

- been partly translated into English and published by the University of California Press (1976) under the title, Philosophical Hermeneutics.
20. Studies in the Historical Jesus, E.Fuchs, p207, SCM, 1964
 21. Themelios, Vol.5, No.2, p14. Similar statements by other scholars are to be seen, for example, in Explorations in Theology, Vol.2, C.F.Evans, p79 and Existentialism from Within, E.L.Allan, pp2 & 40, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953
 22. Studies in the Historical Jesus, p194
 23. Word and Faith, p32
 24. The Bible in Human Transformation, p4, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1973
 25. ibid, p6
 26. ibid, pp6-15
 27. Quoted by A.C.Thiselton in New Testament Interpretation, Paternoster, p313
 28. Truth and Method, p367, Sheed and Word, 1975
 29. Studies in the Historical Jesus, pp33-37
 30. The Two Horizons, A.C.Thiselton, p104
 31. Being and Time, pp95-102
 32. Studies in the Historical Jesus, p192
 33. ibid
 34. On the Way to Language, p85, Harper & Row, New York, 1971
 35. The Nature of Faith, p187
 36. Truth and Method, pp289-305
 37. ibid, p291

COMMUNICATING CHRIST CROSS-CULTURALLY

by David J. Hesselgrave

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In modern Britain alien cultures freely co-exist with those of the native British. That there are areas of misunderstanding and suspicion is evident from the recent spate of riots, which have been partly racial, as well as frequent newspaper reports of friction. Since the gospel is relevant to all men it is the responsibility of all Christians to consider how this may best be proclaimed to them. It is no longer sufficient, if ever it was, merely to preach the Word in the context of our own particular Western culture. For any who cling to that assumption here is a book both to challenge and to stimulate.

Professor Hesselgrave's book is the "ripe fruit of many years as a working missionary and now a decade and a half as a scholar in the study and in the classroom" we are informed in the Foreword. The book is aimed at the missionary, more particularly the North American missionary. The main emphasis naturally falls on situations to be met with on foreign soil. The author has clearly made a deep study of the science of communications, and it is from this perspective that the arguments of the book are developed.

There are nine major Parts, each of several chapters. In Part I the scene is set with a discussion of Communication and Mission. The basic jargon of the science is introduced and explained with the aid of diagrams (e.g. 'source' corresponding to speaker; 'respondent' corresponding to audience; 'encoding' corresponding to the transmitter of electronics; 'decoding' corresponding to the electronic receiver). Part II Communication and Culture is an analysis of the nature of 'culture' of a society and the implications for the missionary. The remaining seven Parts of the book are a further detailed analysis of culture under the aspects: world views, i.e. ways of perceiving the world; cognitive processes i.e. ways of thinking; linguistic forms, i.e. ways of expressing ideas; behavioural patterns, i.e. ways of acting; social structures, i.e. ways of interacting; media influence, i.e. ways of channelling the message; motivational resources, i.e. ways of deciding.

There are useful chapters in the book on such items as contextualisation, the vital importance of language, and the relative values of radio, TV, visual aids etc. in gospel presentation. Several of the issues handled are controversial (e.g. group conversions pp445/6).

Generally the chapters are fairly short and most are fairly easy to follow, though some in the technical realms (psychology, sociology) are occasionally hard-going. At the end of each Part there is a conclusion, problems for study and discussion, and a list of selected readings. Notes on the text are recorded at the end of the book. There are Indexes for Persons, Places and Peoples of the World, Subjects, and Scripture References.

Professor Hesselgrave's evangelical conservatism appears in statements like: "We should not overlook the fact that the authority for our message rests in the Word of God as it was written in the

autographs of the Old and New Testaments..."(p397). Again, he points out that the congregation to which Edwards preached his powerful 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God' was different from that in modern America, and suggests that adaptation is necessary. He continues: "But compromise is not called for! And it is compromise or worse that occasions the almost total lack of preaching on topics like judgement, hell and repentance today The valid reason for preaching about hell has never been to frighten people but to deliver the whole counsel of God!" (p426).

However, at certain points this reviewer was left dissatisfied. For example, in chapter 4 'Perspectives from the science of communication' it is contended that: "'the message' never exists in the sense of having an independent existence. Its existence is in the source, in the encoded form, perceived by the respondent and decoded by the respondent. Much misunderstanding would be averted if we could but grasp the truth that in a very real sense messages are in human beings - in sources and receptors - not in words or pictures or acts" (p29). (Emphasis is mine).

This basic point is developed in the context of man to man communication throughout the remainder of the book, with great cogency. However, its development in the context of God to man communication is almost nil. Scripture is God's message to man in words. The Law was written by God Himself on tablets of stone - in what sense was that message "in human beings"? Surely Professor Hesselgrave would agree that the Lord Jesus Christ, the supreme revelation of God to man, was more than merely a message 'in a human being'; did He not also exist independently prior to incarnation? The whole question raised is not trivial: can the analysis of communications presented here be accommodated to Biblical teaching on revelation?

A second example is that in dealing with concrete relational thinkers (e.g. Chinese) the following quotation is used from Hajime Nakamura: "We can see a distinctive feature of the Chinese way of thinking, i.e. the true way is not to be obtained by words - not through universal propositions - but only through concrete experience" (p225). Yet later we find the statement by Professor Hesselgrave himself: "Experiences are usually capable of more than one interpretation" (p230). So it is rather strange to find him

suggesting the communicator should: "make full use of legitimate visual forms ... the potential inherent in drama and ritual" (p232) Though this may be a legitimate option from the perspective of communications science, we enquire as to its Biblical warrant? To the Galatians Paul wrote: "... before (your) eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you" (Gal.3:1) and he is referring to the "hearing of faith". Paul preached the Word. To the Corinthians he wrote: "... it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor.1:21). Where in the New Testament do we find evidence that they used other methods of communicating the gospel? Do we imagine the Lord did not cater for concrete relational thinkers in His appointed means of proclamation? Surely our fundamental need is to know the same abundance of power as the apostles and others in revival times, and not a resort to communication methodology, much less indulgence in theatrical performances?

On page 421 Professor Hesselgrave states the Biblical position: "Neither fact nor feeling, logic nor enthusiasm, can constitute the sine qua non of repentance and faith The Holy Spirit must convict (elengchein) (John 16:8)! The Word must be heard (Romans 10:17)!" However, nerve later fails him as we read: "It is one thing to appeal to men to repent, believe the gospel, and 'grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ' (Eph.4: 15). However, it is quite another thing to succeed in getting them to do it. The decision is theirs." (p444 emphasis mine). One cannot but sympathise with him in grappling with the issues, but because his procedure is scientific rather than Biblical, with his foundation ill-laid, the building is somewhat disproportionate.

With these qualifications, this book has much to say to ministers and missionaries, and we ought not to neglect to listen carefully. All who desire to know more about the peoples, races and cultures of the world will benefit from reading this book. There is a good deal of useful information and many stimulating insights. The layout permits easy use for reference with culture-related problems. It will not present solutions to them, but it might often help in understanding. In one pithy sentence Professor Hesselgrave makes the point: "An ounce of understanding is worth a pound of recrimination" (p227). Another arresting sentence to more bilious effect is on page 147: "But most naturalists perceive pulpit pounding as being the preacher's proxy for a penetrating pondering of profound

problems." Are all alliterations artful?

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A review of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC VI) will appear in the next issue.

Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally An Introduction to Missionary Communication. View larger. ISBN-10: 0310368111. He is the author of numerous articles and books including Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally, Planting Churches Cross-Culturally, and Paradigms in Conflict: 10 Key Questions in Missions Today.