As with others in this series, I too prize the pluralistic, even countercultural, experiences in my upbringing. Blame it partly on my parents. Long before I was born (in December 1924), they were wonderful people, faithful, devout, loyal Presbyterians, but they were also strongly influenced by the global, evangelical, mission-oriented Christian Endeavor movement, which was not very conventional.

It's partly my own fault. At some point, realizing that my faith must be more than just inherited, I began to examine all sorts of other beliefs that went far beyond the highly interdenominational spectrum exhibited by Christian Endeavor. I took a look at the Roman Catholic tradition, Seventh-day Adventism, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others. I can still remember the look of dismay on my mother's face when she found me exploring the Book of Mormon.

Further cultural loosening up took place over the next few years through World War II. The Bible itself demanded a total parting of the ways with the assumptions undergirding inherited culture. While in high school, I was involved in a sort of Protestant version of the Jesuit order. The Navigators, also evangelical, which today has four thousand members in ninety-four countries, was strong on discipline and Bible study and involved serious daily and weekly commitments.

Attending the California Institute of Technology--all but the first year under the auspices of the navy (a cross-cultural experience in itself)--was a time of radical questioning of the social order in which I was born. Already scientifically inclined, I gained there a much deeper acquaintance with the wonders of nature (through Nobel prize-winner professors, etc.). Later, in seminary, all this fused into a permanent merger of science and theology.

All of these influences were in one way or another distinctly "countercultural." Christian Endeavor, Navigators, and evangelicalism in general were all globally oriented. In that milieu it is not surprising that I came across one of the earliest anthropology books written by an American evangelical missionary--one by Gordon H. Smith. But that only whetted my appetite. A hefty 150-page chapter on anthropology by William Smalley and Marie Fetzer Reyburn (in an American Scientific Affiliation book entitled Science and the Christian Faith) made clear to me that anthropology, of all academic disciplines, offered more to a boy from the "evangelical ghetto" than any other field of study.

My parents (and others) thought I would never settle down to a career. (The Second World War's GI Bill gave me college tuition that helped me study in eight schools beyond college.) Would I continue in engineering? Then why, as a college graduate, go back to a Christian college to learn Greek? Why take two years of seminary if I were not going to be a minister? Wycliffe's Summer Institute of Linguistics seemed the logical next step in preparation for me to be a missionary. Why then to a Bible school to study a unique method of teaching the Bible? Why did I shift to an M.A. at Columbia University in Teaching English as a Second Language? (My family knew that I had initiated a movement to send evangelical teachers to a certain closed country, as well as opening the way for my older brother to head up an engineering school there.) Why did I decide to go on for a Ph.D. at Cornell? There I majored in structural linguistics, minoring in cultural anthropology and mathematical statistics. Finally, because of studying
anthropology--and noting the general influence of the role of the witchdoctor--I did decide to return to finish at Princeton Seminary (in 1956) and become a properly ordained "white witchdoctor." Which is to say I concluded that ordained ministers possess unusual leadership opportunities.

At that point one of my professors at Princeton (Samuel Moffett) was also serving as interim personnel secretary at the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions in New York. He told my wife and me about a position in Guatemala where the field request was specifically for a couple where the man was ordained and had graduate training in linguistics and anthropology, and whose wife was a registered nurse. You would have thought that that would have made the decision for us, and perhaps it ultimately did.

At exactly the same time, however, because of the unusual mix of my Ph.D. dissertation, I was asked to join the faculty at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to help work in the mechanical translation of language--but only if I could promise more than two years. I was still very interested in the problems of language learning (as an aspect of the global mission challenge) and while at Princeton had worked out a "Contextual Lexicon" of the Hebrew text of Genesis. In 1956 I gave a paper on the subject of vocabulary statistics of the Hebrew Bible at the annual meeting of the Linguistic Society of America and coauthored another with Charles Fritsch (a Princeton Seminary professor) in relation to the pedagogical implications of Hebrew vocabulary statistics, the latter presented by Fritsch at the Society for Biblical Literature in the same year. It was a wrenching decision to turn my back on such a long-standing interest to go to Guatemala, but the "mission industry" did not seriously support background academic studies; between academics and mission, I chose the latter.

Before leaving for the field, at the end of 1956, we went through a really marvelous six-months-long "graduate school of mission" designed by our denominational board, a program that later was located at Stony Point, New York, and became ecumenical. This was one of the most valuable experiences of my life. In that period we went through some inner-city, coal-mining, and other "sand-papering" activities, but we also had some really straightforward studies in a superb library of global mission and were exposed weekly to serious outside lecturers ranging from Communists, Muslims, Hindus, and others to mission statesmen like Kenneth Scott Latourrette and even seminary presidents like Henry Pitney Van Dusen. The formal ecumenical tradition was made familiar to us. Board policies and backgrounds were exposited. Interpersonal relationships were explored at the same time. All of these experiences, however, were little more than a prolonged prelude to our even more drastic cultural shake-up within the world of an "aboriginal" culture of the so-called New World, specifically the Maya of Guatemala.

TEN YEARS IN GUATEMALA

My wife and I and our budding family were sent to work in what was considered by our mission board to be one of its "conservative" fields. After my studies and all the decontextualizing influences through which we had gone, I'm sure we seemed radical to some of the missionaries. We precipitated a major rejection by some when, after a great deal of thought, we tried to promote the idea that pastoral leaders in our mountain tribal churches ought to be trained in both theology and medicine (in view of that same range of functions of the native shaman). We also wanted to give certain minimal modern-day medical skills to local shamans as a means of protecting the people in general from careless medicine as well as to become friends with them. Such ideas encountered hopeless opposition. But we did train our future pastors in various kinds of business activities that enabled them to be itinerant or at least not to be tied to
the soil. Although bivocational ministry was pervasive in Latin America, it was a pattern often opposed by expatriate missionaries.

A fundamental insight of another missionary, James H. Emery (whom I had known in seminary), pointed out that residential seminary training, so prized by our (historically recent) Presbyterian tradition back home, was clearly a mixed blessing in rural areas, where full-time professional ministry did not readily fit. I assisted him in bringing about an institutional revolution in the existing "seminary," which had already moved from Guatemala City to the rural town of San Felipe. This move, now coupled with theological studies by extension, suddenly made ordination available to the Mayas and rural poor--providing they first completed a government-sponsored adult education program that we also set up and supervised nationwide with the cooperation of all the major missions.

During our second term of service I shared some of our experiences with James Hopewell, secretary of the World Council of Churches' Theological Education Fund. This was in 1963, while in Mexico City working for a few days as a translator at the first meeting of the transformed International Missionary Council, later the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the WCC. Hopewell decided to put some TEF funds into our experiment in Guatemala and later contributed a chapter to a book I edited in 1969, Theological Education by Extension. The TEF also financed the sending out of one thousand copies of this book to schools all over the world.

Meanwhile, on our second furlough in 1966, I was invited to be a visiting professor at the newly founded School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary, sharing insights from the theological education experiments in Guatemala. After that year with Donald McGavran (of Bridges of God fame) and Alan Tippett (who had just finished his classic Solomon Islands Christianity as a WCC study), I was urged to stay on. I was reluctant to do so because we were involved so deeply in Guatemala, but leaders in my PC(USA) mission board decided to assign me to stay on. Was it because they wanted to know just what this new burgeoning school was teaching? Was it because they were aware of the negative reactions to some of our theories in Guatemala? Or was it because they realized that in this position what had begun in a corner in Guatemala might influence the whole world of missions? Again, it took some soul searching and a willingness to go in a new direction on behalf of the overall cause.

FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL

During the latter part of that same second furlough in 1966--ten years since our formal commissioning as missionaries--I served as executive secretary of the Association of Theological Schools in Latin America, Northern Region (an accrediting association), the last expatriate to hold that position. In my travels in the seventeen northernmost countries of Latin America, I had a lot of opportunity to promote the off-campus education of pastors. I was then invited further south, speaking to groups of theological educators in Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, and Brazil. At the end of my week in Brazil, the sixty-five or so who attended decided to start an association of theological schools involved in extension, the Brazilian acronym for which was AETTE.

Ten years later, in 1976, I was invited back to speak at their annual meeting and to note their progress in theological education by extension (TEE). Again, at their twentieth anniversary I was invited back, but this time I discovered that they had dropped out the phrase "by extension" in their title, and that therefore the basic ideas in their founding had succumbed in a reversion to the residential tradition--even though it was more true than ever that all of the roaring growth of evangelicalism in Latin America consisted of movements that first selected charismatic leaders,
then trained them, rather than groups that first trained young people and then hoped they would
grow up to become leaders. Such is the dead hand of tradition!

In the ten years at Fuller, 1966-76, I met missionaries from many traditions, with loads of
diverse grassroots experience in many lands. This period afforded me personally an
incomparable education. In those first ten growing years of the school, students could not
matriculate without at least three years of field experience. The result was as if I were the student
and the students were the teachers!

It fell to me to teach TEE, statistics, and the history of missions. I was especially delighted
with the history assignment, which introduced me to a vast additional array of new insights. This
became my major focus. Ever since my first year at Princeton Seminary I had been a disciple-at-
a-distance of Kenneth Scott Latourette. My job now required an overall perspective of both
historical and contemporary global realities. On the latter level I worked with Gerald Anderson
to establish a scholarly society (the American Society of Missiology) that would bring together
"Catholic, Conciliar, and Conservative" streams of mission scholarship. He became the first
president, and I the first secretary.

I say "conservative," although it would appear that, historically, the pietist-evangelical stream
of Christendom has been anything but conservative. The reality of unconservative
"conservatism" is revealed by the fact that I had no trouble at the IFMA/EFMA Greenlake '71
conference signing up sixty-five evangelical mission leaders as charter members of this new
scholarly society in which Roman Catholics were scheduled to have a prominent place.

For the first three years of the ASM, I was the secretary and de facto business manager of the
society's journal, Missiology: An International Review. This journal started out with a bang, in
part because I was able to negotiate a merger with the nineteen-year-old Practical Anthropology
journal (and its three thousand subscribers), a journal that had all along been an enterprising and
sprightly product of what you might call radical evangelicals in the world of missions--many of
them proté:gé:s of Eugene Nida, whom I had followed with great respect ever since I had first
met him a quarter of a century earlier as a professor in the Wycliffe Bible Translators' Summer
Institute of Linguistics in 1948, at the University of Oklahoma at Norman.

For an additional three years I was unable to shake off the business manager's job, but it was
not difficult, in view of my experience for some years in the publishing firm called the William
Carey Library, which had been founded to assist in the publication of theses and dissertations
that were pouring out of the Fuller School of World Mission in ever greater number. Although
my wife and I took a deep breath before starting this publishing firm, it was not an unfeasible
undertaking in view of my engineering degree, experience in small business development in
Guatemala, plus teaching accounting both in Spanish and English. Little did I know that all this
experience--and a very great deal more--would soon be required in a far larger project than a
publishing company.

**TWO DISTURBING THOUGHTS**

The most momentous upheaval in my adult life came as a result of a slowly growing
awareness of two serious limitations in contemporary mission strategy. First, pioneer
missionaries in the Protestant tradition had become planters and then caretakers and then, finally,
not much more than spectators in a vast global network of "national" church movements. That
achievement was their pride and glory. Second, at the same time, mission agencies from the
West almost uniformly failed to pass on a pioneer missionary vision to the "younger churches."
Missionaries were now wonderfully helpful to national churches that had been the product of
earlier pioneer work; they were not now helping those national churches to do their own pioneer mission work elsewhere.

The Melanesian Brotherhood, for example, mentioned in Alan Tippett's analysis of the Solomon Islands, was a historically unusual event in mission experience. The very concept of Third World missions was not yet discussed very widely. In 1981 I contributed an article to the International Review of Mission entitled "The New Missions and the Mission of the Church," referring to the sprouting up of new mission-sending structures in the so-called mission lands. I was surprised that the keen eye of the editor, in pointing out certain details, also revealed in our early correspondence a total misunderstanding of the concept of new mission sending structures sprouting up in the so-called mission lands.

The hue and cry of the major denominational missions was to turn things over to national leaders and go home, or continue on a very passive, humble basis. But it seemed to me that practically no one was concerned about the still untouched ethnic pockets that, in aggregate, amounted to a significant global reality--over half the world population. The theory that local churches will automatically reach out successfully across cultural boundaries to near neighbors, however plausible at first glance, is all too often the least likely thing to happen--due to almost inevitable resentments at that level. Still needed are those who come from afar.

DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT

After three years at the Fuller Theological Seminary School of World Mission, I was asked by Zondervan to add an updating chapter to the seventh volume of Zondervan's edition of Latourette's History of the Expansion of Christianity. The unreduced version of my chapter came out separately as a little book entitled The Twenty-Five Unbelievable Years. There I observed that although between 1945 and 1969 the global colonial world had dramatically collapsed, the "younger churches" were for the most part left standing on their feet. The member denominations of the NCCCUSA had provided 75 percent of all American missionaries in 1925, but by 1969 far less than 10 percent, even though the total number (deriving from many new sources) was at an all-time high. As Latourette had generalized, vitality is usually accompanied by profusion and confusion.

In 1974, the first of the Lausanne congresses took place in Switzerland. I was asked to present a paper focusing on the remaining task of mission. In those days most mission writers were still talking in terms of countries or major religious blocs. My focus at Lausanne was on the subtle barriers that subdivide human society at a vastly more detailed level than is implied by broad categories. (People used to think of "Chinese" as a single language, when it would be equally reasonable to think of "European" as a language.)

Also by 1974 (after two years discussing it), the fledgling American Society of Missiology had unofficially launched a call for a meeting in 1980 comparable to the 1910 meeting at Edinburgh, a global-level meeting of mission executives focused on finishing the task. It brought together an even larger number of mission agency delegates, fully one-third of them from the Third World, under the banner of World Consultation on Frontier Missions, and under the watchword "A Church for Every People by the Year 2000."

Looking back, we see that a major shift of attention in mission circles has taken place as perceptions of the ethnic realities around the world have brought into focus "unreached peoples" rather than "unoccupied territories" (the 1910 phrase). Very little in the way of "territories" remained totally unoccupied by 1974, but literally thousands of "nations" (in the
ethnic sense) were still sealed off by language and culture from any existing witness—and were not even on the agenda of the strategic dialogue in scholarly and agency circles.

THE FINAL PLUNG

At the end of ten years at Fuller—in 1976, at age 52—my own conscience would not let me continue as merely a professor. My wife and I felt we had to leave the scintillating and rewarding atmosphere of the Fuller School of World Mission and attempt to establish a major base for promoting and focusing increased efforts on outreach to those thousands of "frontier" groups within which there was not yet anything like a "national" church. The founding in Pasadena, California, of the U.S. Center for World Mission and its associated university in 1976 and 1977, respectively, pitched us into a whole new world of pressure, anxiety, and uncertainty.

Making the decision in the first place brought to mind the thought that "risks are not to be taken on the basis of their probability of success but in terms of the potential of their result." What we attempted had little chance of success, but if successful, carried high importance. That was enough to go on. This change from a settled professorship into a totally new, unsponsored project requiring millions of dollars was the hinge of our lives. One of our daughters came up with the thought that "faith is not the confidence that God will do what you want him to do for you. Faith is the conviction that you can attempt what he wants done and leave the consequences with him." At no point in the years of struggle to pay for a thirty-three-acre campus was I able to feel confident that we would succeed. But, what I never doubted for a second was that our efforts, whatever the risk, were worth investing in even the possibility of success. I recalled what Dawson Trotman, the founder of the Navigators, had said in my hearing years earlier, "Never do what others can do or will do if there are things God wants done that others either can't do or won't do."

Across the years we have spawned many programs, but the more important growth has been in seasoned and dedicated members of the Frontier Mission Fellowship (a kind of religious order) that is the basic entity guarding and governing our strategies. Without these real people and their long-term commitment and vitality, the property for which we struggled so long would be worth nothing.

Now, nineteen years (and quite a few miracles) later, we feel deeply gratified by the small role we have had in the much larger swirl of God's initiatives around the world focusing on the remaining frontiers of witness. All four of our children are occupied in global mission, on three continents. In all this we have continually underestimated the number of people who are responsive to information about the work of God across the world. We have been sponsoring a three-semester-unit course "Perspectives on the World Christian Movement," offering it in eighty places in the United States each year. Over 22,000 have taken this fifteen week program. The 944-page Perspectives Reader associated with this course has topped the 100,000 mark, being used in over one hundred colleges and seminaries. As a follow-on, we are now in the midst of preparing a seamless, integrated, interdisciplinary seminary-plus-global-mission curriculum ("World Christian Foundations"), the first part of which is already being used in both colleges and seminaries. Designed for off-campus use, this massive project will, we hope, be better than nothing for hundreds of thousands of pastors around the world--nine out of ten of whom, in the Two-Thirds World, have had no formal theological training.

SENDING AND SURVIVAL

To "declare his glory among the nations" is not a technically definable blueprint for action,
but it is sufficiently clear in its necessary outworking to allow a truly amazing global fellowship of literally hundreds of agencies linked together eagerly and fruitfully. I speak of the unprecedented network of the AD 2000 and Beyond movement, an enterprise with a leadership no longer dominated by Westerners--a movement with a vision that outstrips that of most Western entities. For Archbishop Temple the "younger churches" were "the great new fact of our time." Now the great new fact is the mission initiative of those same--now much more numerous--younger churches.

As with most of the others writing in this series, the most significant "lump" for me to digest in my lifetime has been the cross-cultural experience of a missionary career. On the basis of that experience, I have concluded that the Christian tradition down through the ages could not have survived had it not attempted to "give away its faith"--that is, sought to transcend the cultural institutionalization of its own experience in the process of mission outreach, the missionary process of sharing faith across cultures.

With other writers in this series, in particular H. D. Beeby, I am convinced that one of the most important functions of the missionary movement is to continuously rescue the faith itself from becoming lost through institutional and cultural evolution and absorption, and that this rescuing, renewing process is largely unintentional and unnoticeable; it is mostly the by-product of earnest attempts at cross-cultural outreach. Western outreach, however small and pathetic in any absolute sense, has inevitably involved many church traditions in "contextualization," the startling and astringent process of "distinguishing the leaven from the lump"--to employ Eugene Hillman's metaphor. That process of trying to make our faith understandable cross-culturally has in many different but vital ways pumped back into the home church a constantly renewed sense of what is, and what is not, the leaven. While a communal faith requires culture, just as the crustaceans require a shell, the life is not in the shell.

Now, however, thanks in part to Lesslie Newbigin--and Beeby--I realize that the equally urgent other end of contextualization is decontextualization. Unless we become as serious about rediscovering the true faith in contrast to the assumptions of our own culture, we will trumpet an uncertain sound wherever else we go. But the root of this danger is the distinct possibility that a sending church can no longer distinguish the leaven from the lump. This is a case where we must (here at home) depend on corrective insights from our own cross-cultural workers and, yes, brothers and sisters from the other "mission lands." Frankly, I see the world church as being more than just the result of missionary outreach. By now it is an essential element in the survival of the West itself.

Added material
Ralph D. Winter and his family served for ten years in Guatemala under Presbyterian (U.S.A.) auspices, working with Native Americans of the Mayan tradition. He then taught for ten years in the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary. Ralph and his wife, Roberta, then moved into a new career in the establishment of the U.S. Center for World Mission and its associated university in Pasadena, California, which emphasize mobilization and education in the specific sphere of frontier mission outreach to groups with little or no Christian influence.