

over the cognitive. The upshot was that religion became a matter of personal preference that had little or nothing to do with communal learning.

The book effectively illustrates the fact that secularization took place progressively across generations with committed Christians in the leadership. That leadership in nearly all cases appears to have been sincere in setting forth Christian platitudes, but as time progressed, the substance undergirding the platitudes became weaker and weaker until it finally ceased to exist.

Burtchaell's massive study is must reading for every person who is interested in the future of Christian higher education. While following in the line of research opened up by Marsden and others, this volume will hopefully not be the last in that sequence. It is to be hoped that some scholar will follow the challenge set forth by Burtchaell and examine the secularization process in the "even more interesting stories" of those schools belonging to denominations that are still quite closely tied to their founding organizations. In addition, Burtchaell never sought to provide "instruction on how to avoid the failures of the past (and present)." As he puts it, "that is not the purpose of this book" (851). While that is true, we look forward in anticipation to a volume that does undertake the task.

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Carro, Daniel, and Richard F. Wilson, eds. *Contemporary Gospel Accents: Doing Theology in Africa, Asia, Southeast Asia, and Latin America*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996. xv + 142 pp. Paperback, \$21.95.

In 1995 the Baptist International Conference on Theological Education was convened in Buenos Aires in conjunction with the Baptist World Alliance Congress. The commission responsible for organizing the meeting felt that there was a "profound need for a deliberate contextualization of our faith"(ix) and invited fourteen Baptist theological educators from the "southern" zones of earth: Africa, Asia, Southeast Asia, and Latin America, to "speak for themselves." This book is comprised of the fourteen papers presented at the session, two introductory essays, a concluding summary, and a brief essay on the gospel and culture.

Obviously the theologians involved responded to the challenge and utilized the occasion to voice their concerns openly and freely. R. F. Wilson of Mercer University, in an introductory essay titled "Contextual Theology and Global Baptists," which appears to be motivated by a concern to prepare the "Western" church to accept the principle and reality of contextualization, and possibly also to counter the shock "which some Westerners might experience upon reading the papers," wrote, "Until now there have been no attempts to explore Baptist confession and practice in light of contextual theology" (10). Obviously some Baptist communities have done quite a little contextualizing, and this statement, in itself, sounds mild enough, but it really serves notice of the magnitude of the change some felt necessary.

Perhaps the flavor of the conference is better conveyed by a sampling of the kind of statements that recurred during the conference than by an attempted description.

"North Atlantic theologies are regarded as 'central theologies'; . . . others . . . are discerned as peripheral to the main issues of theology" (13).

"A third aspect of our conference is a protest against unwanted and unnecessary interference in the development of our 'southern' theologies" (14).

"We incite our desire to speak for ourselves" (15).

"[We] . . . have been other-defined people. . . . For too long we have been treated as a cultural, spiritual, and intellectual *tabula rasa* upon which everyone wants to put his mark" (21).

Our theological curricula "should include courses that affirm the dignity and worth of every African. The 'bulldozer mentality' of western missionaries which seeks to uproot everything African in order to make . . . room for reconstruction . . . using western design and materials, should be rejected" (38).

"Any talk of the . . . 'contextualization' of the gospel . . . must begin with talk about redeeming the . . . church, with all its accretions, from what I term 'the Babylonian captivity of the West'" (63).

"Western individualism—including the idea that beliefs are personal and do not change one's participation in the larger community—created difficulties for converts to Christianity" (64).

But there are also many balancing voices which point to the dangers of an overreaction to Western influence, and of uncontrolled programs of indigenization and contextualization. Examples:

"The colonial mentality of Christianity in Asia has given rise to indigenous and contextual theologies, that often reacted against western theologies, rather than being informed by them. One cannot ignore this aspect of Asian theology while talking of contextualization. . . . There is a danger, however, of being diverted from biblical truths for the sake of reaction" (60).

In the summarizing chapter, entitled "What We Have Heard," Wilson writes, "We have heard clearly two common themes. We have heard of the significant impact missionaries from Europe and North America have had on the shape of gospel interpretations in the South. . . . [W]e have also heard significant unrest about the captivity of gospel interpretations by European and North American cultures" (120).

The papers are uneven in length and quality, but those in each group serve to convey a feeling for the ethos and cultural/religious circumstances in the areas they represent. The value of this book, coming as it does from theological educators of one of the largest, most widespread, and conservative Protestant families of churches, is the clear and uninhibited voice it gives to the need for contextualization in an intentional effort to develop forms of religious expression and formulations of the gospel that engage and are culturally relevant in particular communities. Suggestions are made in many of the essays regarding possible ways forward, but the strength of this book lies not so much in positive construction as in the articulation of a *cri de coeur* for change and authenticity.

This book should be useful in generating awareness of the serious need for contextualization in mission courses, and perhaps even more so in helping to prepare prospective missionaries for the shocks and surprises they are likely to encounter in the churches of the two-thirds world, if they have eyes to see and ears to hear.