where evangelicals have tried to enter through such widely opened doors.

Of course a real commitment and a strong faith are needed if you are to serve in the midst of pagans. Our emphasis has been to put our youth into comfortable "hothouses." That was not the case with Daniel, Joseph or Nehemiah. Their God is our God also—here in Latin America, here in the seventies.

It is increasingly less difficult to come to an agreement among evangelicals at this point.

Some acute political questions become alive and relevant for evangelicals today: the Christian attitude towards government, civil disobedience, unjust laws, violence, and patience in face of the slowness of justice. Here I see a minimum twofold task ahead.


Dr. Samuel Escobar is Associate Director for Latin America of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. He is also the editor of Ediciones Certeza. Although he is a Peruvian, Dr. Escobar resides in Argentina.

Social ethics. Looking back to the reformers and to the Bible we must try to rediscover and teach a comprehensive view of man, society and history. This is specially urgent for the new generation which confronts a militant, clear-cut social theory in Marxism, a theory which has permeated our culture and university life beyond imagination. Of course this is no easy task for "nonhistorical" churches which have ignored Reformed theology and have specialized in proclamation without teaching. At this point some tension arises between those who believe in church growth at any cost and those who (like this writer) are rather critical of patterns of growth which in the past have produced a very superficial type of "evangelicalism" open to syncretism by penetration of cults, animism or Marxism.

Another point of tension is that our social ethics cannot be a mere translation of Anglo-Saxon ethics, which sometimes is nothing but the theoretical justification of the status quo in England and the United States. Take for instance the whole failure of representative democracy and *laissez faire* capitalism in Latin America. Most of our countries are living now under military regimes that are trying to change structures. An evangelical evaluation of this historic moment is needed. But it cannot be given by people who believe that "democracy" and "capitalism" are the only Bible-based expressions of social life. Extreme forms of individualism and collectivism, the relation between development and social justice, poverty as a way of living, the relation between the Christian hope and the hopes of the world—all these problems have to be reconsidered in the light of the Bible. Yes, only a deep biblical revival can safeguard us in this hour.

Institutional creativity. There is no doubt that many social and political institutions arise out of a social ethic. This is clearly shown by a glance at the history of the Church. Political changes are opening possibilities for new institutions in Latin America. Could evangelicals contribute here? Up to this point we have had three alternatives: pre-Vatican II Catholicism, liberal democracy and Marxism. The first and the third have been articulated more than the second. Can we show new ways? I do not think that we must wait until we are a powerful political bloc. We can start at small local levels. Personally, for instance, I have seen that evangelical projects in education and social action, like those of the Wycliffe Bible Translators, have already influenced the educational policies of countries like Peru and Bolivia. This decade still has open doors for us. But extremism can come when "no man can work anymore."

Looking to the future. Our continent will go through decisive changes in this decade. What will they be like? Will the advance of revolutionary Marxism turn our continent into a new Vietnam? Will a renewed Roman Catholic church produce social changes and a new way of structuring society? Will our countries become more dependent on the United States, reaching a cultural and political status similar to that of Puerto Rico? Will we see political blocs confronting each other with opposite official ideologies and atomic weapons? Many of our evangelical leaders do not seem to be conscious of the radical changes that will inevitably take place. Some of these leaders become apocalyptic and think that more than ever the only thing to do is to preach individual salvation and to forget everything else.

Those who try to be faithful to the teaching of the Bible have not changed their goal in life. We are called to live to the glory of God in Christ and to pray and expect His kingdom. And there is only one way to prove that we are citizens of His everlasting kingdom: to preach Christ and to be like Christ in the midst of these troubled and self-destroying kingdoms. 

**"Our continent
will go
through decisive changes
in this decade."**

giant steps

by Benjamin Moraes

"For a country"

The 90 million people of Brazil are a melting pot of European and African races. Though the Portuguese colonized Brazil, the Germans, Italians and other Europeans left their imprint. The Portuguese language is spoken throughout the country, and Spanish is understood by only a few. The European stock intermixed with the Negroes who were brought to Brazil where they served as slaves up to the mid-19th century. A third element which figured in the composition of the Brazilian population is the Indian. Thus, Brazil is radically different from other Latin American nations.

Protestantism in Brazil up to 1850

The Huguenots had the distinction in 1556 of holding the first Calvinist service in America on a little strip of land jutting into what is now known as Guanabara Bay, adjacent to Rio's Santos Dumont Airport. They fled from persecution in France and founded the first Protestant colony in Brazil. Inevitable clashes developed between the Portuguese colonists and the smaller group of Huguenots, who were eventually defeated and banished from the country.

The seventeenth century saw a second attempt at the establishment of

Pastor of Prebyterian Church of Copacabana, President of the Brazil Bible Society, author of many books, and the holder of a law degree, Dr. Benjamin Moraes serves his country, church and Lord.

Protestant work in Brazil. The Dutch, who controlled an area in northeastern Brazil for about 30 years, managed to establish a religious beachhead. However, they were likewise unable to withstand the pressure from the Portuguese colonists and were thrown out of Brazil even as were their French predecessors.

Brazil gained its political independence in 1822. It established its first empire under King Pedro the First and proclaimed the Roman Catholic Church the official state church. It was not until the first half of the nineteenth century that the English Protestants living in Brazil obtained from the Brazilian government the proper permission to organize their church which at that time was restricted only to English-speaking people. Protestantism was thereby limited to the four walls of the English church, as Protestant proselyting was prohibited.

Fused from three different races, religions in Brazil acquired a unique flavor. The Portuguese colonists brought a strong and domineering Catholicism through a large contingent of Jesuit priests. Highly cultural, intelligent and forged in the austere disciplines of their order, the priests implemented with an iron hand the teachings of the Church—particularly among the Indians who had to be

born Catholic, nursed by the dominance of that religion and buffeted by the influence of other creeds, the growth of Protestantism amid tenacious persecution is amazing and encouraging.”

in Brazil

taught through theatrical antics because of the language barrier.

African Negroes gradually enhanced Catholic rituals and dogmas with fetish-worshiping which involved all of its pagan mysticism. This variety so appealed to the primitive and uncultured masses, that soon a new cult known as “spiritism” emerged, whose influence is felt to this day among all social strata in Brazil. The already existing indigenous sects and African paganism made Catholicism in Brazil a syncretism of three currents.

“Spiritism” has the largest following next to Catholicism in some states of Brazil. The sect has assumed two facets in Brazil: a small group adhering to the European-born sect founded by Alan Kardec, Roustaigue and Flammarion which is considered “scientific spiritism” or “high spiritism.” Its followers are among the people of a high cultural level. A more highly diffused sect—and with more followers—is called “low spiritism,” bearing mostly on African-derived superstition, best manifested in *macumba* and *espírito de terreiros*—which in practice means outdoor pagan worship, allowing for ritual dances, animal sacrifices and loud invoking of spirits.

Growth of Protestant Missions

Early in 1850, despite strong opposition from the official Church, the first Protestant missions emerged: the Congregationalists from England

and the Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists from North America. By the end of the nineteenth century, when the Republic was proclaimed, full religious liberty was in effect and the Roman Catholic Church was no longer the official state church. Encouraged by this full religious liberty, the Episcopalians, the Pentecostals and many other denominations also sent their missionaries to establish churches in all Brazilian states. Later, they set up home missions and outposts to evangelize Indian tribes. Impelled by the cry of their sister nations to “come to Macedonia and help us,” the churches in Brazil organized foreign missions and sent missionaries to Bolivia, Paraguay, Venezuela, Argentina, Chile and even to its mother country, Portugal.

The American Bible Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society were staunch and constant in their support of our work in Brazil. In 1948, the two Societies relinquished their plants and assets to the Brazilian Bible Society which was organized at that time. Since then it has published and distributed more than 80 million Scriptures to Brazilians, and is the main producer of Protestant Bibles in Brazil.

Current Status of Protestantism

For a country born Catholic, nursed by the dominance of that religion and buffeted by the influence of other creeds, the growth of Protestantism

amid tenacious persecution is both amazing and encouraging. There are five million avowed Protestants in Brazil. If we count three or four million sympathizers, we represent nearly 10 percent of Brazil’s current population.

These eight or nine million believers, however, are divided into nearly 80 denominations, counting subdivisions in each denomination. Pentecostals, alone, are divided into some 40 different groups. Collectively, they constitute the largest number of evangelicals in Brazil. Their success in numbers is attributable to their easy penetration into the lower economic social strata, since their style of worship is very appealing to that group.

Though Protestantism is advancing now by giant steps in Brazil, the careful observer can detect denominational and ideological influences making inroads among traditional churches. We have, for instance, the Pentecostal ideologies pertaining to glossolalia and divine healing, not infrequently causing serious divisions and attrition among Protestant denominations. Also there is a peculiar humanistic tendency which is affecting our young pastors and intellectual leaders who focus inordinate attention upon the preaching of a purely social gospel. This reasoning sometimes leads to an ideological equation of Christianity and socialism. Quite frequently, these leaders seek the association of political groups of the left. *continued*

“A paramount need exists not necessarily for organic or structural unity, but for unity in Christ manifested in a Christian life of witness...”

The opposite is true with those of other extreme views. Some fundamentalists exert strenuous efforts in the founding of newspapers to “defend the faith.” Advocates of ecumenism, who openly seek rapprochement with the Roman Catholic Church, seek to modify the Protestant church to fulfill Christ’s dictum: “. . . so that ye may be one.”


At present, a new current is developing among those who would like to see the church return to the old-fashioned methods of evangelism. They look with disdain on any extreme movement, whether of the right or the left. Among this group are those who choose the safety of a middle ground between two fires and withdraw from the church. Some even dismiss the notion that the church is indispensable to maintain the faith.

A Message of Reform for Professing Protestants Today

Gospel truths are constant and eternal, however rapidly our changing world might evolve. Hence as Christians, it is incumbent upon us to reassert our belief in those truths. It behooves us as believers to assume a determined stand in the face of criticism by so-called intellectuals and those who deem biblical terminologies trite and obsolete, despite the fact that they are keys to immutable truths. As partakers of a great prophetic tradition, it falls to modern day bearers of the gospel courageously to display

evidence of espoused evangelical principles such as: the infallible authority of the Bible, the universal priesthood of believers, the unrestricted examination of the Holy Scriptures, and salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

In view of emerging modern philosophies appealing to those who seek to satisfy material needs, there is an urgency for spreading the gospel of repentance for sins and the atoning grace in Christ. More than ever, a need exists for personal evangelizing as practiced by the apostles of old. The gospel carries within itself the thrust for social reform. This is confirmed by Luke 12:31. Our Christian sensitivities feel assailed by the Marxist propaganda deceitfully flaunted particularly before souls in underdeveloped countries. But we dare not forget any who never heard the priceless Word—irrespective of their social strata.

Finally, a paramount need exists not necessarily for organic or structural unity, but for unity in Christ manifested in a Christian life of witness, the kind Jesus meant when He said, “. . . that they may be one, as we are” (John 17:11). Its overriding qualities: cooperation, understanding and love in the Lord’s combining of our talents and virtues to carry out His will on earth. Its overriding reward: the incredible fact that of all the lost souls, we were given the opportunity to express our love for Him by loving and helping our fellowmen. 

This is an age when everything comes in instant packages with instructions on the label for guaranteed results. Today vast resources of man-hours and money are expended in intensive study and extensive research in order to produce simple, easy-to-grasp formulae for assured results.

The Church Growth Research In Latin America (CGRILA) project was launched in September, 1965, by the Institute of Church Growth under the direction of Dr. Donald McGavran. The project sought to:

- determine the degree and nature of church growth already achieved,
- estimate the degree of responsiveness to the Christian message likely to be evidenced in the years ahead,
- describe the factors which retard and those which accelerate the establishment of soundly Christian churches.

The final published report, *Latin American Church Growth*, is a milestone in Christian research. The data

brought together is remarkable. But it is also disturbing. The information raises some hard questions for which we need to find answers. How do we evaluate, for instance, the spontaneous—almost instant—growth among Pentecostals? Why is it that much of the phenomenal growth taking place in Latin America is outside the framework of missions? By what criteria can the conclusions and lessons of Latin American Church Growth be analyzed? What does the project say to us and what do we do about it now—and in the explosive future? These are the basic questions to which we must address ourselves in these days.

When Jesus announced His plans for the church, He projected in concise terms the end product of mission: "I will build my church." As His plans were unfolded He laid out for His disciples a precise formula for achieving this goal and for measuring the results both quantitatively and qualitatively:

Dr. Vergil Gerber was named Executive Director of the Evangelical Missions Information Service, Inc. (EMIS) last fall after many years of missionary service in Latin America.

"One of the obvious lessons coming out of Latin American Church Growth is precisely at this point: wherever the church has been irrelevant to the purposes of Christian mission little or no growth has been experienced."

how churches grow

by Vergil Gerber

$g + b + t/MD = c$ (*Matt. 28:19, 20*)

g = going into all the world

MD = you are to make disciples from all nations

b = baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

t = teaching them to observe the things I have taught you—and you can count on my personal assistance always

c = church

The expression “Great Commission” comes from the Greek which has one main verb meaning “make disciples.” It is given in the imperative sense. Three other verbs girate around this main word.

“Going” is a participle in which the action, although not put in the imperative, is implicit. “As you go,” says Jesus, “you are to MAKE DISCIPLES.” How? By *baptizing* and by *teaching*. New Testament growth in these dimensions is both qualitative and quantitative.

Biblical mission falls short of its objective unless it relates converts to congregations and incorporates them into local churches as responsible members. One of the obvious lessons coming out of *Latin American Church Growth* is precisely at this point. Wherever the church has been considered irrelevant to the purposes of Christian mission little or no growth has been experienced. Mere Christian *presence*, as important as this is, is not enough. Nor is mere Christian *proclamation*.

Commenting on the theology of Christian *presence*, Arthur Glasser writes, “The chief objection of conservative evangelicals to the Christian presence concept is its tendency to assign a higher priority to the ‘redemption of social structures’ than to bringing men to Christ. It also unwittingly provides umbrellas under which ‘service-imperialists’ gather together. These men appear solely concerned with radical social reform, even violent revolution. They are frequently hostile to the evangelistic mandate.”

James Goff recently wrote: “Over the signature of Bishop Mortimer Arias, the newly autonomous Methodist Evangelical Church in Bolivia announces its intention to become incarnate in the indigenous culture. It

will evaluate its mission not in terms of numbers or of financial success but in the degree to which it helps Bolivians achieve the freedom which God means them to have.”

On the other hand, mere *proclamation* which does not lead to incorporation into a local congregation is equally defective. Alan Tippet in his book, *Verdict Theology*, calls attention to the need for a basic “theological undergirding of missionary method which seeks to persuade for verdict, that is, to bring men to a point of decision for Christ.” He includes church-relatedness as an essential part of this decision: “The whole idea of the Christian mission depends on the idea of the church. They go together.”

The New Testament gives us a thorough, well-documented report on the origins and growth of the first-century church. The first church in Jerusalem began with a small band of 120 disciples. On the Day of Pentecost 3000 were baptized, instructed and added to the Jerusalem fellowship. Percentage-wise this represented an *instant growth* of 2600 percent.

In the fifth chapter of Acts, the “explosion of numbers” defies exact figures, but “multitudes” of men and women were added. Chapter six tells us the number of the disciples was *multiplied*.

Church multiplication in chapter nine is not in terms of a single church, but in the generic, collective sense of geographical multiplication of believers in many places in all Judea and Galilee and Samaria. It focuses on the transition from the mother church to emerging congregations in other parts of the world. The twenty-first chapter records the church growth report of tens of thousands of members.

The Acts of the Apostles, assisted by the Pauline epistles, gives a full account of the historic march of the church from the capital of Judaism to the pagan centers of the world in less than four decades.

What is particularly remarkable about this data is the pattern for church growth which emerges. We see a responsible church growing out of witness on the Day of Pentecost. Filled with the Holy Spirit, the first

Christians began to witness not in unintelligible babble, but in effective communication. Three thousand were baptized and added to the Jerusalem band of believers. Men from every nation of the then-known world were on hand in Jerusalem, heard the Christian witness and in turn carried the seeds of the church back with them to their own native soil. Result:

<i>The Holy Spirit</i>	→	<i>Effectively communicated His message</i>	→	<i>Through human witness</i>
		<i>Resulting in numerical reproduction</i>		<i>and geographical expansion</i>

What is significant to us at this point is that from the very beginning clear structures emerged into an organized church at Jerusalem with all the characteristics of what Peter Beyerhaus and Henry Lefever call “responsible selfhood.”

The second chapter of Acts summarizes what took place:

Group Incorporation: *They were baptized and added to the Jerusalem fellowship.*

Biblical Indoctrination: *They were instructed in the teachings of the apostles.*

Social Adaptation: *They sold their possessions to take care of their material needs.*

Cultural Identification: *They gained the favor of the family, friends and associates in their cultural sphere.*

Continuous Propagation: *They ceased not to teach and evangelize. And the Lord added new members daily.*

On Pentecost the supernatural intervention of God released spiritual energy hitherto unknown and set off a chain reaction which shook the world of the first century.

It empowered the newborn church with a supernatural quality enabling her to fulfill her God-given mission. It is this *qualitative* dimension coupled with the *quantitative* growth which gives breadth and depth to the New Testament report. “Restlessly the Spirit drives the church to witness,” says Harry Boer, “and continually churches rise out of witness.” After the Day of Pentecost, dynamic, living cells multiplied into hundreds of con-

gregations in Asia, Europe, Africa and around the world.

Looking at the cumulative evidence in the New Testament report as a whole, certain conclusions emerge which give us biblical criteria for analyzing and sizing up the Latin American situation—assessments by which we can also evaluate the degree to which the efforts of missions measure up to the scriptural standards.

Are these efforts *church-oriented*? Alexander McLeish points out: "The only objective of the Christian cause is to call into existence the fellowship of the church as the agent of the Holy Spirit in achieving His purpose and not ours. His (Paul's) was no vague effort to meet universal need which so often inspires what we loosely call 'evangelism.'" What does all this say to us about the priorities of our missionary involvements in Latin America?

Are these efforts *spirit-oriented*? The Pentecost stands at the beginning of the New Testament church, thus introducing the church into a new era of missions. Our interpretation of Acts 2 would become distorted unless we recognize that the Holy Spirit is central to the missionary purposes of God.

Translator J.B. Phillips says in his preface to the book of Acts, "No one can read this book without being convinced that there is *someone* here at work besides mere human beings. . . . It is a matter of sober historical fact that never before has any small body of ordinary people so moved the world that their enemies could say, with tears in their eyes, that these men 'have turned the world upside down!'. . . . To these men it is quite plainly the invasion of their lives by a new quality of life altogether."

In the last analysis it is the supernatural invasion of the Person and power of the Holy Spirit that produces genuine qualitative growth. For the church is the Life of the Spirit in action. That Life cannot be self-contained. It must be reproductive. Spiritual reproduction is intrinsically and uniquely the work of the Holy Spirit.

Roland Allen has some very helpful suggestions at this point: "The Spirit given to the apostles is thus seen to

have created in them an internal necessity to preach the Gospel. 'We cannot but speak,' they say. Throughout this book the Spirit is revealed primarily as a Spirit impelling those to whom He comes to carry to others that which they have received. Thus, at His first coming, the Holy Spirit revealed His nature and His work as world-wide, all-embracing. The Holy Ghost was given: forthwith the apostles began to preach Christ."

Are these efforts *lay-oriented*? The basic theorem of the late Dr. Kenneth Strachan is that "the growth of any movement is in direct proportion to the success of that movement in mobilizing its total membership for the propagation of its belief." To put it in a simplified formula:

$$\text{Total mobilization} = \text{Total evangelization}$$

This theorem is not new. It is firmly rooted in New Testament authority and practice. Nothing is quite so evident in the early church as the fact that every Christian was expected to be responsible and reproducing from the moment he became a follower of the Lord. He was at once related to the visible church and involved in its mission and worship. *Responsible churches are made up of responsible members.*

There is no question but that this is one of the reasons for the mushrooming growth of the indigenous churches in Latin America, that is, its emphasis upon lay-participation and its de-emphasis upon missionary-dependence. This biblical criterion calls for a rethinking of our theology of mission in terms of making reproducing, responsible church members.

Are these efforts *people-oriented*? Paul's missionary activities were concentrated on the "people centers" of his day. He was concerned about "people movements" and group solidarity. He recognized the anthropological and sociological principles of "group solidarity." He was not afraid to record instances of "group conversions."

In Acts 6:7 Luke reports that in Jerusalem "the number of disciples multiplied" and "a great company of *priests* were obedient to the faith."


The priests apparently came in groups, preserving their social and professional solidarity. What does this say to us about the statistics for church growth in Latin America which only register numbers in terms of identification with *Protestant* churches? What does it say to us about our methodology and our audience image? Do we really go where people are?

One of Dr. George Peters' theses is that "The group solidarity concept is firmly embedded in the New Testament—the household, a people socially, religiously or professionally bound together, a society, and the community. This must become a guiding star in our evangelism program. To ignore this group solidarity is to ignore a major and effective approach in evangelism, and to by-pass multiple conversions that could move multitudes to Christ who will but meagerly respond as individuals."

Are these efforts *culturally-oriented*? Church growth has both vertical and horizontal relationships. Its vertical relationship by means of the Holy Spirit's dynamic gives qualitative content to its measurement. Its horizontal relationship complements its vertical relationship in terms of social and cultural adaptation. Perhaps nowhere is this so vividly evident as in the New Testament record of *household conversions*.

Dr. Peters continues: "Multiple conversions are not mere happenings, even though they may seem that way to the casual onlooker. We must learn to trust the Holy Spirit to equip us as instruments in guiding and inducing people and communities to move unitedly into the fold of God."

The first church in Jerusalem laid down the yardstick by which growth of the church can be accurately measured both qualitatively and quantitatively in five dimensions (Acts 2:41-47). As churches multiplied, a sixth dimension completed the biblical criteria.

So finally, we see the biblical criteria for church growth falling into six categories or areas of development: group incorporation, biblical indoctrination, social adaptation, cultural identification, continuous propagation, and **church multiplication.** 



One million dollar China broadcasting project launched by Far East Broadcasting Company. Land has been purchased on an island off Korea. Here FEBC plans to build within a year a 250,000 watt medium wave station directed at Red China. Another FEBC station also aimed at Red China is being built on Luzon in the Philippines. FEBC calls the project "Open Door to Red China." These stations will beam evangelical radio across China.

Prayer for Mainland China spurred by World Vision International. Head of WVI, Dr. W. Stanley Mooneyham, has called for the church to put China and Chinese Christians on their regular prayer lists. The organization is sponsoring "Pray for China" ads in evangelical magazines and has released a film aimed at stimulating prayer for China, called TARGET: CHINA. Dr. Mooneyham has just completed a soon-to-be-released book, CHINA: THE PUZZLE. The book attempts to give the layman a better understanding of the politics and people of China where one quarter of the world's people live.

Methodists may join United Church of North India in 1972, says United Methodist Bishop Joseph Lance of Lucknow.

"We have a problem because the Methodist Church in India has the disadvantage of having a lot to learn about how to work ecumenically," he stated. He said his church is working hard to become self-supporting and expects few foreign missionaries to be connected with the church.

Modern missionary era has ended.

This was the conclusion of 120 Asian churchmen and missionaries meeting in Kuala Lumpur at a Consultation on Missionary Service in Asia Today. The consultation agreed that the thrust of Christian missions in Asia must come from Asian initiative rather than from the West. Receiving most attention was a proposal to restructure the present missionary system in order to avoid its "unfortunate consequences, and promote the selfhood of the church and ecumenical mission." The meeting expressed the growing mood of Asian churches. It was questioned as to how well these sentiments are understood by the churches of the West, which hold most of the resources.

Missionary family ousted from Taiwan after six years service there. The Rev. and Mrs. Milo Thornberry, Jr. were given 48 hours notice to leave the country. The United Methodist Board of Missions under which the Thornberys worked suggested that the reason may be the missionaries' association with many Chinese and Taiwanese people, some of whom are not looked on with favor by the government. The move is also seen as a reaction to President Nixon's new openness to mainland China. The Thornberys were reportedly the first private American citizens ever deported by the Nationalist Chinese.

WCC channels 17 million dollars in 1970 to needy and refugees. The Council's Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service sent funds contributed by 252 Protestant,

Anglican and Orthodox member churches to Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East and Orthodox countries.

Caribbean churches form conference of churches. To better coordinate work and to initiate fellowship among themselves, a Caribbean Conference of Churches has been proposed. First general assembly meeting is scheduled late in 1971. Any church in the Caribbean may become a member if it accepts the basis of the constitution which reads: "The Caribbean Conference of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

Missionary car used in the liberation of Claude Fly. The following narrative was told by Lutheran Church in America missionary, the Rev. Karl Laantee, who serves in Montevideo, Uruguay. Dr. Claude L. Fly, a United States agricultural specialist, was kidnapped seven months ago by Uruguay terrorists, the *Tupamaros*.

"The action started on Tuesday at 9:15 p.m. when our door bell rang and two men and a woman in civilian clothes identified themselves as police and expressed their desire to talk with me. My wife who had opened the door asked them to sit down in the living room.

"When I entered the room, they told me that they were *Tupamaros*, pointing to the weapons they carried, and asked for my car for 'an operation.' Since there was nothing to do but comply, I turned the car in the garage under our home over to them.

"The person who took my car mentioned to me on departure that I would be happy to read in the morning papers for what purpose the car was used. When I asked whether it was for the liberation of Dr. Fly, he did not answer.

"Since it was an interesting opportunity to meet real *Tupamaros* I

started friendly conversation to put us all at ease, covering among other things their goals, image and strategy, use of violence in revolution, Marxism vs. religion, lack of personal freedom in Marxist society. I counseled them to tone down the violence and killing for the sake of their own image. They were convinced that during some of the remaining three years of our service in Uruguay, we would live under their rule.

"When I asked them to consider releasing Dr. Fly whose captivity does not serve any purpose, they did not like the fact that the project for which he worked received funds from U.S. AID, although they considered Fly a good person.

"At 11:15 the *Tupamaros* were advised that the operation had ended and they left us on our own, asking us to wait for five minutes before informing the police.

"When I arrived at the local police station they had just learned of the liberation of Dr. Claude Fly and soon it was also confirmed that my car was used for the operation and that it was left with Dr. Fly at the British Hospital."

Mexico "Impact Day" set for May 2. House-to-house visitation phase of the interdenominational Evangelism-in-Depth program now going on in Mexico begins the first Sunday in May. Already 13,188 prayer cells have been organized and EID national advisor Juan M. Isais states that 40 men are now working full-time as leaders, mobilizing the evangelicals of Mexico.

"Intimidation" of South African churches criticized by Capetown newspaper. A number of recent deportations of clergy prompted the *Sunday Express* to write: "One might well ask, why the government has decided on wholesale deportation of churchmen.

"If there is anything in the conduct of any priest, as in the conduct of any layman, to warrant action being taken against them, the government should test its case in the courts."

The paper warned: "If the churches


cannot take up the cudgels on behalf of the underprivileged masses, if they cannot fight for social justice in South Africa, they will be reduced to mere prayer houses of little importance and the masses will turn away from the white man's churches and seek their salvation elsewhere and in less peaceful ways."

Largest Lutheran project dedicated in Tanzania. Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Center, largest project ever funded through the Lutheran World Federation's Community Development Service (cost \$5.8 million) was dedicated by Bishop Stefano Moshi and Tanzania's President Julius Nyerere. A representative of the Tanzania government called the center "a monument to the growing cooperation between church and government in integrating the health services of this country." He also expressed gratitude that although church funds were used for the project, the medical center was built after "thorough consultation

with the government as to whether this hospital was in accordance with the needs and priorities of the country."

Editors resign in protest of Catholic "capitulation" to Ian Smith's Rhodesia government. Two Catholic lay editors resigned to protest what they felt was a "backing down" from the strong antigovernment position on racialist legislation which the Catholic bishops had taken.

Under the Land Tenure Act the churches are required to register as voluntary organizations to be able to operate multiracial institutions on land allocated to either racial group. At first the Catholic church leaders refused to register, believing the Act unlawful which gives white Rhodesians special privileges while depriving black citizens.

Later the Rhodesian Catholic bishops after consultation with Prime Minister Ian Smith, announced they would register "under protest." 

people make the news

Lieut. Commissioner **Harry Williams**, missionary surgeon who helped develop a surgical technique to give leprosy patients new use of their hands, has been named commander of the Salvation Army in New Zealand. Williams worked among leprosy patients in India for 31 years.

Sir Louis Mwachkwu Mbanefo of Nigeria has been elected chairman of the Anglican Consultative Council, an advisory body of clergy and laymen representing 47 million members of the Anglican communion. Sir Mbanefo, 59, is a judge and parliamentarian and chancellor of the Anglican Province of West Africa.

David Y.K. Wong, a structural engineer, has been chosen head of the Baptist World Alliance men's work. He is the first Asian to hold this office.

Dr. Walter J. Hollenweger, an evan-

gelism specialist with the World Council of Churches, has been named a professor of mission by the University of Birmingham in England. He is believed to be the first professor of mission to be appointed by a British university.

Robert Thompson, a member of parliament and for seven years a missionary educator in Ethiopia, was elected president of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

Bishop **Armando Rodriguez** has been reelected leader of the autonomous Methodist Church of Cuba. He has led the 2700-member church for the last three years.

John Lin has been appointed director of FEBC's Hong Kong operation. His major responsibility will be producing radio programs in the five mainland China dialects. 



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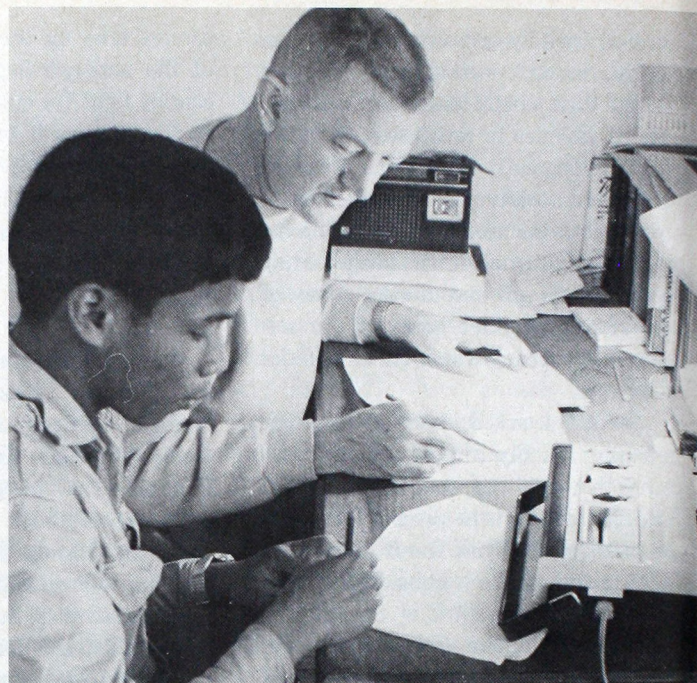
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Wycliffe linguist John Miller works out translation problems with his Bru language informant.

**WV
NEWS**



Mission to the Montagnards

by Jerry Ford

Their home is in the central highlands of Vietnam. Their living is primitive; their history unfortunate, for they have been pushed from their lands by the Vietnamese somewhat like the Europeans displaced the American Indians. For centuries they have been used and misused.

They are more than a million strong and speak over 30 different languages. They are a dark-skinned minority people in the midst of 17 million Orientals. They are animists in a Buddhist country. During colonial days the French called them Montagnards or mountaineers. But more accurately, they are the tribespeople of Vietnam.

Herbert Jackson, a member of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA), had worked nine years among the Vietnamese in the Mekong Delta. When his son's ill health forced the family to move to the cooler highland region of Dalat in 1929, Mr. Jackson became the first person to start evangelical mission work among the tribes. At first his association with the Montagnards was limited. For seven years French authorities forbade him

to travel to the jungle villages. His first contacts were made by bartering with the tribesmen when they came to town with their goods. Within a short time, the Jacksons had Montagnard help for building their mission compound.

As an answer to prayer, they found one laborer named K'Sol who could speak Vietnamese. Through him the Jacksons were able to communicate the gospel and begin their study of the Koho language.

With a growing spiritual interest evident among the Koho, a Bible school was established in Dalat for training pastors. As a result several tribal churches were built before the villages were ever visited by a foreign missionary.

A few years after the Jacksons began their work in Dalat, a second CMA tribes mission station was opened in 1934 in Banmethuot under the direction of Gordon Smith. Again a central Bible school was started. From this station workers were sent to preach to the Raday, Mnong and Jarai people.

These two stations remained the only evangelical missionary outposts

among the Montagnards until after World War II. During this time several Vietnamese Christians were appointed to tribes work. Some worked along with American missionaries while others began evangelistic ministries in new tribes.

Immediately after the war, CMA tribes work was strengthened with new appointments and the opening of new stations. In addition to the regular church work, a leprosarium was founded in Banmethuot in 1950 with an outreach to four large tribes. Today it has been expanded to include Pleiku and six outstation clinics ministering regularly to 2000 leprosy patients.

It was in the late fifties that mission activities among the Montagnard surged. Beginning in 1956, several new CMA missionaries were appointed to tribes work. Then, as now, most of this work was evangelism and church planting. All churches are now self-supporting and are grouped into two districts in the Evangelical Church of Vietnam. These are governed by Montagnard district superintendents. Along with this, literacy materials and Bible translations were written. Today the CMA mission continues to have work in the five largest tribes plus several smaller lowland tribes.

In 1956 Gordon Smith organized an independent mission with several volunteers in the northern part of the country. Now, under the United World Mission, he directs an orphanage and leprosarium in Danang and a small group of Vietnamese and tribal churches.

The late fifties saw the entrance of Wycliffe Bible Translators into Vietnam. Initial field studies were begun in 1957 with the first tribe being entered in 1959. The group of translators grew quickly with a large influx in the early sixties and today it totals 50 members. Only a few of these are administrative or office personnel. The rest are full time linguists working in more than 20 tribes.

In Vietnam, as in other fields, Wycliffe workshops are held regularly to discuss problems and procedures. These sessions are stimulating not only to Wycliffe members but also to other mission personnel who attend. Among

continued on page 28

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Facts of a Field: Latin America



VITAL STATISTICS

Area: 7,900,000 square miles (almost 14 percent of world total).

Population: 283 million (1970).

Population Growth: 2.9 percent annually (the world's highest growth rate).

Population Composition: Major ethnic groups include Indian, mestizo, European, mulatto, Negro and Asian. Widely diverse cultures ranging from primitive mountain Indians to jet-age city dwellers. A young population, with about half under the age of 19.

Urbanization: About 50 percent and increasing. Extensive migrations to cities.

Literacy: About 60 percent (1967 estimate) although varies widely.

Languages: Estimated over 600 languages and dialects. Predominant ones include Spanish, Portuguese, French, English, Quechua, Maya and other Indian tongues.

Economy: Predominantly agricultural. Developing industry in some areas but overall economic growth is slow. Rapid inflation in some nations. Wide range between rich and poor classes; the wealthiest five percent of the population share 31 percent of the economic product. Per capita annual gross national product estimated at about \$486.

Government: Majority of nations are republics, although actual type of government ranges from dictatorship to democracy.

History: Contact, exploration and colonization by European nations developed in the 16th century, with the predominant influential nations being Spain, Portugal, France and Great Britain. Most of the Latin American nations gained their independence during the 19th century.

Religion: Roman Catholicism has been predominant. Protestants total about five percent of the total population. Scattered pockets of Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism. Many sects and syncretic belief systems.

CURRENT STATUS OF CHRISTIANITY:

The Christian Church in Latin America is showing vigor in many areas. There is widely spread nominal Roman Catholicism, although there have been recent renewal movements. Protestant churches are growing rapidly in many countries, often among the lower classes and often associated with Pentecostal churches. Within both the Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions, there is a developing debate over social problems as related to the Church.

CHURCHES:

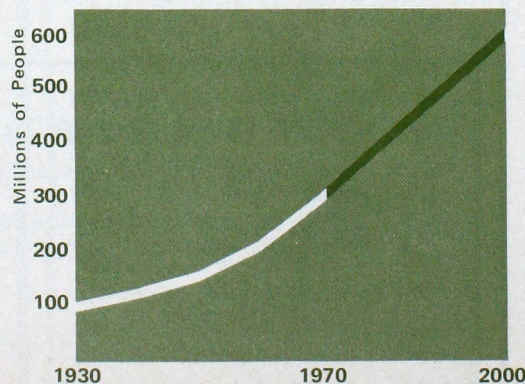
The total number of Christians in Latin America is difficult to determine although an overwhelming majority of the population of the region claims to be Christian. The number of Protestants in Latin America has been estimated at from 10 to 20 million. Brazil has the largest number of American Protestants. The Protestant churches as a whole are growing rapidly. In a number of countries Protestant churches are increasing at three times the rate of the population as a whole.

Some of the largest Protestant churches in Latin America are the Pentecostal family of churches and the Adventist churches.

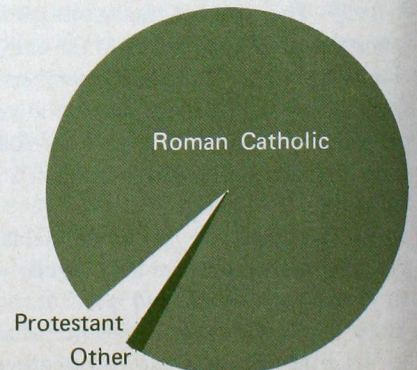
Significant movements in Protestantism in Latin America include development of theological education by extension; the Evangelism-in-Depth

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Population Growth




Approximate Religious Distribution



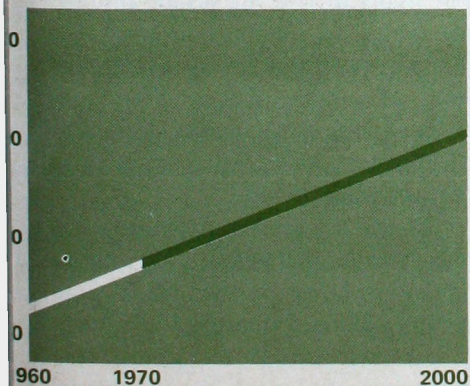
campaigns; the national congresses on evangelism; the continuing lay-based movements largely in the Pentecostal churches; and the large numbers of unpaid lay leaders.

The Protestants are not without problems, however. There is continued debate on the church involvement in social issues; mission and national church relationships are changing, as national churches assume leadership of their own affairs; and the expression of a Latin American-oriented theology. The radical and revolutionary social changes that are pending in several nations will certainly affect the churches of the region.

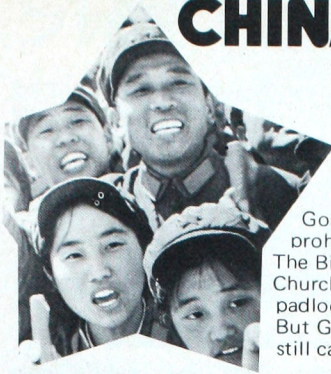
MISSIONS: The first missions were Roman Catholic. The earliest Protestant missionaries began work in Latin America in the early 1800's. The largest number of foreign missionaries in the region are from North America, although there are a number from Great Britain, Germany, other European nations and Japan. In 1969, 10,400 North American Protestant missionaries were in Latin America, making it the continent with the largest number of North American missionaries. This is a significant shift in missionary emphasis. Prior to 1969, Asia had attracted the largest number of missionaries from North America.

Protestant missions are engaged in a wide range of activities including various types of evangelistic efforts, language translation, literacy training, general and theological education, broadcasting, social developments and Bible training and distribution. 

Estimated Protestant Community Growth



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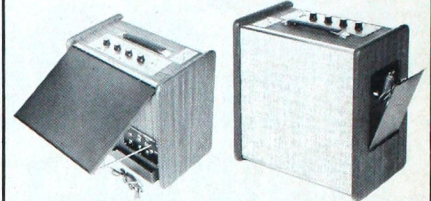
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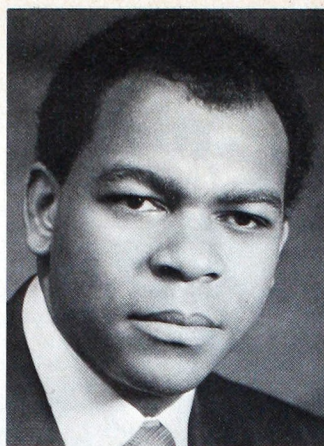
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personality profile



Evangelist Tom Skinner

To free the oppressor

by William E. Pannell

The history of the church is the story of holy men. And although biographers have not always been careful to record the fact, the men were often of ordinary circumstances. What made them extraordinary at times was the fact that the Holy Spirit was able to use them to accomplish the will of God. A combination of the right man at the right time often produced the "critical mass" necessary for the nation-shaking release of spiritual power. Thus, we have come to recognize names such as Martin Luther, John Knox, John Calvin, and John Wesley. Their contributions though long recognized remain incalculable.

Great Men of Color

But there is a curious thing here. These men are from the West. They are Euro-American, and the question arises as to why no comparable contribution has been made from nonwhite sectors of the world community. No doubt there are many factors involved ranging all the way from the problems of communication and travel, to the socioeconomic conditions imposed upon nonwhites by colonialist-minded Christians. A more careful study would reveal that great men of color have made enormous and lasting contributions to the advance of the gospel and society, but for some reason these exploits failed to receive proper notice. Black men, often lacking the resources and skills, were not able to report on their activities, and in America a strict censorship on religious knowledge was often imposed lest blacks find out that in the sight of

God they are as significant as other men.

Afro-Americans have been involved in missions since George Lisle sailed from Savannah, Georgia for Jamaica in 1761. This was nine years before the foreign missions awakening in Great Britain led by William Carey. Lisle's impact upon Jamaica was profound and the churches he founded were responsible for sending 45 missionaries to Africa during his lifetime. An ex-slave from Virginia named Lott went to Africa in 1812 settling in Liberia. Other men and movements from the nonwhite world could be cited, but much research needs to be done in order to better understand those factors which effect revival and its social impact in nonwestern societies. The point here is crucial to an understanding of the nature and purpose of the gospel as perceived by nonwestern peoples.

Christianity and Oppression

Among the current crop of blacks in America, including theologians, Christianity is seen as the greatest buttress for continued oppression of minority groups. Although the Christian message has made notable impact upon Afro-Americans from the earliest days, its radical influence has waned in recent generations. Today, black religion, like its white counterparts, has become secularized and can largely be understood in "folk" rather than distinctly biblical terms. The headlines have gone to the more socially activist clergymen on the one hand, and clergymen preaching a more personal

salvation on the other. There have been few models, black or white, whose message was perceived as a balance between those two extremes.

Survival Among Youth Gangs

There is evidence that this emphasis is changing. One of the men in the forefront of change is evangelist Tom Skinner. Skinner is from Brooklyn, New York where he spent most of his adolescence trying to figure out the meaning of Christianity and struggling to survive among the tough youth gangs in Harlem. He was more successful in the latter pursuit, and his story, *Black and Free*, became a best seller. Now 28 years of age, the tall, dark, and powerfully built Skinner began preaching shortly after his conversion and has held major crusades from New Jersey to Guiana, and from center stage at the Apollo Theatre in Harlem to the cavernous Coliseum in Chicago. He is undoubtedly the most sought-after black evangelist in America today, a fact which prompts the inevitable comparison. Antipating the question Skinner advises, "No, I do not consider myself a black Billy Graham. Our message, while the same on essentials, is different because a black man is in a better position to understand the need to present the gospel for the whole person. He ought to understand the nature of institutional racism and other social sins and it is to these issues that I seek to address the message. If the oppressed are to be set free, then so also must the oppressor be set free. I'm really speaking to a different crowd. I'm trying not to give the impression that I'm trying to save the system through my preaching. I'm not convinced that the American system is salvageable. And, of course, I have been conditioned differently; by the street, and the black church as well as exposure to the evangelical world."

Sensing a great opportunity to not only preach the gospel, but also to model its effect to the black community, Skinner organized and evangelical association to handle the increasing calls for ministry. The fledgling organization has 15 staff

members. The board is chaired by Harold L. Garnes, a black medical doctor and influential Christian layman. Other key laymen, black and white, serve on the board.

In addition to large-scale evangelistic meetings, Tom Skinner Associates pursues a vigorous on-campus ministry aimed especially at black students. It is the association's conviction that the crisis in leadership for the black community may well be determined on the campuses, especially black colleges in the South.

Another growing ministry sponsored by the Associates is that of leadership training institutes. These institutes are attempts to assist existing black evangelical leaders to better manage those ministries they now have. Often this represents the only significant street-level leadership within the black community. Says Skinner, "We expect to hold these sessions in conjunction with our major crusades as well as independently. We have been greatly assisted by some of the staff people from World Vision and Missions Advanced Research and Communication Center. We have evidence that the principles of leadership studied by our men have greatly enhanced their effectiveness."

Hour of the Darker Races

Tom Skinner and his associates are not the only black men in evangelism today, but they do constitute a major breakthrough in an area too long viewed as the exclusive province of white evangelicals. And speaking of timing, there is evidence that the pendulum of religious influence has swung to the nonwhite majority in the world. Sensitivities honed razor-sharp by years of exploitation and oppression, nonwhite men are in a unique position to interpret the radical meaning of the gospel to a white minority grown callous through its capitulation to greed and racism. Whether this happens or not remains to be seen, but this is doubtless the hour of the darker races. It could be their finest hour. If the response to God is favorable, the course of history could be altered. If not.

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***with Indians, of course!**

continued from page 23

the other participants are three CMA literacy teams and the Oliver Trebilcos who recently joined the Bethany Literature Fellowship to do language and translation work among the Hre tribe.

The linguist spends most of his time at his field post. With the increased war activity of the last several years, however, allocations have changed considerably. Formerly, a missionary could live in a jungle village. Now he generally works within the security of a large city with a partner and a tribal language informant and makes occasional daytime visits to tribal villages.

The linguist begins his arduous language study by first pointing out tangible items and asking for their names. If he is fortunate, he may be able to use an intermediary language such as Vietnamese. After a few months of listening, mimicking, and using tapes, he is able to communicate effectively and begin work on an alphabet.

The next step is to prepare primers in the tribal language. These and other literacy materials are being used in government schools throughout the country. Teacher's guides are also prepared and teacher training workshops are held in central locations. This literacy program is of such an interest to the American Government that the Agency for International Development (AID) has underwritten most of the cost for the past three years.

Of course, the linguist's ultimate goal and most rewarding job is the translation of the Bible into the tribal



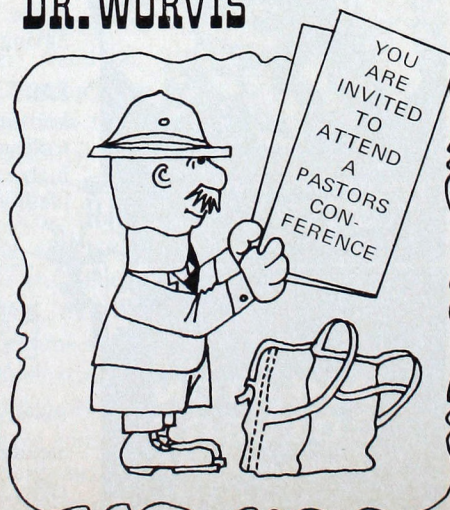
Grandmother and child of the Bru tribe live near Hue, South Vietnam.

language. Several members of the tribe carefully check the work to see if it communicates in a clear and natural style. Certain Scripture portions and books are published as the translation is completed to help speed the propagation of the gospel.

This entire process of linguistics, literacy and translation is naturally very time-consuming. Yet, already Wycliffe personnel have translated the equivalent of two New Testaments. The CMA, too, has made notable progress in the translation field. The Koho New Testament, which the Jacksons began and 10 others worked on, was dedicated in March of 1967. Two years earlier the first entire Montagnard New Testament had been completed in the Raday language.

Preparing readers for the Word and the Word for the readers—this is the job of the missionary linguist. Church evangelism, social concern, and medical projects—these complete the picture of Vietnam mission activity among the tribes. And does it pay? Just talk to a Montagnard Christian and discover the love of Christ in his heart and his hope for the salvation of his people.

DR. WORVIS



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Latin America: Whence and Whither?

“The Latin America LBJ Will Not See.” The headline was used by U.S. News & World Report when, in 1967, President Johnson was ready to fly to Uruguay to meet with the leaders of a score of Latin American nations.

The headline was of course correct. No visitor—not even the President of the United States—on a four-day trip to the American continent that lies beneath the Southern Cross, can possibly see, in depth and breadth, the Latin America that *is*.

Clearly and compellingly needed at the moment is a new climate of understanding between the people of the United States of America and the mounting millions of our Spanish/Portuguese-speaking friends to the south of us.

This need, moreover, extends to our Christian communities North and South.

Consider the following:

A quick review of the interpretation media during the last decade makes it clear that the mission administrators our denominations have chosen as their leaders, the missionaries chosen to be their ambassadors for Christ in Latin America and their interpreters of what was going on, have almost unanimously expressed the arrogance of the American Christian vis-a-vis the rest of the world.

Those are the words of Archie Crouch in a research paper published by the Missionary Research Library of New York. If the word “arrogance” seems too strong, as perhaps it is, our resistance to it should be tempered by the fact that what it stands for is precisely what many of our Latin American brethren feel they have seen in us.

For, like it or not, there is still “The Latin America LBJ Will Not See!”

Unmasking Yesterday

Four centuries of Roman Catholic religious and social dominance—that fact has to be reckoned with if even the slightest attempt is made to understand the present situation.

It is not new for informed and hardy spirits among the Protestants to protest Catholic abuses of power. What *is* new is for representatives of Rome to look back and to report that weaknesses once concealed are showing up—with consequences which even now it is impossible fully to measure.

In his book *Missionary Crisis and Challenge in Latin America* Robert Wood, a Maryknoll priest, candidly faults his Church in these particulars.

1. *A bad start.* The Spanish conquerors, looking for gold, were not good representatives of the love of God.

2. *A foreign clergy.* Uruguay, for example, has known times when 85 percent of its clergy were foreigners.

3. *Intolerance and denial of religious liberty.* Here Wood pins the blame chiefly on the early Spanish leadership, a device that seems difficult to reconcile with the fierceness with which Protestants were treated in Colombia as recently as the 1950's.

4. *Dissensions and conflicts within the Church.* His frank admission of feuding between the different orders of priests, or between particular orders and the bishops, does much to erode the myth of total solidarity in the Church of Rome.

5. *Inconsistencies in the conduct of leaders.* Speaking of the clergy at the end of the 19th century, Wood observes that “they fell into all kinds of abuses, and in many of the remote mountain regions the priests often had families. This resulted in what he calls “the low opinion which the laymen in Spanish America had of the clergy.”

Is it surprising, author Wood asks in effect, that as of 1965 out of the 200 million Latin Americans, 90 percent of whom are baptized Catholics, not more than 15 percent of the Church's claimed membership are active Catholics?

For us, the question arises, Can such Catholic candor be matched by Protestant objectivity in the attempt to assess the past? Notably worth pondering are points two, four, and five. In reference to point five Protestants would have to think not of the hypocrisy of violated celibacy but the sexual and financial delinquencies that too often have cast their shadow over Protestant church life.

As for *foreignness*, do we dare close our eyes to the long arm of North American missionary society paternalism that, disguised or otherwise, has appeared much more alien to our Latin brethren than we have realized?

Unraveling Today

Notwithstanding the recent appearance of a 420-page book on *Latin American Church*

Growth—on any evaluation a milestone in missionary research—many difficulties of understanding remain, many discrepancies require further examination, many theories require still further testing to determine their validity or otherwise.

What is clear is the remarkable overall numerical growth of the Protestant community. One can say this without denying the difficulty of acquiring statistics that are full and firm. To speak in round figures, a Protestant community that numbered two million at the end of World War II has expanded to 20 million.

What is equally clear is that Pentecostalism, in a variety of organizational expressions, has led the way in Latin American church growth. In Chile, for example, the official Methodist Church, from which the Methodist Pentecostal Church separated in 1909, is about the same size today—4000 members—that it was 60 years ago. Its Pentecostal offshoot, however, has grown to a membership of more than three-quarters of a million, with nearly 1500 churches.

What is not so clear is the reason why a middle-of-the-road Pentecostal body, a large percentage of whose pastors have never spoken in tongues, should far outstrip in numerical increase many charismatic groups who more typically and passionately represent the Pentecostal emphasis.

What is clear is that Brazilian Pentecostalism, in which some bodies tend to be very exclusive of other bodies, has experienced phenomenal growth in spite of this refusal to be Pentecostally ecumenical.

What is not so clear is the significance of the fact that a million of these Brazilian Pentecostals, despite this past intramural exclusiveness, have affiliated with the World Council of Churches.

What is clear—to move to another area of interest—is that Evangelism-in-Depth, beginning only a little more than 10 years ago, has had 10 national thrusts in Latin America. Its attempt, under God, to generate total involvement of the people and resources of the churches in evangelistic witness has kindled glorious fires and has met with a measure of success which, if not fulfilling all expectations, has enriched the fellowship of the churches and opened up new vistas of evangelistic responsibility.

What is not so clear is the extent to which these, and similar, evangelistic efforts have been effective *both* in gaining converts to Christ and having them rooted and nourished in the life of local congregations. Some tests made in Colombia would indicate that the second goal has been much more difficult to reach than the first.

What is clear is that Latin American Protestantism has, in the main, ducked its social responsibilities, muted its social witness. It has done this largely

under the influence of the evangelical conservatives of North America, many of whom had had a neurosis about the “social gospel.” We have flailed the phrase while fumbling with the facts. We have beaten the daylights out of the term without probing its background, grasping its real distortion, or pointing the way to biblically valid and creative alternatives.

What is not so clear is the course that will now be taken by our Latin brethren. If they fail to confront men, within the social context of their living, with the Gospel, urging them in love to that confession of Christ which makes the difference between life and death, they will fail the biblical evangel: “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.”

On the other hand, if they fail to develop, within their communities of worship and evangelism, tough minds and tender consciences, owned by believers who will take their places in society as standard-bearers for political morality, business honesty, social justice, anti-dictatorship, they will have failed the biblical ethic: “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

“Physician, heal thyself,” is the comeback that our Latin brothers may rightly toss our way. Be it so. I am not trying to be preachy but to be brotherly.

Unshackling Tomorrow

A perceptive Roman Catholic observer of the Latin American scene, Louis Colonnese, speaking generally about present relations between North and South America, has written:

The Latin Americans are demanding liberation and North Americans insist on talking to them about development. The Latin Americans are talking about what is owed them in justice and North Americans are talking about what we are willing to give them in charity. Latin Americans are talking about their determination to be more and North Americans are talking about the possibility that they may some day earn more and therefore own more.

Let that paragraph be altered a bit so as to apply more particularly to our respective Protestant communities. Then try thinking it through in Christian perspective.

Liberation—not paternalism. A sharing as between equals—not a doling out as with charity. A willingness by North American Christians to *receive* counsel from their Latin brothers—not an insistence that northerners be always on the counseling end.

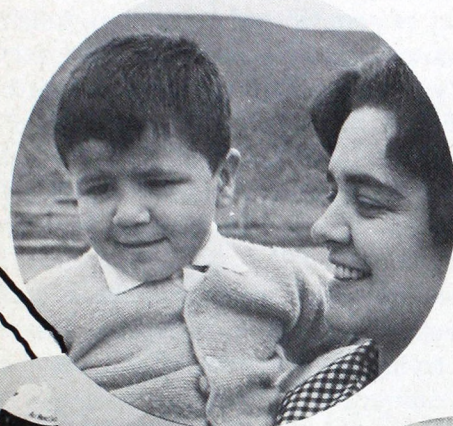
This appears to be the open road to more fruitful tomorrows in Latin America. Failing here, the result will be—more, not less, of “the Latin America LBJ will not see.”



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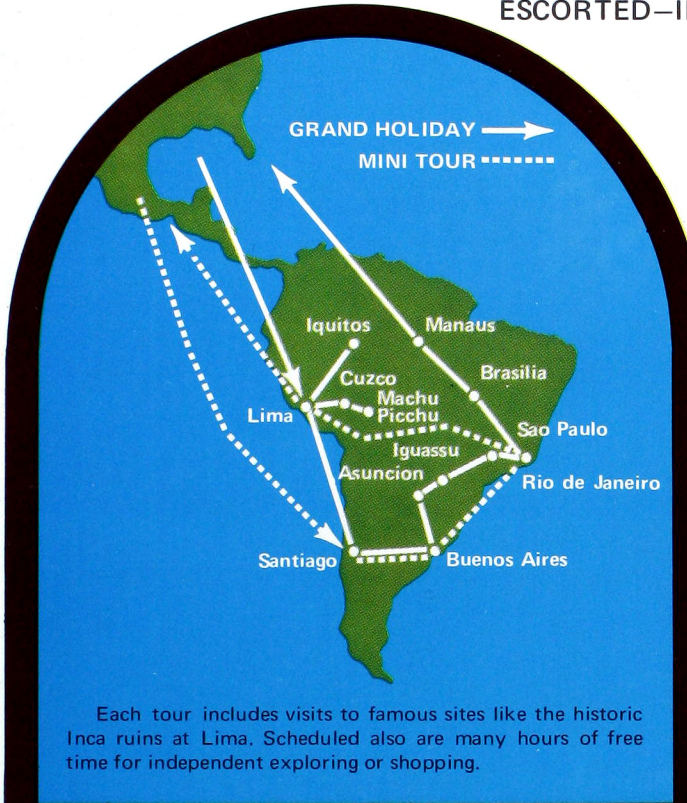
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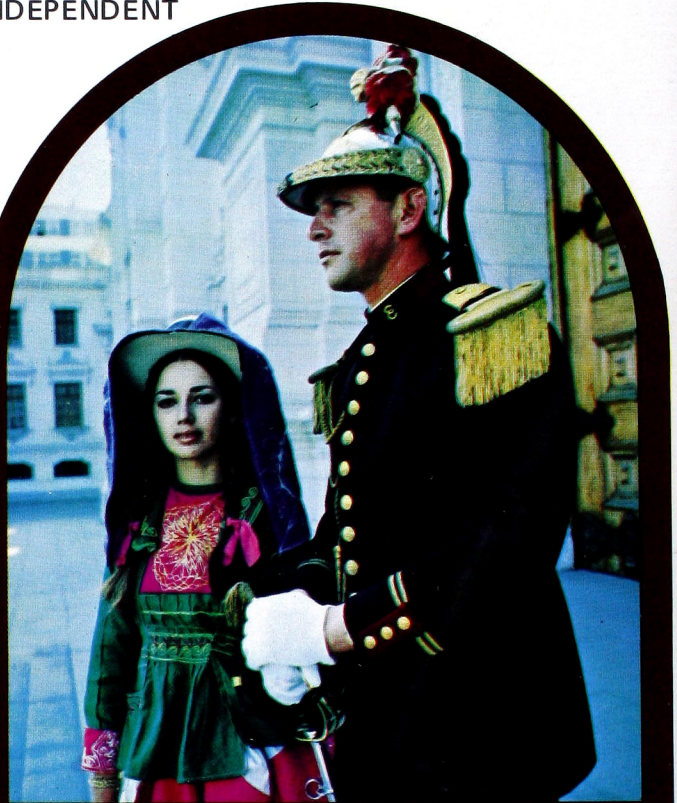
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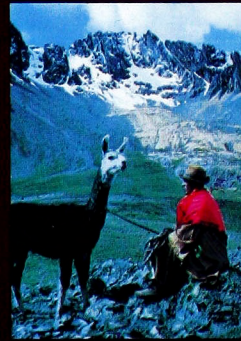
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