

where World Vision staff and assets were repeatedly exposed to threats that resulted from their intended neutrality. 'Managing Staff Stress and Trauma' covers experiences from Cambodia and particularly highlights and challenges the assumptions that both expatriate and local staff have the same psychological needs after being exposed to the same crisis and that the standard 'talk therapy' approach to trauma counselling used extensively in the West, is relevant in different cultural contexts. There is a challenge too for an agency such as World Vision as its staff may be confronted by fundamental traumas associated with the nature of God and suffering.

The bulk of this excellent book is dedicated to lessons learned from World Vision's operations in a variety of complex emergency settings as a contribution to the discussion on best practice. 'Holistic Care of Children' focuses on the extremely difficult dilemmas confronting World Vision staff in Rwanda where the needs of children were so comprehensive that the organization needed to decide whether to provide one particular type of support or provide a broad-based programme covering a variety of activities. 'The Gile Airlift' examines the decision-making surrounding the use of aircraft in maintaining and supporting food security. The chapter on 'Agricultural Recovery' continues the food security theme and establishes the importance of a development vision from day one of the relief operation and the need to promote a participatory approach. In the end, a clear and determined focus on agricultural recovery as soon as possible means less reliance on extended food aid and supplementary feeding programmes.

Other chapters are concerned with the peace process and the importance of healing wounds before any

meaningful attempt at building sustainable development can be made ('Building on Local Capacities for Peace' and 'Rwanda: Telling a Different Story'). 'Setting the Stage for Resettlement' focuses on the complexities of post conflict resettlement, looked at through World Vision's Malian refugee programme, following the civil war in Mali between 1990 and 1996. The programme targeted women and had a direct impact and 'a powerful indirect effect on refugees' efforts to rebuild their communities upon return' (p. 216).

The thoughtful final chapter on 'Conflict, Repression and Politics' asks the direct question, 'Dare NGOs Hope to Do Any Good?' and concludes that where an unaccountable state is also repressive, an NGO has to set its own limits in relation to the regime and should seek to minimize any potential for the state to gain economically from an NGO, while avoiding legitimization by the state, promoting participatory development and choosing its partners very careful. Clearly there are no easy answers and to a great extent agencies such as World Vision are still on a learning curve. The sharing of experiences such as those detailed in this book, however, can only help. Reading the commitment and dedication in these chapters leads to the conclusion that what is so very important for the future is to garner an accumulated knowledge and experience that can be drawn upon by those who are in the process of setting up operations, thus avoiding the continual re-invention of the wheel. World Vision would not claim to have the answers – but it can quite rightly claim to have accumulated practical action that will contribute to best practice. In a constantly changing and increasingly complex world, in humanitarian terms that is

all that can be asked of them.

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Mission as Transformation: A theology of the whole gospel
(Regnum, 1999) xviii + 522pp np

This book collects 25 previously published articles and conference reports, documenting and interpreting a major movement of global Evangelicalism in mission over the last 25 years. The dichotomy between evangelism and social action has been overcome by arguing the theological and biblical validation of social action as obedience to God, as down-to-earth demonstration of the reality of faith in Christ and life in the Spirit, and as witness to the kingdom of God. The measure and the goal of 'development' is the humanity revealed redemptively in Jesus Christ, the new Adam, the image of the invisible God. Development cannot be merely earthly or secular: because it signs what God promises, even the cup of cold water given in his name has eternal weight. If development and social action is so understood, not simply by theorists, but in the day-by-day spirituality of practitioners, evangelism can be integral to it. Evangelism is nested in development rather than being an external competitor. Evangelism occurs within the invitation to everyone to put their faith and hope in God who is behind, and in, and beyond truly human development. In this kind of evangelism, people are not invited to be the mere recipients of aid and development, but to become partners of God and all his creatures in working and praying, imagining and

venturing towards the full realization of the promise of God. To be evangelized is not to get religion, but to be invited to live life fully on earth. Human dignity is a criterion of true development; and it can be both by leaving people in poverty and by treating them as nothing more than needy consumers. Rather human dignity involves being called to share in responsible, humanizing action which reaches out to what God has for us, far beyond what we can ask or think. If evangelism indwells development in this way, development also depends on evangelism, for without it, people do not see or enter the fullness of what is given them in their created, redeemed God-oriented being.

I hope this is not misleading as a summary indication of the heart of the movement recorded in this book. It may be inaccurate, for the wealth of material can be sources of confusion and there are many questions still to be answered. This book has been made mostly by activists who want to get things done; by preachers who inspire rather than research; by conferences which may start with divisive problems, but are counted successful because their outcomes are at least workable compromises. Any living movement in the world has to carry open questions, tensions and confusions, even though at the same time, it needs to be honest about them and to be constantly sorting them out.

Two kinds of question about this book and the movement it represents need further attention, one conceptual, the other contextual. For me, a focus for the *conceptual* question is the meaning of 'transformation'. Transformation has been chosen as a brand-name, and even as a key criterion of what mission is about. Is it a clear concept? It is used in several different meanings which do not cohere, although it

may be optimistically assumed they do. The word 'transformation' purports not only to symbolize a commanding value, but to communicate intelligible meaning. But I am left confused by the word and confusion erodes its authority. It does not seem to me to be a clear and efficient way of summarizing 'mission' as it is in the 'whole gospel'.

There have been theories of progress, and of revolution, according to which humanity and its conditions of life can be changed so radically and totally (transformed) that human life will be freed from limitation, suffering and evil. There have been Christians who have conflated such visions of transformation with the promise of the gospel. Where that is done, we can see what mission 'as transformation' means. But we know that even our best historical changes do not amount to a transformation which realizes what the gospel of the kingdom promises – a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness. The kingdom of God as seen in the gospels has to be understood as both 'already' and 'not yet' (as some papers here remind us extensively). Mission is done in this world, between the times. 'Mission in faithful and obedient hope of the transformation which is not yet' is significantly different from the snappier 'mission as transformation' ('as' is arguably a more problematic word than 'transformation' in this formula). Mission cannot be understood as transformation by putting all the weight on the already. Of course, Christians will not do anything to belittle the significance of what God has 'already' done in Christ, especially in the world which knows Christ so little and despises him so much. But the 'already' in Jesus was and is not the wholistic transformation of the world or humanity; nor is the revelation of

the true recipe for making this world a better place. The 'already' in Christ includes pain and sacrifice contrary to worldly wisdom. As some papers make clear, common ways of thinking are overturned by the kingdom, because Jesus took the way of the cross, and gives it to us as ours. If mission includes sacrifice and suffering, it requires us to live through the not-yet of the transformation we long for. Mission is not transformation, though it may be public, historically enacted *prayer* for transformation.

Questioning the word 'transformation' in this theory of mission could be no more than a pedantic quibble. I would argue, rather, that it identifies issues that need to be clarified for the sake of good witness and action.

Help with conceptual questions of this sort could be supplied by more critical and widely ranging historical *contextualizations* than this work provides. We need to know more than it has space or inclination to tell us about what was going on in evangelicalism before this twenty-five year stage of the journey of evangelicalism in mission. And more about how it relates to Roman Catholic and 'ecumenical' mission thinking. Evangelicalism is wonderfully entrepreneurial and pragmatic for the sake of the gospel; it borrows and imitates whatever it can make use of and does not spend effort recording its debts. Yet to understand itself better, it needs to do that. Perhaps that task calls for a few more conferences and another big book.

Wider contextual investigations may throw light on the question of the meaning and function of the word 'transformation'. We are told on page 265 that it was adopted in 1983, at the Wheaton Consultation. Two years later, the International

Association for Mission Studies, meeting in Harare, took as its theme *Christian Mission and Human Transformation*. The word was in the air. The IAMS report printed in full Bible studies on transformation, given in one of the conference workshops by John Pobee. It is not clear, however, how the lucidly analysed biblical material fitted with the address, given to the conference by the then President of Zimbabwe, the Revd Canaan Banana, on 'the gospel of Jesus Christ and Revolutionary Transformation'. Here 'transformation' has a very definite contemporary meaning, thanks to Marxist and

anti-colonial rhetoric. Canaan Banana passionately demanded 'the total re-orientation of the church to the new social, economic, and political movement of the masses the churches profess to serve' (p. 16). Transformation is taken out of its churchly, religious confines – which is good; it is taken out of churchly control – which is risky; and Bible and theology are treated as instruments serving a political movement, not the source of criteria for evaluating politics, or a witness to what transcends politics – which is bad. This rhetoric is a clue to the popularity and power of the word trans-

formation in the recent past. What, by contrast, does transformation mean for us after 1989? Do we still look for the 'total re-orientation' of church and society together, only in some non-Marxist way? Or are we, for the sake of the gospel and good sense, resistant to talk of totalizing change, or to projects promising literal transformation? If so, what does the gospel mean and how can it be demonstrated in our life in the world?

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