

## BOOK REVIEW

### MISSIONS

*What Next in Mission?* By Paul A. Hopkins. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977, 122 pp., \$3.95 paper.

Like Nathaniel we frequently ask ourselves, "Can any good thing come out of mainline church presses on missions?" Titles calling for reconstruction in missions usually end with more dropped from the category than the "-s." Others ask questions like "Is mission possible?"—implying a negative answer. We are delighted, therefore, to commend this volume from the pen of the Africa secretary of the program agency, UPUSA. It is a clear rebuke to my Nathaniel spirit and a sensitively constructed call for reevaluation of the world mission of the world Church that does not give up totally on missionaries or on evangelism in its holistic call to communicate "the gospel in its wholeness that Christ's life, death, and resurrection may transform both persons *and the society that people create*" (p. 113).

Serving a modest but needed purpose, the volume seeks to communicate to the non-professional in the North American Church the reality of Christ's mission in the world as a ministry now to be identified with a world fellowship and not simply "our missionaries" (pp. 7-8). Seven brief but pithy chapters survey the implications of that perspective as we are treated to a history of the ebb and flow of the Church in mission (pp. 16-41), the growth of the Church in the third world (chap. 3), and the questions it now sees as integral to its task—justice (chap. 4), self-integrity and the call for a moratorium (chap. 5), affluence as a western barrier to ministry (chap. 6).

Of particular significance to evangelicals is the author's reluctance to raise these questions without relating them to the classic concerns that motivate the framework of the Lausanne Covenant—the 2.7 billion unreached (pp. 52-54), the American worship of success (pp. 91-95), and the crisis of faith that Hopkins designates "the great problem of the church in America" (p. 109). His final chapter swings from congregation to missionary and mission agency to the body of Christ as he proposes a methodology for renewal to meet new challenges.

This does not mean the evangelical will walk away from the book totally satisfied with the treatment. The topics themselves are as disquieting as when Escobar and Padilla raised them at Lausanne and an *ad hoc* "radical missions" consensus gave them vocalization there. The security one feels when his list of "safe" authorities is quoted (like R. Allen, H. Kane and R. Winter) will be challenged by the addition of material from J. Miguez-Bonino, Martin Luther King, Jr., and W. A. Visser't Hooft, who are quoted without critical interaction.

Perhaps two areas in particular will be found to be the least satisfying by evangelicals. The author's treatment of the liberal-fundamentalist controversy over missions in the 1920s and 1930s downplays the radically non-Christian dimensions of the *Re-Thinking Missions* report and its attitude toward the world's religions as more of "an appreciative attitude toward other faiths" and the work of H. Kraemer at the International Missionary Council's 1938 Madras meeting as an argument "for the traditional principles

of the missionary movement" (p. 34). Both these judgments do not seem to me to be at all fair to the intent of the Hocking commission or to Kraemer or accurate as a theological judgment of them. Flowing from this is the too-breezy dismissal by Hopkins of the rise of fundamentalism in this period and an implicit criticism of this whole affair as creating reactions that set back "reform in the missionary movement" and "hindered the life and development of the younger churches" (why does he retain that outmoded term, "younger"? (p. 35). Agencies, in the face of loss of credibility in the eyes of the conservatives, turned to status quo. An alternative reading of the history, and much more satisfying to me, is the judgment of N. B. Stonehouse (*J. Gresham Machen. A Biographical Memoir* [1955]), who sees the mission agency (in this case, Hopkins' own) as a much more direct theological participant than Hopkins' administrative emphasis portrays (pp. 469-492).

The second area is not so much disagreement with what is stated but with what is left unstated. What is the place of the cross-cultural evangelist in today's new face for missions? Though for much of his information regarding the nearly three billion "unreached peoples" he depends on the work of Winter, we do not hear clearly either Winter's argument that the vast percentage of these people cannot be reached in any other way except through cross-cultural evangelists or any interaction by Hopkins to Winter's thesis. He warns wisely against the captive relationships, the western cultural imperialism, the American superiority and racism, that lie behind the call for moratorium. He decries those concepts of evangelism that for too long have meant telling spirits with ears the way of salvation. But the only call we hear coming out of this is not for chastened, church-related evangelists from west and east, but for missionary specialists—doctors, nurses, agriculturalists, etc., and then still flowing from west to east, rather than also vice versa (pp. 113-114). Can the full body life Hopkins calls on us to seek in the renewal and unity of the world Church be achieved without the presence of cross-cultural evangelists there *and* here? Can a renewed body be renewed without the sharing of evangelistic gifts as well? And what of those areas (for example, in the Muslim world) where there is, in actuality, no body as yet? What of those areas where people are not so much "unreached" as "unincorporatable"?

We commend this layman's introduction to the new face of missions. With the exceptions noted, it should prove of great service in the evangelical community and to the Church at large.

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