

The Kingdom of God in Africa:

Or How to get Africa into the Western Church History Curriculum

by *Mark Shaw*

The time is early in the next century.¹ A first year seminary student, taking Church History 101 at a North American seminary, reads the concluding paragraph of her textbook's chapter on the Reformation. The paragraph goes something like this:

"Concurrent with the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Reformation in Europe was the equally significant Ethiopian Reformation in Africa. This Reformation was the inspiration of Emperor Galawdewos (1522-1559) who after defeating the Muslims and restoring to the church many who had undergone forced conversions to Islam, turned his attention to the renewal of Ethiopian Christianity. While enlightened in his attitude towards Rome, Galawdewos strongly opposed the aggressive attacks on Ethiopian Christianity by men like

the Jesuit, Oveido. Galawdewos was excommunicated by Rome for his heroic stand. The Emperor's bold actions were crucial for the subsequent history of Ethiopian Christianity in particular and African Christianity in general, a Christianity which now claims nearly half of all Christians in the world." The student closes her text and rushes off to her next class--Asian Christian theology and its impact on Europe.

This picture of the future may be a bit farfetched for those aware of the glacial pace with which the discipline of church history institutes change. It is, however, the possibility of just such a scenario that has drawn many of us to ponder the questions raised by Lamin Sanneh, A.F. Walls and others in recent years.²

Professor Sanneh in particular, in his paper "World Christianity and the

Teaching of History" has asked the key questions with which we must wrestle: "What would church history ... look like if it takes in world Christianity?"³ and "What would it take to make the transition into such new fields effective and long-lasting?"⁴ These are strategic questions for those of us concerned about progress in the doing of Church history. These are questions deserving of thoughtful answers.

The burden of this paper is to suggest an approach to African Church history that offers a partial and preliminary answer to these two questions.

Specifically I would like to make two points. The first is the value of the concept of the kingdom of God for providing a possible point of contact between the Africa Christian story and the Western one. The second point is the contribution of H.R. Niebuhr's *Kingdom of God in America* in showing us how to go about doing this, that is to write church history in a way that can exploit this point of contact and get Africa a bigger share of the Church history texts of the next century. *The thrust of this paper is that a kingdom approach to African church history might help us make a transition into this new field of a truly multicultural and global Church history that will be both "effective and long-lasting."*

I begin by noting that African history has been changing the university even while being slighted by the seminary. We who are students of African church history can only look with envy at how much the African continent has contributed to the rewriting of world history in the academy. What kind of impact has Africa had on the writing of secular history? Steven Feierman in his essay "African Histories and the Dissolution of World History" argues that "the emergence of African history . . . has changed our understanding of general history, and of Europe's place in the world, in profound ways."⁵ Feierman points out that the most obvious change is the new academic consciousness that a eurocentric view of the world is no longer credible in the writing of world history.

Feierman's comments remind us of the importance of Fernand Braudel and the *Annales* school in pioneering this global perspective. Braudel was an early pioneer in developing a non-eurocentric perspective. Witness his entertaining *History of Civilizations* where he devoted the first two thirds of his survey to non-European civilizations.⁶ What permitted Braudel to rise above the academic habits of his contemporaries and see the cultures of the world as possessing an equally fascinating story to tell? Braudel

reveals his secret. Good history for Braudel is not in comparing civilizations as much as discovering their own uniqueness. He described this as 'looking within a civilization for its "key." This may seem, he wrote, like "a simplicity that distorts the truth" but it is instead "a simplicity that is clarity, the light of intelligence."⁷ When we look at Niebuhr this insight of Braudel will be most useful.⁸

In light of Feierman's comments and Braudel's pioneering approaches of thirty years ago, the sluggishness of Church historians to similarly revise their story lines is a discouraging contrast. I can only applaud the global scope of a Church history survey such as Clouse, Pierard and Yamauchi, *Two Kingdoms*.⁹ Yet such a survey seems to be the exception rather than the rule. More characteristic, I think of the current church history mind set is Kee, Hanawalt, Lindberg, Seban and Noll, *Christianity: A Social and Cultural History*.¹⁰ This is a book with many virtues. Yet the book tries to tell the whole Christian story by relegating African, Asian and Latin American Christianity to an epilogue.

This simply will not do. Numbers alone should justify a new prominence for African Church history. Elizabeth Isichei, in her recent synthesis of African church history, points out that if the projected figure of 393 million

African Christians by the year 2000 is correct then "1 in 5 of all Christians would be in Africa."¹¹ African Christianity is more than just statistics but such numbers should awaken church historians of the West from their dogmatic slumber.

I would like to follow up on Braudel's bit of wisdom that the way to write about history is to search for a key--the simple truth at the heart of the story that is not "a simplicity that distorts the truth" but is instead "a simplicity that is clarity." Allow me, however, to amend Braudel slightly. If we expect the localized church histories of the younger churches to find a place in the story of World Christianity we must find the key that fits not one door but two. We must find a key that opens the heart of African Christianity but also unlocks a gate to the consciousness of the Western Church. We must ask the question: What is at the heart of the African story that can touch the heart of the western church story?

Some might object that church history should be concerned with the creation of a clear narrative of events and not succumb to the western, and typically North American mania, with "fixing things." To such a viewpoint, searching for keys, common issues and problems sounds more like sociology than history. My reply to such an objection is that some of the best

history being written today is concerned with problem-solving. Basil Davidson's *Black Man's Burden* is one example where the problem of the modern nation-state is explored in a comparative way using African and Eastern European examples.¹² David Hackett Fischer's study of American history, *Albion's Seed*, is a second example where a cultural history of British and American views of freedom is used to illuminate social conflict and development in the American story.¹³ For Church historians, Martin Marty is a third example. His *Pilgrims in their Own Land*, tells the story of American Religion as a study in pluralism and spiritual consumerism.¹⁴ The problem of spiritual restlessness ties together the divergent expressions of religion in America and functions for Marty as Braudel's key to unlock the meaning of the story. With David Fischer then I argue that the detached objectivity of the old narrative history should be replaced by a problem solving approach to history that stresses themes and issues while still preserving the narrative strengths of the old history in what Fischer calls "a braided narrative."¹⁵ We will not get the African story into the bigger Christian story in any lasting way unless we write more than bare chronologies or chronicles and find the key that unlocks the two doors. Let me suggest a key

and then show how Professor Niebuhr sheds light on its use.

The Kingdom of God as a common Key

What might that key look like? I must make it clear that I think there are a number of keys or points of contact that would work. The first possible point of contact is *church growth*. African Christians are interested in their own church growth and Western Christians, particularly where Christianity may be declining are eagerly interested in the question. Here surely is a common ground. Older studies which are still relevant used this key of world wide expansion and interest in the dynamics of growth. This is the key that C.P. Groves and Kenneth Latourette used in their multivolume surveys.¹⁶ This is the key that Neill used in his enduring single volume study.¹⁷ Peter Falk's *Growth of the Church in Africa* also used this key but with less success.¹⁸ The major drawback to this approach today is the stigma associated with the missionary Christianity these studies tend to emphasize. Charges of religious imperialism in this Post-colonial era make the theme of expansion less attractive than other options, though I would argue that it is still valid and that additional studies along this line are needed.

A second point of contact between African Christianity and the wider church is in the area of *ecumenism*. The union of the fractured body of Christ is one of the crucial issues for many churchmen around the world. Leslie Newbigin has stressed this repeatedly. John McManner's *Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity* adopts this ecumenical perspective, as John Taylor's closing essay makes clear.¹⁹ In that spirit a full chapter is given to African Christianity.

Lamin Sanneh's interest in pluralism in general and Christianity's remarkable ability to adapt and renew a wide variety of cultures principally though not solely through *vernacular translation* is a third promising common key or point of contact.²⁰ This theme is of broad appeal and relevance. African Christianity provides a particularly useful test case for the examination of this issue in Professor Sanneh's writings.

Despite these promising keys, it is a fourth one that has captured my imagination--that of *eschatology*. Leslie Newbigin has written about this with insight and eloquence. I refer to his books, *Sign of the Kingdom*, and *Foolishness to the Greeks*. Both books underscore the teleological crisis of West. Newbigin argues that the greatest challenge facing western churches is dealing and communicating

with a culture that has lost its eschatology. "We shall not be wrong . . ." he wrote, "if we take the abandonment of teleology as the key to understanding of nature for our primary clue to understanding the whole of the vast changes in the human situation."²¹

Why is this the case? The collapse of an eschatological framework makes it impossible to explain things in terms of purpose. Modern man can only use the language of causation which treats humans like machines or plants and is ultimately dehumanizing. The old language of purpose, provided by Christian eschatology, gave dignity and meaning to the West. The recovery of the theme of the Kingdom of God and its eschatological import is therefore crucial to both the renewal of the West and the churches evangelization of Western man. As Newbigin states: "A true understanding of the last things is the first essential."²²

The Western church has felt this loss of teleology and has at times followed the culture into its malaise. David Bosch has strengthened Newbigin's insight by stressing the Church's need to rediscover the kingdom of God. In his *Transforming Mission*, Bosch argued that the recovery of the eschatological nature of the church and its mission is one of the crucial needs of Twentieth century theology.²³ "In every Christian

tradition," declared Bosch, "and in every continent we are still in the midst of a movement to reformulate a theology of mission in the light of an authentic eschatology."²⁴ Bosch further insisted that without a kingdom framework true Christian mission is not possible. "It is because God already rules and because we await the public manifestation of his rule that we may, in the here and now, be ambassadors of his kingdom. Christians can never be people of the status quo."²⁵ Bosch thus calls for a rediscovery of kingdom thinking in our understanding of both secular and salvation history.²⁶

While the West gropes towards the importance of the kingdom in understanding both Christianity and culture in the West a similar movement is afoot in Africa. In 1980 Dr. E. A. Adeolu called for a new church history that went beyond Marxism and capitalistic analysis and did "for our time what Augustine did for his: discern the mysterious intermingling of the City of God with the earthly city."²⁷ More recently, Nigerian theologian Ukachuwu Chris Manus, called for a new kingdom emphasis in African Christianity in order to promote social justice. "The reality of the kingdom of God," writes Manus, "provides men and women of all ages the vista to judge this world and to renew it through their total commitment to peace, justice,

freedom."²⁸ Justice is served by a kingdom consciousness.

So also is ecumenicity. The need for a viable ecumenical perspective has led African church historians like Ogbu Kalu towards a kingdom framework for African Christianity. Kalu called for a rediscovery of the kingdom framework in order to move beyond the parochialism of institutional church history. "The basic assumption of Church history is that the Kingdom of God is here among men, providing enormous opportunities for renewal and reshaping of individual and communal lives."²⁹ While we must avoid the triumphalism that such an approach suggests, Kalu feels that a kingdom perspective would actually lift the story above local and denominational biases and illumine "the ways in which the community sees herself and the intruding presence of the Kingdom."³⁰

In summary, the crisis of meaninglessness in the West, if we accept Newbigin's analysis, is due to a loss of eschatology. The problems of injustice and sectarianism in Africa have led various African theologians and church historians to call for the recovery of a kingdom eschatology. The kingdom of God thus seems to be a useful key that unlocks two doors.

But how does one move from the need in both Africa and the West to see history through kingdom eyes and the

actual doing of church history in a way that successfully utilizes the kingdom motif? This is the contribution of H. R. Niebuhr.

The contribution of H.R. Niebuhr

The 1937 publication of *The Kingdom of God in America*, the year before he began teaching at Yale, was a landmark in the personal pilgrimage of H.R. Niebuhr. In this seminal work, recently republished by Wesleyan University press with an appreciative introductory essay by Martin Marty, Niebuhr worked out more fully his rediscovery of the sovereignty of God that had swept over him in the thirties and marked his break with liberalism.³¹ This work was also a landmark in the interpretation of American church history.³²

Niebuhr contended that the concept of the Kingdom had played a unique shaping role in American Christianity similar to the way that the Vision of God had impacted Medieval Christianity.³³ He recognized that the Biblical concept of the kingdom had three distinct but interconnected elements: God's sovereign rule which is tied to the doctrine of providence; Christ's redemptive reign over hearts which is tied to the doctrine of salvation; and the coming kingdom as an earthly utopia which is tied to eschatology and ethics:

The Christian faith in the kingdom of God is a threefold thing. Its first element is confidence in the divine sovereignty which, however hidden, is still the reality behind and in all realities. A second element is the conviction that in Jesus Christ the hidden kingdom was not only revealed in a convincing fashion but also began a special and new career among men, who had rebelled against the true law of their nature. The third element is the direction of life to the coming of the kingdom in power....³⁴

What was most striking about Niebuhr's model was the suggestion that the American church in different periods of her history tended to put more emphasis on one of the aspects of the kingdom to the neglect of the others. Niebuhr gave some examples. The seventeenth century New England puritans emphasized the kingdom as the sovereign rule of God over all of life and attempted to witness to that reality by building a theocracy (or more accurately a theonomy) where the word of God ruled every sphere or institution of society. The very success of their witness led to a rigid institutionalizing of the theocracy which was unable to withstand the forces of change that

occurred in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The church then moved from the old witness to the kingdom in response to the demands of changing America and bore a fresh witness to the kingdom by emphasizing the redemptive reign of Christ over hearts. The awakenings and revivals of the 18th and 19th centuries created an evangelical movement that emphasized converting individuals instead of building theocracies. But the changes brought on by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (urbanization, immigration, religious pluralism, secularization) led to the social gospel which interpreted the kingdom as an earthly utopia brought about by the steady advance of human progress.

The institutionalizing of this liberal vision of the kingdom has likewise led to discontent and restlessness in the church for the kingdom can never be equated with any human institution or structure.

Niebuhr was critical of this broken witness to the kingdom and called for the restoration of the whole gospel of the kingdom because "the three notes of faith in the sovereignty, the experience of the love of Christ and hope of ultimate redemption are inseparable."³⁵

Niebuhr was particularly critical of liberal Christianity with its focus on the earthly kingdom to the neglect of the

cross of Christ. "There was no way", argued Niebuhr, "toward the coming kingdom save the way taken by a sovereign God through the reign of Jesus Christ."³⁶

Niebuhr's ideas continue to intrigue American historians. The most aggressive attempt to apply Niebuhr's framework is found in the work of Brown historian, William McGloughlin, who has asserted that all American history may be related to the core values of the kingdom:

From its first settlements, not only in Pilgrim Plymouth but in almost every colony, America has been a utopian experiment in achieving the Kingdom of God on earth. Our Revolution was justified on these terms in 1776. Our history has been essentially the history of one long millenarian movement. Americans, in their cultural mythology, are God's chosen, leading the world to perfection. Every awakening has revived, revitalized, and redefined that culture core.³⁷

What is remarkable about this statement is how easily it applies, with just a few word changes, to Ethiopian, Afrikaner, Zionist or African charismatic forms of Christianity.

More recently, Evangelical historian, Ronald Wells, has attempted

to broaden this kingdom approach by using it as a framework for understanding all of Western civilization.³⁸ For Wells "the story of humanity in the West is a story of trying to bring together what St. Augustine called the two cities, of God and of 'Man.'"³⁹ He calls this way of seeing history "the kingdom vision" and sees the basic plot of Western history as the gap between kingdom ideals and human realities. When this gap becomes too great civilization is thrown into a crisis between its beliefs and its behavior. This kingdom perspective helps us to see history as in ongoing tension between the "already and the not yet", between the provisional nature of today and the final reality when the Kingdom of God will be consummated.

But does this perspective apply to Africa? South African historian John de Gruchy has used Niebuhr's categories to unlock the meaning of Church history in that region of the continent: "As the struggle of the church in North America was a struggle for the kingdom of God, so, too, the struggle of the church in South Africa is for the kingdom of God in another segment of world history. Indeed, as we look back on the history of South Africa, and the theologies that have shaped and interpreted that history, the cruciality of the kingdom emerges strongly and resembles in an almost uncanny way the

story of the kingdom of God in America."⁴⁰

As I have taught African Church history over the years in Kenya, de Gruchy's words have grown in their significance. I would suggest that the story of African Christianity not only in South Africa but in all the continent "resembles in an almost uncanny way the story of the kingdom of God in America."

What would the story of African Christianity look like if told from a kingdom perspective? Cutting across denominations and institutions are conflicting but ultimately complimentary views of the kingdom. In the first six hundred years the theocratic idea of the kingdom prevailed with Christian political kingdoms emerging in Egypt, North Africa, Nubia and Ethiopia. In the African middle age, from the rise of Islam until the coming of the Dutch to South Africa in the seventeenth century, rival theocracies clashed. Kingdoms of Allah and Mungu locked horns with the kingdoms of Christendom, the Portuguese and the Dutch. Caught in the middle of this kingdom rivalry were the African Christian theocracies of Nubia which collapsed and Ethiopia which survived.

Just as the great clash of theocracies was coming to an end a new vision of the kingdom was rising in the west on

the wings of revivalism and the Clapham sect.

The evangelical concept of the kingdom turned its back on theocracy and emphasized personal regeneration and social transformation through transformed men and women. The twin movements of nineteenth century evangelical activism, the antislavery campaign and the missions movement shaped a new kind of African Christianity. Whether the *Krio* Christianity of the recaptives of West Africa, or the *kitoro* Christianity of the fugitive slaves of East Africa, this new kingdom vision as the redemptive rule of Christ over hearts made major inroads.

As Africans shaped their response to missionary Christianity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries they did so in kingdom terms. The Zionism of South Africa refers to more than the location in Zion, Illinois, from which the original visionary, John Alexander Dowie, hailed. It was a consciousness that the Kingdom of God was more than just the Sovereign rule of God and the redemptive rule Christ. It was also the kingdom on earth. The search for a sacred place that is at the heart of so many African indigenous churches reflects this third aspect of the kingdom. Since independence, the kingdom on earth theme has come to mean a struggle for social justice

against apartheid, capitalism and the corruption of Africa's kleptocracies.

Like the kingdom of God in America though the vision has been a dominant framework for meaning and action, no one group, no single institution or denomination has been able to grasp the fullness of the kingdom as the sovereign God's rule through the redemptive lordship of Christ to hasten the coming of his kingdom of justice and love.

What would be the strengths of such an approach? Let me list three. 1) The kingdom approach gives African Church history a meaningful point of contact with Western Church history. 2) The kingdom approach advances the Protestant principle that no one group, theology, church or denomination is ultimate or final. Only the ideal of the kingdom is transcendent. All earthly witnesses to the kingdom are finite and fallen. Such a perspective keeps us from an unwelcome triumphalism. 3) The kingdom approach moves us past the impasse so often seen in the writing of African church history between so-called missionary, nationalistic and ecumenical approaches and offers a fourth way forward.⁴¹

Conclusion

I have tried to answer in a provisional way the question of how to get Africa's story into our western Church history curriculum. I have presented my

conviction, shared with Howard Snyder and others, that "one cannot understand Church History without grasping the role the kingdom concept has played."⁴²

I have further suggested that H. R. Niebuhr's tripartite understanding of the kingdom in *The Kingdom of God in America*, offers a model as to how such a perspective might be applied to Africa. The kingdom perspective is valuable because it is a point of contact with a Western church that desperately needs to recapture the sense of meaning and purpose that the Kingdom of God has provided in the past. Such a perspective has meaning in the West as Niebuhr and others have shown. Such a perspective has meaning in Africa as Augustine, de Gruchy, Adeolu, Manus and Kalu have insisted. It is not "a simplicity that distorts the truth" but it is instead "a simplicity that is clarity, the light of intelligence." Telling the African story using a kingdom perspective may in fact be the common key that unlocks two doors. It may hasten the day when African Church history reshapes the western church history syllabus, the day when Galawdewos takes his place along side Luther in the story of a wider sixteenth century Reformation.

Ali Mazrui, writing in *The African Condition*, presents Africa as the continent of paradox.⁴³ He offers a number of those paradoxes to the

reader. Africa is "the first habitat of man but the last to be made truly habitable." Africans "are not the most brutalized of peoples but are probably the most humiliated in modern history." It "is not the smallest of the continents but it is probably the most fragmented."

Mazrui offers many more of these contrasts as a way of helping the western mind understand the mystery and the meaning of Africa. The Africa Church may contribute yet one more powerful paradox that Mazrui overlooked. John Mbiti once wrote that African traditional religion lacked a sense of the future. My studies in African Church history have convinced me that whatever the case with Traditional religion, African Christianity, from Ethiopian kings and Zionist prophets, to Dispensational missionaries and liberation theologians, has been deeply impacted by the eschatology of the kingdom. What African tradition did not provide, African Christianity has abundantly supplied—a powerful kingdom eschatology. The greatest future paradox of Africa may well be that the continent without a strong indigenous eschatology may become the continent which renews the kingdom consciousness of the world.

- ¹ This article was originally presented as a paper at the 1995 Yale-Edinburgh Conference on the History of Christian Missions.
- ² Cf. the pioneering essay by A.F. Walls, "Africa's Place in Christian History", in John Pobee (ed.) *Religion in a Pluralist Society*, (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 181-189.
- ³ Lamin Sanneh, "World Christianity and the teaching of History", unpublished paper, Yale-Edinburgh Conference, 1994, 4.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.
- ⁵ In Bates, Mudimbe and O'Barr, *Africa and the Disciplines*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 182.
- ⁶ Fernand Braudel, *History of Civilizations* (Allen Lane, 1994).
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, xxv.
- ⁸ In the opinion of some the *Annales* approach has become derailed in recent decades by what Harold Bloom has called "the ideologies of resentment." Fernand Braudel himself has admitted that this approach was "overwhelmed by its own success." David Hackett Fischer of Brandeis notes that "Instead of becoming a synthesizing discipline, it disintegrated into many special fields—women's history, labor history, environmental history, the history of aging, the history of child abuse, and even gay history—in which the work became increasingly shrill and polemical." Cf. David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), ix..
- ⁹ Robert Clouse, Richard Pierard, Edwin Yamauchi, *Two Kingdoms: The Church and Culture through the Ages*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1993).
- ¹⁰ Howard Kee, Emily Hanawalt, Carter Lindberg, Jean-Loup Seban and Mark Noll, *Christianity: A Social and Cultural History* (New York: MacMillan, 1991).
- ¹¹ Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 1.
- ¹² Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State*, (Nairobi: EAEP, 1992).
- ¹³ David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).
- ¹⁴ Martin Marty, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land: 500 Years of Religion in America*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 1984).
- ¹⁵ Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, xi.
- ¹⁶ C. P. Groves, *Planting of the Church in Africa*, 4 volumes (London: Lutterworth, 1948); Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, 7 volumes, (New York: Harper and Row, 1937).
- ¹⁷ Stephen Neill, *History of Christian Missions*, (London: Penguin, 1960).
- ¹⁸ Peter Falk, *The Growth of the Church in Africa*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979).
- ¹⁹ John McManner, (ed.), *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).
- ²⁰ Cf. *Translating the Message: the Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1989) and *Encountering the West: Christianity and the Global Cultural Process* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993).
- ²¹ Leslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 34.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 134.
- ²³ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991), 498.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 508.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 508.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.* Note that Bosch does not really accept (although he uses) the distinction between secular and salvation history: "There are not two histories, but there are two ways of understanding history" (508).
- ²⁷ Dr. E. A. Adeolu, "A Research Proposal", *The Ecumenical Review*, 32.2 (April 1980), 127.
- ²⁸ Ukachukwu Chris Manus, *Christ the African King*, (Frankfort: Peter Lang, 1993), 164.

²⁹ Ogbu Kalu, "Doing Church History", unpublished lecture, Yale Divinity School Archives, n.d., 2.

³⁰ Ibid, 12.

³¹ See Niebuhr's discription of this change of perspective in "Reformation: Continuing Imperative", part five, "How I Changed My Mind" series, *The Christian Century*, LXXVII, No. 9, (March 2, 1960), 248.

³² A recent exploration of this theme first sounded by Niebuhr is David Lenn Jeffrey *The Kingdom of God in America: An Historical Analysis and a Contemporary Inquiry* (Boston College, 1981).

³³ H. R. Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1937), 20.

³⁴ Ibid, 88.

³⁵ Ibid, 127.

³⁶ Ibid, 27.

³⁷ W. McGloughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings and Reform*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 19.

³⁸ Ronald Wells, *History Through the Eyes of Faith: Western Civilization and the Kingdom of God*, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989).

³⁹ Ibid, 27.

⁴⁰ John DeGruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 199.

⁴¹ For a discussion of this current impasse in African Church historiography see Ogbu Kalu, "African Church Historiography: an Ecumenical Perspective" in Kalu, (ed.), *African Church Historiography: an Ecumenical Perspective*, (Bern: Lukas Vischer, 1988), 9-27.

⁴² Howard Snyder, *Models of the Kingdom*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 22.

⁴³ Ali Mazrui, *The African Condition* (London: Heinemann, 1980).