

***City of God, City of Satan:***

***A Biblical Theology of the Urban Church***

by Robert C. Linthicum (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1991) XIII,  
330 pages, paper back. Subject Index and Scripture Index.

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The book has thirteen chapters in three major parts. Part one sets out the theological proposition that the city is the habitation of God and a "battle ground" where God and Satan are engaged in constant spiritual warfare. In the second part, the author postulates the vicarious death of Jesus Christ as the ground on which the church builds its faith and practice in the city. The last part presents four elements which the author considers as the source of power to sustain city ministry. i.e. personal spiritual formation, participation in community, maintenance of a vision, and faithfulness rather than search for success.

Dr. Linthicum has made some very striking theological insights which contribute to the quality of his work. One of those insights is the way he finds in the very name "Jerusalem" an etymological concept of the city as the abode of both God and Satan. This view is opposed to the traditional interpretation of Jerusalem as the *habitation of peace*. It is in this other interpretation that the author attributes the inherent dualistic antagonism from which stems all sorts of evils in the city.

Another striking feature of this book is the author's holistic approach which is exhibited in his exegesis, interpretation and application. While the author acknowledges the individual's responsibility in social evil, he also contends that there are institutionalized evil systems in the city which require that the city be transformed by God just like the individuals who indwell it. The transformation has to affect all dimensions including spiritual, social and physical aspects of the city.

Yet in spite of his radical view of evil in the city, the author remains optimistic. He views the city as part of the world which has been reconciled to God through the vicarious death of Jesus Christ. For this redemption to be realized in the city, "presence, prayer, practice and proclamation" have to take place. Those who have been reconciled need "personal spiritual formation, participation in community, maintenance of vision" and faithfulness rather than search for success. The last point here is very important. It calls for humility and dependence on God for the result. In a society where success is the motto for everything, the shift of emphasis to faithfulness is a unique and commendable insight.

The deplorable conditions of life in African cities as well as social and economic injustice call for the involvement of the church. Linthicum gives a theological challenge as well as practical guidelines as to why and how the church should

participate in reclaiming the cities of Africa for God. The author gives yet another very serious challenge that the church need not only deal with individuals in the cities but also encounter the institutionalized systems of injustice with the Gospel of justice and love. As the author puts it: "the church is also called to put its body where its mouth is" (p. 174).

The book will help the church to understand the biblical challenge for Urban Ministry and the responsibilities that the ministry entails. It is a readable book that is recommended for theological institutions in Africa.

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***Christianity and the Nature of Science:  
a Philosophical Investigation***

*by J. P. Moreland (Grand Rapids, MI, USA: Baker  
Book House, 1989) 170 pages*

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In this companion volume to his acclaimed *Scaling the Secular City*, J. P. Moreland, professor of philosophy of religion at Talbot School of Theology (Biola University), sets out a philosophical apologetic for the relationship between science and Christianity. Moreland is a philosopher first, a scientist second. This makes for a somewhat unique approach to this not-so-new topic. Whereas many such books dealing with the tension between these two subjects have been written from the perspective of science, and hence unwittingly yield the "high ground" to the discipline by defending according to science's own rules; Moreland's approach is clear from his title. It is the very nature of science that intrigues him, not simply what science says or does. The result is a philosophical apologetic which levels the playing field by calling into question the very underpinnings of science, viz. its own thinking about itself.

Moreland begins with science's own definitions, and shows that not only does modern science not always live according to its own prescriptions, but that there is no clear line of demarcation between science and non-scientific disciplines. Philosophical and theological concepts, for instance, are very much a part of science, he argues, in that science is ultimately based upon philosophical presuppositions. This is a polite way of saying that scientists are biased, and bring those biases into their science. He likewise demonstrates that science is very much a

part of theology and philosophy, because rather than being inductive in its approach to problems, e.g. beginning with observations, science often follows more of an eclectic model that utilizes differing methodologies, including educated guesses. He argues that science not only is limited as the "end-all, be-all" of knowledge, but that *scientism* (faith in science as the last word of truth and rationality) is based on myth, not reality.

Moreland's conclusion is that both "science and theology...interact on common ground" (13). In this sense, they might be more compatible than they often appear, and more than perhaps some modern scientists would like to admit!

Moreland's *raison d'être* for writing this book is that he believes science to be the most critical influence upon the world today. Hence, instead of running from it, Moreland believes that Christians must come to terms with it. He is against what he terms "easy," or "neat," positions which attempt to sweep apparent conflicts under the rug, or worse pretend they do not exist. In this he has succeeded admirably. Moreland's defense is superb--one could even say, brilliant. Unfortunately, in the process of avoiding those easy, neat solutions, he also has avoided being easy, period. Moreland is a difficult "read," and this is unfortunate because he deserves to be read. While declaring on the one hand that this book is a "serious attempt to explore areas of interactions among science, philosophy, and theology" (14), he defines his target audience as possibly being "informal church or parachurch educational activities" (15). The "serious" are content to chew the tough stuff; but most of us, accustomed to learning by sound-bytes, need some of those easy, neat, solutions. It would seem that the author needs to decide just who it is he is trying to reach. Moreland's ideas are too important to be kept a secret.

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***How Long, O Lord?***

*by D. A. Carson (Leicester, England:  
Inter-Varsity Press, 1990) 275 pages*

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One of the great theological and philosophical problems facing all Christians is the problem of evil. There have been many volumes written on this deep mystery and Donald Carson, Professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, has added a unique and helpful book.

The purpose of this book is to aid Christians in preparing themselves for times of suffering. It is "a book of preventative medicine." It is not primarily a theological examination of texts related to evil and suffering but a practical and personal discussion designed to enable Christians to respond to suffering in the correct manner when it does occur. The author briefly rejects several unbiblical and sub-biblical views on suffering and evil. These include the views that there is no God, that God is not omnipotent, that God is omnipotent but does not involve himself in the affairs of this world and that the knowledge of evil is necessary and in that sense good.

The second section, the largest in the book, "probes several biblical themes important to the problem of evil and suffering." These subjects include poverty, war, natural disasters, discipline by God, persecution of Christians, hell, illness and death. An important chapter in this section is chapter 8 which discusses the realized kingdom of God and the coming kingdom, and what these contribute to our understanding of suffering. The author's point is that God is just and while justice may not be done in this world it will be accomplished in the end. We must adopt the long view. Chapter 9 is an examination of the book of Job. This chapter was given at the NFTC Student Symposium in 1990. Carson's understanding of this book is that God never answers Job's questions concerning his suffering. There will always remain some mysteries to suffering but we must respond as Job did, in faith that God has the answers.

The final section contains the "meat" of the book. Dr. Carson proposes that the Bible teaches both of the following truths:

1. God is absolutely sovereign, but his sovereignty never functions in such a way that human responsibility is curtailed, minimized, or mitigated.
2. Human beings are morally responsible creatures - they significantly choose, rebel, obey, believe, defy, make decisions, and so forth, and they are rightly held accountable for such actions; but this characteristic never functions so as to make God absolutely contingent.

Carson calls this position "compatibilism" and stresses that both are true and must be held simultaneously. He offers support from the Bible for both, convincingly demonstrating that these truths must be held together. From this proposition the author then says,

God stands behind good and evil in somewhat different ways; that is, he stands behind good and evil asymmetrically. To put it bluntly, God stands behind evil in such a way that not even evil takes place outside the bounds of his sovereignty, yet the evil is not morally chargeable to him: it is always chargeable to secondary agents, to secondary causes. On the other hand,

God stands behind good in such a way that it not only takes place within the bounds of his sovereignty, but it is always chargeable to him, and only derivatively to secondary agents.

The final chapter contains some applications of compatibilism, notably in prayer and evangelism. The section on prayer is a bit confusing. He rejects the idea that since God is sovereign in everything our prayers must never be more than acknowledging that his will is best but then says we should pray in line with God's sovereign plan. Is not acknowledging God's will is best and praying in line with His will the same thing? The book also includes an appendix of some thoughts concerning AIDS and a Christian response to this disease. This is an essential topic for all of us to reflect upon in light of the growing epidemic worldwide.

At the beginning of this review the adjective 'unique' was used to describe this book. After reading this book some similarities to *The Problem of Pain* by C.S. Lewis and *Where is God When it Hurts* by Philip Yancy came to mind. All three are popular treatments of the subject of pain and suffering. This book differs in that it deals more directly with the biblical evidence, offers more footnotes (though they are put at the end of the book and do not detract from the reading) and includes several real life stories to enliven the reading.

The subjects touched upon in this book are complex. The subject of evil must include a discussion of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility as well as the freedom of man. Obviously a book of some 275 pages, including many illustrations, cannot present opposing viewpoints and involve itself in long, detailed discussions of the strengths and weakness of each position. But then that is not the purpose of this book. It is meant to prepare believers for enduring the suffering that at one time or another we will all face and with that purpose in view it succeeds admirably. It is a beautiful blend of theological reflection with practical advice and suggestions.

Each chapter concludes with approximately seven questions for further study and thought and if completed would lay a solid foundation for weathering the times of storm. This book should be bought and read by believers struggling with questions concerning God's providence and mankind's responsibilities, by believers farsighted enough to prepare themselves for distressful times and by believers who want to examine the edges of the deep mystery of evil in a good God's world.

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***A Study Of Conversion Among The Angas Of Plateau State Of  
Nigeria With Emphasis On Christianity***

***by Daniel Nimeir Wambutda (Bern: Peter Lang:1991) 238 pages***

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Perhaps the most significant recent study done on the Angas (properly Ngas) people of Plateau State in Nigeria, this book is written by the respected Angas theologian, historian and social anthropologist, Dr. Daniel Wambutda. In the preface the author states that his purpose in writing is to correct the misrepresentation of Angas ethnology written by colonial anthropologists like C. K. Meek, H. D. Foulkes and C. G. Ames. He also provides an explanation for the phenomenon of Angas conversion to Christianity, which, (as the title suggests) is the central issue of the book.

In the first chapter, Wambutda provides a history of the Ngas from the pre-Jihad period to modern times. Relying on oral tradition, he suggests that the Ngas are one of the Afro-Asian Chadic-speaking people who lived in Central Sahara before moving to Borno, from where they migrated to Nyam, then Sara "north of the present day Ngas land." Chapter two presents a detailed analysis of Ngas social structure before the advent of Christianity. The social structure was based on the clan system. The clan was centered around the concept of Nkara. Chapter three then gives the religious background of the Ngas, based on the Ngas social structure. Religion is communal. The Ngas are a very religious people. As Wambutda has shown, "it would have been virtually impossible to conceive of existence in Ngas without religion" (p 138).

It was to this religious tribe on the Jos Plateau in Nigeria that the Cambridge University Missionary Party (CUMP) were attracted in the early 1900s. The story of the encounter is presented in Chapter Four. The last chapter provides us with the crux of the study, an explanation of the conversion of the Ngas to Christianity. Social scientists, especially instrumentalists such as Robin Horton, Ifeka-Moller, and Humphrey Fisher, have offered their insights, which the author effectively summarises. But they have only scratched the surface. What has eluded these scholars, and even some scholars of religion like the author himself, is the fact that there is always a power-encounter whenever Christianity meets other religions. It is not just a question of Christianity, perhaps by use of superior technology, uprooting the other religions, but there is also a battle between God and the gods of such religions. This encounter can lead to the defeat of these gods (under the control of Satan), or the other way round. The influence of these social scientists on the author, as much as can be seen, is in according undue credit to Pax Britannica as

a catalyst for the Christianization of the Ngas people. Also characteristic of many African cultural nationalists and their European counterparts, the author presents Ngas traditional religion as if it was a lifeless museum piece devoid of negative and harmful power. For instance, the author presents go-ne-pinwa, which are actually spirits of witchcraft, as having salutary purposes.

Of particular interest to me as a young church historian is the lack of critical analysis of mission policies. The CUMP missionaries were rather paternalistic in their relationships with the Ngas, thereby fostering what may be termed 'rice Christianity.' But the Sunday United Mission (SUM British Branch) who took over from the CUMP had a different policy. SUM had adopted the theories of Henry Venn who had argued that a missionary's main role was the establishment of a self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating church. For instance, the SUM authorities never paid native evangelists, believing that the local people themselves should support these evangelists. This explains why the Ngas protested the CUMP hand-over of that area to the SUM in 1930; hitherto all the native evangelists and teachers were on the pay roll of the CUMP.

This book is the author's Ph.D. dissertation (University of Ife, 1978). Apparently it was not reworked before it was sent to the publishers, as can be seen in the preliminaries, and typographical errors also abound. Also, the price is very high. Nevertheless the book throws fresh light on attempts by early missionaries to Christianize pagan areas within the muslim emirates of Northern Nigeria, a neglected topic in historical reconstruction in both European missionary and African historiographies. This is a good book, and will be treasured by scholars in theology, history and social anthropology.

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***Proclaiming Christ in Christ's Way: Studies in Integral Evangelism***  
*edited by Vinay Samuel and Albrecht Hauser (Oxford: Regnum Books,*  
*1989) 228 pages; £9.95*

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"Integral evangelism", according to the contributors to this book, is a new initiative in evangelical theological reflection and action. The integration intended is that elusive one between the proclamation of the gospel and social transformation. After the earlier western rejection of attempts at this integration, some non-western

evangelicals have expressed a new interest following the Lausanne gathering of 1974. The essays in this collection set out the theology of this evangelism--a blend of evangelical and ecumenical concerns, in what John Stott in his comments calls the "overlap" in the discussion, a discussion with which he himself is comfortable. The Stuttgart Statement of 1987, contained at the end of the essays, is reportedly the high-water mark of this theological expression. German evangelical Walter Arnold, Executive Secretary for Missions and Ecumenical Relations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Württemberg, is singled out as the person who has most ably understood the movement and facilitated its spread. The collection of essays is a *Festschrift* in his honour.

Christian leaders from non-western lands have taken the initiative in developing new models as: (1) indigenous to non-western cultures rather than copies or transplants, (2) committed to effective integration, (3) manifesting spontaneous response to God's call, (4) sharply focused on the poor, an experiential knowledge of Christ, and aimed at social transformation, (5) products of those gifted to reflect theologically, (6) concerned for unity of the Body, (7) contributory toward a movement that God has brought together, and (8) reflecting a central theme of salvation in relation to history.

The book contains twelve essays and three supplements that intend to portray the nature of integral evangelism as it was expressed between the Lausanne meeting of 1974 and the Stuttgart Statement of 1987. In Chapter 3, Christopher Sugden of the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (one of the organizational offspring of the movement), traces the development between these two events. Rene Padilla and Samuel Escobar triggered the explosion at Lausanne, says Sugden. The affirmation of social involvement as part of the church's mission was firmly implanted in the Lausanne Covenant. Other constructive consultations followed: Gospel and Culture at Willowbank, Bermuda in 1978; the Consultation on World Evangelisation in Pattaya, Thailand and the Simple Lifestyle Conference in London in 1980; the International Association for Mission Studies in Bangalore, India in 1981; the First Consultation of Evangelical Mission Theologians from the Two-Thirds World in Bangkok and the Consultation on the Relation between Evangelism and Social Responsibility at Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1982; the Wheaton Consultation on the Church in Response to Human Needs in 1983; the Second Consultation of Evangelical Mission Theologians from the Two-Thirds World in Cuernavaca, Mexico, in 1984; and, finally, the Stuttgart Consultation on Evangelism of 1987.

The conceptual developments identified by Sugden are represented in the essays that follow his historic survey:

1. The church needs to be closely related to culture, transforming and enriching it.



2. Culturally conditioned presuppositions such as those of the West need to be challenged.
3. People groups, not just individuals, need to be considered in the evangelistic task.
4. The total setting in which people live is the context of concern to evangelism; this includes political, economic and social situations.
5. Third world interests in holistic evangelism have often been circumscribed by a North American agenda.
6. Good works are a necessary fruit of and expression of faith in Christ.
7. Every evangelistic activity has a social dimension, and every social activity has an evangelistic dimension.
8. Social concern is a bridge to evangelism.
9. There is need of a two-thirds world evangelical theology and missiology.
10. Transformation is defined as "the change from a condition of human existence contrary to God's purposes to one in which people are able to enjoy fulness of life in harmony with God" (p. 42).
11. There is a need to overcome the dichotomy between the spiritual and material.
12. The traditional evangelical spiritualization of texts about the poor in scripture that made them refer to "all people in their spiritual poverty towards God " has been rejected (p. 44).
13. The poor should be the focus of evangelistic concern.
14. Evangelism can never be separated from justice.

The remaining essays flesh out some of these issues under such general themes as: critiquing current mission trends, gospel and culture, plurality and secularism, and ethics and ideology.

The critique of missions comes from Kwame Bediako of Ghana and the African-American evangelical William Parnell. Both are opposed to North American domination of evangelistic discussion. Bediako deplores the way evangelization is in the hands of specialists and para-church organizations with access to funds, personnel and technology, instead of local churches. The great victory of Lausanne in 1974, he continues, was a victory of theology over strategy in evangelization. Yet the victory was deflated at Pattaya where a "sociological construct" again dominated over a "full-orbed holistic and theological vision of the Christian mission" (p. 58). The right kind of people, not just the right kind of strategies, are needed for world evangelization, he asserts. The study of Christian mission history can develop such people more than the prevalent study of anthropology.

Though the chapters on gospel and culture provide little that is new, one contribution made by Vinay Samuel, general secretary of Partnership in Mission, India, provides for a conceptual link in the troublesome relationship between the

individual and culture. Religion, says Samuel, is the link, a unifying third level of study usually ignored by the secular scholar. Revelation in particular provides important themes such as the image of God in man, the Constitution of Israel, the People of God, the Church, the Kingdom of God, the World, the Incarnation, and the work of the Holy Spirit. Hermeneutics and communications also figure into the linkage.

David Gitari, Bishop of the Diocese of Mount Kenya East, discusses the nature of primary, or incarnational, evangelism among the Boran, Gabbra and Rendille of Marsabit District in Northern Kenya. Recognizing the past errors of evangelism wrapped in western culture, he sees the challenge as avoiding the same errors in this Anglican approach to unreached peoples. His essay is a combination of insight and confession that portrays Anglican reappraisal of the necessity of buildings, and the nature of church government, the priesthood and their model of episcopacy.

Essays on plurality and secularism also make valuable contributions. Reminding readers that the Bible account unfolds in a religiously plural environment, Michael Nazir-Ali of Pakistan, current head of the Church Missionary Society in Britain, presents the negative assessment which the Bible usually accords religious systems. Yet, he hopes for a theology of the Word that can bridge the systems. He proposes an agenda characterized by integral evangelism for each of several themes: salvation-history, church and state, morality, law, prophetic Christian witness, reciprocity, and tolerance.

Raymond Fung of Hong Kong, evangelism secretary of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches, draws on six years of residence in Geneva to discuss the re-evangelism of Europe. Using the parable of the lost son in Luke 15:11-31 as a model, he states: There are signs of people awakening to the falsity of secularism everywhere. When this happens, it will be crucial for evangelization whether the Christian church behaves like the father or like the elder son in the parable (p. 147). He goes on to recommend three elements of a strategy for Europe based on Isaiah 65.

Per Harling, secretary of evangelism for the Church of Sweden and also associated with the WCC, views music as "secularization's liturgy for interpreting life" (p. 156), and in a more narrowly focused essay shows how his church has profitably used this three-dimensional medium of communication consisting of music, lyrics, and more recently video.

Ethics and ideology provide another unifying theme for this volume. Showing the clear grounding of Christian ethics in revelation that embraces both creation and redemption, Ronald Sider, professor of theology at Eastern Baptist Seminary, Philadelphia, explores six implications:

1. Kingdom values are normative and possible for Christians.

2. Faithfulness, not short-term effectiveness, is the Christian's first concern.
3. The Christian community is always a disturbing counter-culture.
4. Christians should lead others in practising Kingdom values.
5. Christians summon all to Christ's standards but do not expect utopia.
6. Every part of Scripture is to be used in the further development of this Christian ethic.

Peter Kuzmic, principal of the Biblijsko-Teoloski Institut of Yugoslavia, speaking to the antagonisms, anathemas, prejudices and caricatures that have risen up in the Christian-Marxist encounter, wonders if these two enemies cannot meet. He offers an

Eastern European evangelical perspective with an ecumenical concern. While outlining basic principles and examining possibilities and limitations, he reminds evangelicals, who have been on the margins of dialogue, that they are in a unique position to offer something new in the Christian-Marxists dialogue, something missing from liberal agendas. That contribution is its quality of personal regeneration, dynamic Christian community, and living concern for the poor and needy.

Rene Padilla of Argentina, general secretary of the Latin American Theological Fraternity, in familiar fashion relates what he calls the political dimension of the kingdom of God to the political dimension of mission. This relationship shows that:

1. The starting point for Christian political involvement is God's revelation in Christ.
2. The Kingdom demands a revolution of values for the fostering of justice above security, and peace above economic growth, requiring the conscientization of citizens, the cross-fertilization of nations, and the transformation of all.
3. The church must be restructured as a community providing sacrificial service for the gospel rather than as a colonial left-over or a modern-day replica of transnational corporations.
4. There must be renewed spirituality that unites evangelism and social responsibility in the service of the Kingdom rather than merely promoting private religious experience.

This book can be a useful textbook for the study of evangelism in the modern context. Speaking beyond the usual North American agenda of church growth, discipleship and reaching the unreached, it considers the task in the broad complexity of our day. Written by authors who have deliberately set out to create a different agenda, it challenges the more conservative evangelical to risk involvement in new areas. Obviously seeking a middle ground on the continuum of evangelical-ecumenical concerns, the editors clear a position and call it integral evangelism. This reviewer was especially drawn to the contrast made between theology and strategy, the religious linkage suggested between individual and culture, the potential for change in church traditions, the proposal for the

re-evangelism of Europe, and the indication of dialogue taking place without conservative evangelical contribution.

John Stott concludes the essays with a helpful critique of the exemplary Stuttgart Statement. He reminds readers that "there is always something exceptional, even unauthentic, about a Christian witness which is either verbal without being visual, or visual without being verbal" (p. 209). While the Statement has its strengths (for example its call to the local church for evangelism), it seems to fall short of the balanced visual/verbal proclamation. As might be expected in this case, the shortfall lies in the verbal. Stuttgart did not spell out the gospel with the clarity needed. It contains "no unambiguous, forthright statement of Christ's uniqueness." There is no reference to the cross and the resurrection.

What is true of Stuttgart is true of this volume. The reader will conclude some essays still waiting for a definitive statement on the gospel. A void will be experienced. How can there be authentic evangelism--integral or otherwise--without a clear expression of the gospel?

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***Forms of Marriage, Monogamy Reconsidered***

by William Blum, *Spearhead Monograph 105-107*, (AMECEA Gaba Publications: Eldoret, Kenya, 1989) 317 pages, Ksh 300/=

***Forms of Marriage (2) Evangelising Polygamous Families:  
Canonical and African Approaches***

by Peter M. Kanyadago, *Spearhead Monograph 116-118* (AMECEA Gaba Publications: Eldoret, Kenya, 1991) 230 pages, Ksh 240/=, \$10.00 US

***Our Kind of Polygamy***

by David G. Maillu, (*Heinemann Kenya: Nairobi, 1988*),  
187 pages, Ksh 89/50

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At the Catholic Bookshop in Nairobi, my eye was caught by the first two books mentioned above on monogamy/bigamy. I will review them separately, but let me first say that because the authors are Roman Catholics, they address some issues

differently than Protestants might, but all who call ourselves Christians must wrestle with the same core issue and can benefit from these books. Also, both books use the word "polygamy" (and the derived word "polygamist"), a term from social anthropology referring specifically to the marriage of one man to more than one woman.

Blum's book is dated 1989, but is based on his 1972 doctoral dissertation. The references have not been updated. Though the title may strike some as possibly advocating polygamy, the opposite is true, the title being a rebuttal to Eugene Hillman's *Polygamy Reconsidered* which argued for permitting polygamy among Christians.

The book is divided into three parts. The first is "African marriage, an anthropological study," comprising half the book. "In order to make any meaningful theological statements about polygamy, we must study it, as it is understood and lived by members of polygamous societies." This section is a very helpful discussion of the social and economic factors that can lead to the rise and maintenance of polygamy. It also lists some factors that are currently leading to the decline of polygamy in some areas. Blum also describes the new form of polygamy, where a man maintains a wife in his traditional home area and has another in the city where he is employed. Blum falls into the common pattern of citing a few examples, then (over)generalizing about "African patterns," a pattern also found in the books by Kanyadago and Maillu.

Part two of the book, "A theological study of polygamy and monogamy," wrestles with the question, "Does the Bible really teach monogamy, or is it merely the influence of Western values that leads us to interpret the Bible this way?" Blum comes to the firm, dogmatic conclusion that the Bible, in all its parts, teaches monogamy. "Monogamy is the form of marriage willed by God from the beginning, and...it is not simply a cultural institution, dependent upon the customs and conditions of a particular society. Monogamy is an integral part of the reality of marriage and not simply a law, which reflects a particular cultural understanding of marriage. Thus, in our planning of a pastoral policy, we must, first of all, recognize that monogamy pertains to the essence of Christian marriage."

His discussion of many Scriptural passages shows a strong belief in the authority of Scripture. However, his assumption of the documentary and late origin of the Pentateuch forces him into many complex discussions of the varying circumstances at the time of various alleged redactions.

Greek and Hebrew exegetes may be disappointed with this section, but Blum admits he does not aspire to give the final word on the detailed exegesis of passages cited. Rather, he does point out how (the assumption of) monogamy underlies many passages related to marriage and divorce.

The third section, "Baptism of polygamists as a pastoral problem," wrestles with the application of his Biblical exegesis to the problems of polygamy. It is here that his Roman Catholic doctrine of baptism leads him to struggle with slightly different questions (or at least to phrase his questions differently) than would many evangelicals. For Catholics, and some Protestants, baptism is a sacrament, very closely tied to a person's receiving salvation. Therefore, excluding polygamists from baptism is a very serious point. Some Protestants, on the other hand, will baptize polygamists, but bar them from leadership positions in the church. Blum dislikes such an approach, arguing "Such a policy seems to be unjust, and to imply that polygamist converts would not become full-fledged Christians." his proposal, on the other hand, is to allow polygamists to be long-term catechumens, baptism not being given until "near death." Catechumens are normally in a program of classes in preparation for baptism, but Blum points out "A catechumen is a committed disciple of Jesus Christ, even though he or she has not yet been fully incorporated into the Church by baptism."

Though I do not see many significant differences between the policy he rejects and the policy he proposes, his proposal is commendable in that it does attempt to do several important things. First, it provides for polygamous converts to be taught in the faith. Second, the proposal allows Christians to make a clear, public statement of the church's commitment to monogamy. Third, it confirms monogamous marriages as the Christian norm, giving children a clear model to follow. Fourth, it gives polygamous believers a clear place within the believing community.

As Blum himself points out, "The criticism of the inadequacies of the solution of baptizing polygamists is, in some ways, easier than the formulation of a solution." Whether readers (Catholic or Protestant) will agree with all of Blum's proposal, it is well thought out.

I turn now to Kanyadago's book. At the outset, let me clarify that I am not reviewing this book as a treatise on Canon Law and its application to marriage, which is his main intended purpose. Rather, I review this book chiefly for its relevance to evangelicals, who are not the intended primary audience.

The title was what first caught my attention. I thought this might be a useful resource in thinking about how to bring polygamous families to faith in Christ. However, I very quickly realized that some of the subtle differences between Protestant evangelicals and Roman Catholics are in definitions. The word "evangelize" in the author's Catholic use refers more to incorporating into the visible church, in contrast to the evangelical use which refers more to bringing about a change of heart in people so that they believe in Jesus Christ. The author is not primarily focusing on how to bring persons in polygamous families to faith in Christ, but whether and how the visible church should incorporate polygamists. That is,

"Can polygamists be baptized? If so, under what circumstances?" (An important point in understanding some of the author's discussions is that in the Catholic Church, Canon Law requires a polygamist to dismiss all but one wife in order to be baptized and take communion.)

Such questions are not new, and certainly not unique to Catholics! However, focusing on Canon Law, the author has an additional problem that most Protestants do not: Canon Law requires that a marriage be performed by a priest. Therefore, some Catholics have posed the issue as follows: "If a polygamist's marriages were not performed by a priest, is the person then not married in the sight of God, and therefore not a polygamist? Therefore is the person eligible to be baptized, even though he has plural wives?"

Wisely, the author begins with an introductory discussion of the indissolubility of marriage. He then presents several different African traditions for formalizing marriage. He then proceeds to ask uncomfortable questions about how to apply Biblical principles to these traditions. For example, in many African traditions, the payment of bridewealth is an integral part of the marriage process ("process" being a key word!). Is the marriage completed and indissoluble when the couple begin to cohabit, or only when the payment is completed? Is there a clear discrepancy between Biblical teaching and cultural traditions on this point? What about cultures where a marriage is only considered finalized when the couple produces a child? Answering these questions requires more than a superficial understanding of the local traditions. He argues for the validity of traditional marriages, but advocated that churches try to integrate both the traditional marriage practices with the church's rite.

The bulk of the book is a detailed discussion of the development and interpretation of Canon Law and church pronouncements on marriage, from as far back as 1585. Though few will be interested in the details, it shows a long-standing struggle to provide Biblically-based answers which could be applied in many different cultures.

The positions cited vary from those who advocate leniency toward polygamy in order that potential converts are not discouraged, to a stricter position requiring the divorce of the present wife to remarry a former (but first) wife as a qualification for baptism.

One point which will surprise some is the small number of Scriptures cited, less than five. It must be remembered that this volume is largely concerned with Canon Law, intended to be complementary to Blum's volume, which discusses many, many Scripture texts.

The book raises many provocative questions, but provides few answers. It calls for more study of local traditions and consultation. It does include some important suggestions (some cited from previous Catholic documents), such as the following:

- Men who have married more than one wife should bear some continuing responsibility for their children and wives if they separate from plural wives.
- Churches should try to find ways to more closely integrate traditional wedding practices and church weddings, so that the two are not seen as separate and unrelated.
- Churches should emphasize the essentials of marriage, and minimize "the secondary aspects, such as clothing or expensive receptions."
- Churches should concentrate on teaching young people about marriage, stressing Christian values and commitment.
- Those teaching youth should not over-emphasize freedom in the choice of one's partner, "in opposition to the senses of community that exists in Africa."
- Those who are already in polygamous marriages must be treated with sensitivity and compassion (without giving the church's endorsement of polygamy).

Kanyadago does not pretend to provide easy answers for a set of difficult questions, but will stimulate those who want to think through church policies and practices on polygamy. Though many will not want to study all the details of the legal cases presented, chapter 1 (Challenges of evangelizing customary African marriage) and chapter 4 (Evangelizing customary African marriage) will be of interest to those who are struggling with polygamy in their areas of ministry.

The books are well printed and well bound on good paper, with the only serious typo being the word "shepherd" spelled as "spearhead" in Kanyadago's book.

A careful reading of these books will help readers to think through the Bible's teaching and their own church's policies and pastoral practices in this difficult area. Blum's book is more basic and of interest to a wider audience. Kanyadago's book has a narrower focus. If I could only buy one, I would buy Blum's. The contents of both books are substantial, the printing is clear, and the bindings are sturdy. Priced at 300/- Kenya shillings or less each (about \$10 US), they are a good value. They will be helpful references to those grappling with the Church's response to polygamy. They belong in Bible school and seminary libraries, if their students can think critically.

In contrast to the above two books, Maillu's book is a defense of polygamy, though not from any particular religious or tribal viewpoint. It contains many of the same arguments that can be found in any informal discussion of the topic: polygamy is good because it helps provide more workers for the farming community, it allows



a man to always satisfy his sex drive, etc, etc. In this regard, the book provides very little new or useful for the study of polygamy.

For example, his understanding and explanation of the origin and functions of polygamy in a traditionally polygamous society is quite shallow, compared to Blum and Kanyadago. He claims that the number of women and men in African countries is almost equal, so that there cannot really be very many polygamous marriages in existence. Blum examines the same matter, but using census data shows that because of the fact that men usually marry at an older age than women, the number of men of marrying age is significantly smaller than the number of women of marrying age (pp. 87-95). Despite Maillu's claims to the contrary, there are many polygamous marriages in Africa, as many of us know from our experience. This sort of shallow research by Maillu does not help one to take him seriously.

On the other hand, one wonders if the anthropological approach, concentrating on *traditional* factors such as bride price and clan relationships, is overlooking some of the factors related to the maintenance of polygamy and concubinage in newer urban forms of polygamy as discussed by Maillu. For example, the strengthening of clan ties by intermarriage is not a factor in new, often urban, forms of polygamy. Even if Maillu does not adequately explain the origins of some of the social issues, he does help us understand how many people perceive and understand themselves and their actions. Maillu clearly believes that a first wife should have no right to object to a husband marrying additional women, it is clearly his right. Also, if a marriage has difficulties, he seems to assume that it is the wife's fault, the husband's involvement with other women is NOT seen as a problem.

Some of his section headings will give an idea of Maillu's topics and approach: Love and Polygamy, Faithful Husbands: Do They Exist?. Objections Based on Christian Religion, Toward Successful Polygamy, Wife Beating and the Use of Force, The Prospective Second Wife, The Advice of the First Wife, The Wife and the Concubine.

From the viewpoint of a polygamist, much of his advice seems useful, though his ethical bases for several points are not clear. He complains that any potential marriage counselor with academic training (social worker, pastor, etc.), is automatically biased against polygamy so that polygamists have nobody to turn to for advice, except elders and family.

His chapter 6, "Objections Based on Christian Religion," is a brief discussion of a few Scriptural passages. Though many of us will not accept his interpretations, it is good to be reminded how many people (mis)understand the Bible on these areas. His misunderstanding of Scripture is most clearly seen on the last three pages, where he argues that God's commandments regarding love and mercy override his commandments on adultery and marriage.

Maillu writes with an informal flowing style, easy to read. His use of proverbs illustrates many points well. (Many Christians wish they could write in such an interesting style.) Maillu's book is well printed and bound, but flawed by several typos, the only noteworthy one being a reference to kissing the Pope's "food," rather than his "foot."

The book will probably not be purchased by many individual Christians for their own study or marriage patterns, but would be useful for a seminary library or post-secondary level Bible school that wanted to include a broad range of books on the subject. That is, this is a very clear statement of the secular position on polygamy. The last section, defending concubines, (as well as some other passages) would also be a useful reference for a class in ethics, as Maillu discusses the pros and cons of keeping a concubine and whether a man should tell his wife about a concubine.

All three of these books require readers to think critically on complex issues.

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