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POINTS OF VIEW

Christian Education and Nation Building: A Focus on Nigeria

EZEKIEL AJANI 

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Abstract

This article discusses the relevance of Christian education to nation building with a

important contributions of Christian education to nation building were identified.

These include the provision of a basis for Christian stewardship;the provision for
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10656219.2013.808972?scroll=top&needAccess=true#>

the basis for Christian leadership; the provision of a basis for Christ-like advocacy for equity and fairness in the rule of law, and the provision of an adequate Christian response to the menace of corruption in Nigeria. It is hoped that if persons who have received Christian education allow such exposure to permeate their lives and activities, then the Nigerian society can improve.

[← Previous article](#)

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Notes

See also other biblical injunctions to parents on teaching the children: Hebrew 12:7-8; Proverbs 3:1-12; 19:18;29:15.

See www.bibletools.com Accessed December 15,2012.

http://www.famousquotes.me.uk/speeches/john_F_Kennedy/5.htm,Accessed on December 10th,2011.

See <http://saharareporters.com/news-page/md-abubakar-confirmed-inspector-general-police>.Accessed December 15,2012. See also the front page of Punch Newspaper,Marcl 18,2012.

Additional information

Notes on contributors

EZEKIEL AJANI

Ezekiel Ajani teaches in the Faculty of Theological Studies,The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, Oyo State Nigeria.He is at present in the Department of Intercultural Studies at Trinity International University,Deerfield Illinois of further studies.

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Contents

Editorial

3 The Importance of the Church and Church Planting Marvin J.Newell

Articles

4 Why We Should Plant Churches as If There Will be a Coup D'etat Any Day Jean Johnson

7 Church Planting in the Hindu Context Timothy Shultz

10 Generating Church Planting Movements Among Buddhists Alex G.Smith

13 Outlining a Biblical Theology of Islam:Practical Implications for Disciple Makers and Church Planting Warrick Faroh

17 The Growth Challenge: Do We Dare to Take an Honest Look? L.D.Waterman

21 Beauty,The Arts, and Church Planting as an Act of Creating Beauty Bill Drake

23 Business as Mission and the Planting of Churches Larry Sharp

26 The Place of Orality in Church Planting Jerry Wiles

30 Mobilization and Training for Church Planting in the Global Diaspora John Baxter

33 How TW2020 is a Catalyst for Church Planting Luis Bush and Paul Eshleman

40 Three Insights that Facilitate Nationwide Disciple Making Movements Russell D.Mitcheli

43 The Art of Dying Well: Missions and the Reality of Martyrdom Gregory E.Lamb

Voices from the Past

46 A Fallacy in Church Planting:A Fable Charles Troutman

Missiographic

48 2018 By the Numbers: A Year in Review December 2018|Volume 6 /issue 4

Book Reviews

50 Going Global:A Congregation's Introduction to Mission Beyond Our Borders *Edited by Gordon W. Kling, and Tony G. Smith*

51 Voices from the Field: Conversations with Our Global Family Edited by T.J.MacLeslie

52 Receptor-Oriented Communication for Hui Muslims in China,with Special Reference to Church Planting By Enoch Kim

53 Kingdom Pursuit: Exploring the Many Facets of Missions Edited by Carl D.Chaplin and Sue Harris

54 The Big Surprise:A History of the Christian and Missionary Alliance in the Congo 1885-1908 By Rene Holvast

55 Cultural Insights for Christian Leaders: New Directions for Organizations Serving God's Mission By Douglas McConnell

56 The Kingdom Unleashed:How Jesus'1st-Century Kingdom Values Are Transforming Thousands of Cultures and Awakening His Church By Jerry Trousdale, Glenn Sunshine, and Gregory Bendit

57 Reciprocal Missions: Short-Term Missions That Serve Everyone By D.J.Schuetze and Phil Steine

58 The Kingdom of God Has No Borders: A Global History of American Evangelicals By Melani McAlister

Reciprocal Missions: Short-Term Missions That Serve Everyone

By D.J. Schuetze and Phil Steine

We're often warned to not "throw away the baby with the bathwater." Short-term missions work is fraught with many challenges, so the authors of *Reciprocal Missions* propose several ways to get rid of the dirty bathwater while protecting the baby of cross-cultural service. D.J. Schuetze, a missionary who has hosted many short-term teams, and Phil Steiner, a facilitator of short-term mission teams, share the wisdom they have gained from decades of experience.

This book summarizes the best practices of healthy short-term missions. Each of the chapters addresses different issues related to short-term missions, such as biblical vision, motives, and the use of money. The authors argue that short-term mission projects have the potential to be a blessing to all involved, but only if they are reciprocal: "The goal is to show the value of a truly reciprocal mission relationship and how to build one" (16). Short-term mission projects must serve and benefit everyone involved: those who send, those who go, those who receive the mission team members, and those who receive the services provided by the missions team.

The motivation for short-term missions must be love and hospitality in order for a mutually beneficial relationship, that is, a relationship of trust, to develop between the short-term mission team and the host community. To do so, there is the need for unbroken, effective communication

between all involved. This trust and communication will allow a thorough, mutual assessment of the project throughout its duration in order to ensure that all parties are benefitting from the project.

There are several major strengths of this book. The book is easy to read and, owing to the rich experiences of the authors, has concrete illustrations that support their arguments. The book offers an insightful critique of American Christianity, such as how consumerism negatively impacts short-term missions. In addition, the book offers practical ideas for building lasting relationships between short-term mission teams and host communities.

On the other hand, the book could be enriched by discussing the spiritual dimensions that are important for short-term missions. Some of these include prayer and power encounters, particularly, as they relate to the majority-world countries (Mexico and Ghana) where the authors have served extensively. Nevertheless, this book would be a valuable tool for everyone involved in organizing and hosting short-term missions. In addition, it will serve as an eye-opener to churches and individuals who send short-term teams, revealing some of the major problems encountered, as well as pointing towards the need to have truly reciprocal relationships.

P&D Publishing, 2018

San Diego, CA

217 pages

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Reviewed by **Ezekiel Ajani**,
PhD, Trinity Evangelical Divinity
School, lecturer in religion and
philosophy, Bowen University (Ni-
geria), and adjunct professor of
intercultural studies, the Nigerian
Baptist Theological Seminary.

For Further Reading

Brian M. Howell. *Short-Term Mission: An Ethnography of Christian Travel Narrative and Experience*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP

Academics, 2012.

Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert with Katie Casselberry. *Helping Without Hurting in Short-Term Missions: Participant's Guide*. Chicago.

IL: Moody Publishers, 2014.

EMQ, Vol. 50, No.2, pp. 249-250. Copyright © 2014 Billy Graham Center. All rights reserved. Not to be reproduced or copied in any form without written permission from EMQ editors.

I Am Not Afraid: Demon Possession and Spiritual Warfare

Posted on April 1, 2014 by

by Robert H. Bennett

Concordia Printing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave, St. Louis, MO 63118, 2013, 214 pages, \$24.98.

-Reviewed by Ezekiel O. Ajani, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois.

Demon possession and its panacea of exorcism is a debatable topic, even among Christians. In 1973, William Friedkin directed the movie titled "The Exorcist." The film, which was based on the novel by William Peter Blatty, was a true story which occurred in 1949. For many, the film which portrayed spiritual warfare was simply a fantastic myth.

For Robert Bennett, the issue of demonic possession and exorcism is not treated as a myth or fable—it is an ongoing reality. In this epic study, Bennett brings to the consciousness of the reader the actuality of spiritual warfare based on the experiences of the Malagasy Lutheran Church. He notes that power encounters are constant realities in the clash which occurs between the gospel and traditional religions.

The book of eleven chapters is divided into two major parts. The first part is a careful

documentation of the stories of over sixty Malagasy people who are recent converts in the

Lutheran Church. Bennett narrates their experiences of demonic possession prior to their coming

to Christ, their conversion, and their present lives of peace and freedom from that demonic

possession. Here, we see a Christian response by the Malagasy Lutheran Church to the religio-

cultural and social malady of her context.

The second part of the book is a theoretical grounding from the Bible and church history on

demonic possession and exorcism. The author validates the reality of spiritual warfare by

alluding to related encounters between Jesus and the demoniacs in the Gospels. Jesus practiced

exorcism as he cast out demons by the power of God. Demon possessions have been and will

continue; however, Satan is wounded and eschatologically defeated. In historic Lutheranism, the

affirmation of the reality of Satan, demons, and diabolical possessions have remained part of the

group's confessional teaching and praxis.

Bennett is to be commended for this work, which provides a platform (the Lutheran Church of Madagascar) through which the Church can learn about the realities of the existence of Satan and Jesus' victory over him, particularly in light of the enlightenment's denial of spiritual forces.

Another helpful insight from the book is that when churches provide a relevant response to its contextual challenges, tremendous growth occurs, as in the case of the Malagasy Lutheran Church. In a future reprint, the second part of the book could be expanded to accommodate ecumenical voices in support of the arguments of the book, other than just the Lutheran voices.

Check these titles:

Nelson, Edward P. 2003. *The Handbook for Spiritual Warfare*. Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas

Olukoya, D.K., 2011. *Power over Tropical Demons*. Lagos: Battle Cry Christian Ministries.

Wagner, C. Peter, ed. 1991. *Territorial Spirits: Insights on Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare from Nineteen Christian Leaders*. England: Sovereign World Limited.

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<https://missionexus.org/i-am-not-afraid-demon-possession-and-spiritual-warfare/>

Sent Forth: African Missionary work in the West

Posted on October 1,2015 by

by Harvey C.Kwiyani

Orbis Books. 2014.

-Reviewed by Ezekiel O.Ajani,Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

Immigration continues to generate debates in the U.S. The 1965 Immigration Act and subsequent reforms have enabled millions of immigrants to relocate to the U.S.Many of these are Christians from Africa. What do Christians in the West think about them?

Owing to the global expansion of Christianity,migrations and the decline of Christianity in the West,Harvey Kwiyani theorizes that the contemporary understanding of missions would differ significantly from the past two centuries. One of the implications of this difference in meaning is that the representative identity of a missionary in this century is not likely to be a westerner serving somewhere in remote Africa. Rather,such a missionary could be Mexican, Nigerian, or Korean serving anywhere in the world.

Migration and globalization continue to make Christianity experience diversity in culture, race, theology, and so on. For this reason, the author hints that prior to engaging cultural diversity in the world,there is the need for the Church to negotiate cultural diversity within Christianity itself.Unfortunately,Kwiyani noted that Western Christianity is yet to accept Majority World Christianity in the West,owing to the former labelling the later as syncretic.

In the book of seven chapters,Kwiyani explores the encounter of African Christianity with Western Christianity in the West.Post-colonial African Christianity is said to be unique. Its context, identity, expressions, and theology are different from Western Christianity and this makes it difficult for the two to work together.

In light of this development, the author's purpose is to "initiate a conversation" to change the present situation by encouraging "a multicultural missionary movement."Such collaboration is believed to be vital for the identity and mission of the Church. In the phenomenon dubbed "blessed reflex," the author describes these African churches as instrumental in reinvigorating Christianity in the West since they declare the gospel in the former heartlands of Christianity.As they do this,Kwiyani argues for the need for cooperation from Western Christianity. This is because both Majority World and Western Christians are all "foreigners" on a common mission in Christ.

Kwiyani is to be commended for this epic book based on both personal experiences and scholarship. Also, the audacity to bring to fore discussions concerning the unfriendly

relationships between Western and Majority World Christianity in the West is appreciated. He rightly identifies "feelings of superiority," "race," and "power" as issues plaguing these groups in the West. He fittingly ends his work by advocating for mutual love between both groups in

order to foster God's mission. In a possible reprint, it would be helpful to delve deeper into practical ways in which African immigrants' churches and Western churches could cooperate.

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<https://missionexus.org/becoming-the-gospel-paul-participation-and-mission/>

Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission

Posted on July 1, 2016 by

Michael J. Gorman. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2015.

-Reviewed by Ezekiel O. Ajani, PhD, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois.

Go on in the work where to God has called you, and He will do all things well. I hope our preachers preach and live the gospel-I am." These were the words of John Wesley in a letter to George Merryweather on December 20, 1766. Here, Wesley expresses the desire that preachers would live the gospel they preach as he did. With a focus on Paul, Michael J. Gorman addresses a similar issue of living or becoming the gospel that we preach.

In this monograph of eight chapters, Gorman, who holds the Raymond E. Brown Chair in Biblical Studies and Theology at St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore, Maryland, succinctly presents an exegetical treatment of Paul's letters. This book is the third in Gorman's works on Pauline writings. The central theme of *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission* and its precursors by the same author is that as early as the first Christian century, "Paul wanted the communities he addressed not merely to believe the gospel but to become the gospel, and in so doing to participate in the very life and mission of God" (p. 2). Thus, Paul's letters invite Christian communities both then and now to participate in the mission of God by becoming the gospel.

'Becoming' relates to the transformative effect of the gospel. God's purpose in the world is transformation-making a new creation. As we believe and become the gospel, we join God in his mission in the world. Therefore, the life of the Church cannot be separated from its witness to the world. Our participation in mission is a natural and necessary consequence of the salvation we have in Christ.

In the subsequent chapters of the book, the author discusses from Paul's writings some important themes on participatory mission. Paul advocates the need for all Christians to participate in *missio Dei* in their respective contexts. Scripture not only encourages believers to participate in this mission, but also equips and empowers them for this task.

Much is to be appreciated in this book. One of its important insights in contemporary times is the need for Christians to be unabashed in living out their faith in Christ. (Although, we must admit that the author does not clearly indicate what that means.) Our salvation in Christ is not just a private matter; it is meant to be lived out in our daily activities and relationships. It is for this reason that Gorman notes that a "more robust understanding of the gospel radically alters everything without losing the message of forgiveness and eternal life" (p. 298). Our vertical

relationship of salvation in Christ must be translated into our horizontal relationship 'becoming'
in action the gospel in which we have believed.

Check these titles:

Gorman, Michael J. 2001. *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

_____. 2009. *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Michael J. Gorman. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2015.