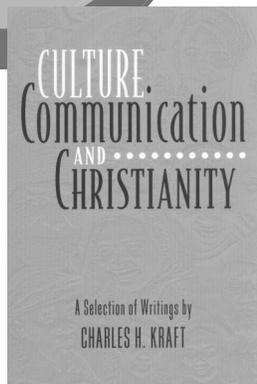




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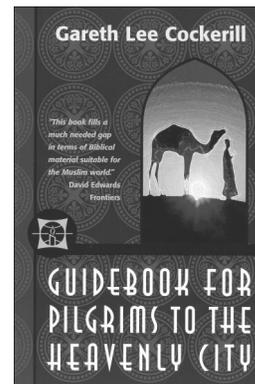
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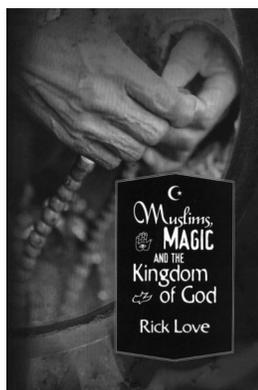
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From the Editor's Desk



In our last issue we very definitely introduced again the existence of mission frontiers which are related to, but different from, the Unreached Peoples Frontier as it is usually conceived. That is, if we recognize the existence of the “unreached people” of the scientifically educated community of, say, Hyderabad, that recognition in turn simply points at an intermediate task. Then, unwrapping that task we quickly find the frontier we addressed last time—“The Religion of Science.”

This time, however, “other” frontiers hove into view, such as the profound and truly awesome warning contained in Rice’s comments on the virtual collapse of the Evangelical Awakening in England. His study of this startled him into drastic insights about a parallel situation, the church in India. But his comments can just as easily startle all of us as we view what may be beyond the amazing current success of the Gospel in China, Africa, and Latin America.

As a matter of fact Rice’s comments are equally applicable to the apparent strength of the Evangelical revival that is taking place in America today.

Bluntly, this frontier—the question of whether we are building enduring Christianity or not—in one sense outranks all other frontiers, including the Unreached Peoples Frontier. That is, what is the wisdom of avidly building a widespread movement to Christ which is going to collapse tomorrow into Gospel resistance?

Notice how Rice’s comments cast quite a shadow over Philip Jenkin’s (*The Next Christendom*) rosy picture of the future of Christianity being in the Global South. But it isn’t just Jenkins. Long before the book appeared missions leaders had been hailing the splurge of growth on the mission field as at least a big thing.

My own thoughts about this dread paradox of wild success leading on into desperate failure are as follows:

There are at least two dimensions of knowing God in Christ. There is an emotional awe in worship and daily life, call it an *awareness* of God, and there is an intellectual *insight* into Who He is. Is it possible to be aware of God with very little accurate insight into Who He is? Yes. Is it possible to possess a lot of insight into the nature of God with little hour-by-hour awareness of Him? Yes.

Awareness arises in worship and in daily devotions and in hour-by-hour God-consciousness, in “practicing the presence of God.” It is the result of “praying without ceasing.” It flourishes in times of true revival and awakening.

But we need to be cautioned by the fact that while authentic, and enormous spiritual revival underlay the First Crusade, that tragic effort swept thousands of ordinary people into a headlong and earnest effort that became a scourge and a scandal—clearly, for lack of *insight* into the nature of the person of God.

We are well acquainted with the opposite, where seminaries become cemeteries, hoarding massive information in their libraries about God’s nature but handling all that holy information with a professionalism that can easily replace any real awareness of the Living God.

So what is the answer? We must begin by recognizing the all-important necessity of *both* awareness and insight. We must be willing to suspect insight without awareness and awareness without insight.

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4 From the Editor's Desk

It is fair to say that the hallmark of the Evangelical movement in its early days was its stress on authentic, emotional experience. Sections of Evangelicalism today actually define Evangelicalism in purely intellectual terms, in a list of doctrinal truths to which we assent. There, however, we may find little or no reference to the central feature of the Evangelical Awakening of the 18th Century (which produced Evangelicalism), namely "assurance of salvation," and, for many, "a second work of grace" that was "here and now" and highly emotional in its manifestation.

Today, that stress on "experience" (not intellectual knowledge) has moved on into the Pentecostal and Charismatic and Apostolic spheres, while the older Evangelicals look on askance, holding tight to their less emotional forms of worship and their lists of doctrines.

But let's be honest. Although some Evangelicals have moved from *awareness to insight*, far fewer have gained them both, and many of us may at times play fast and loose with both. That sorry fact has often been pointed out by citing two books, Carl F. H. Henry's *The Uneasy Conscience of the Modern Fundamentalist*, and Mark Noll's *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*.

Why have Evangelicals been slow to add insight to awareness? Even building on the incomparable "insight" into God's nature and glory which we can see in "the face of Jesus Christ"—His



character and ministry—does God not want us to employ heart and mind in updating the limited understanding of those times? That is, should we not just try to understand what Jesus meant by the things He said back then, but seek to fathom what He would have said back then if those people had known what we today know about germs, for example.

Perhaps because the tightly-held theological truths which are usually employed to define Evangelicalism today constitute only rudimentary insight without the additional glory of God to be seen in the discoveries of a whole stream of devout believers working away in the realm of understanding nature (Kepler, Maxwell, Faraday, Newton, etc.). Our knowledge of God has not by any means kept pace with the daily increasing evidences of His glory, because those evidences are seen as merely secular achievements of science.

Years ago I was asked to write a review for *Christianity Today* of five books that had recently come out on the subject of Evangelicalism. The one I liked the best was *The Evangelical Renaissance* by Donald Bloesch. I ended my lengthy review by saying that "you can no more define Evangelicalism by citing doctrines than you can eat soup with a fork," or something like that.

However, as crucial it is that we hang on to the historic Evangelical *awareness* of God, we must seriously and even urgently add a competent intellectual grasp of God's glory in the much larger world known to modern man. It is absolutely tragic that millions of keen thinkers would be truly awed into a quasi-religious scientism through their contact with God's Book of Creation, while still other millions would be caught up in God's Book of Scripture to the point where they elevate it as a magical object which must somehow provide an explanation of all later exploration of the universe.

Clearly God calls us by heart and mind, not heart or mind. Yet the predominant character of much of the rapidly spreading "faith" around the world (and around America) today consists of multitudes being entranced by the availability of the promises of God unrelated to a true and thorough awareness of and insight into the nature of God and His creative handiwork.

Ralph D. Winter

The IJFM is published in the name of the International Student Leaders Coalition for Frontier Missions, a fellowship of younger leaders committed to the purposes of the twin consultations of Edinburgh 1980: *The World Consultation on Frontier Missions* and the *International Student Consultation on Frontier Missions*. As an expression of the ongoing concerns of Edinburgh 1980, the IJFM seeks to:

- ☞ promote intergenerational dialogue between senior and junior mission leaders;
- ☞ cultivate an international fraternity of thought in the development of frontier missiology;
- ☞ highlight the need to maintain, renew, and create mission agencies as vehicles for frontier missions;
- ☞ encourage multidimensional and interdisciplinary studies;
- ☞ foster spiritual devotion as well as intellectual growth; and
- ☞ advocate "A Church for Every People."

Mission frontiers, like other frontiers, represent boundaries or barriers beyond which we must go yet beyond which we may not be able to see clearly and boundaries which may even be disputed or denied. Their study involves the discovery and evaluation of the unknown or even the reevaluation of the known. But unlike other frontiers, mission frontiers is a subject specifically concerned to explore and exposit areas and ideas and insights related to the glorification of God in all the nations (peoples) of the world, "to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God." (Acts 26:18)

Subscribers and other readers of the IJFM (due to ongoing promotion) come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Mission professors, field missionaries, young adult mission mobilizers, college librarians, mission executives, and mission researchers all look to the IJFM for the latest thinking in frontier missiology.