

# Syncretism and Capitalism<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

In an enlightening article, the South African missiologist Willem Saayman describes the missiological situation in Russia.<sup>2</sup> One of his postgraduate students, a Russian-born evangelical Protestant, Peter Penner (an ethnic German) answered the question of one of his examiners, "How would Russians in general react to foreign missionaries coming to help them?" by stating bluntly: "It depends on how they come."<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, it depends on how they come. For instance, they should not ignore that already before Gorbachev there were more Christians in Russia than members of the Communist Party and that after almost a century of state-directed atheistic propaganda. They should not "approach Russian people as if their thousand years of Christian culture does not exist, and wish to evangelize without even learning Russian." Indeed,

...some foreign missionaries operate as if they work under the assumption "before us there was nothing!" This is totally unacceptable, the more so in a context where the religious and cultural domains are so thoroughly intertwined as in Russia. There is no way that the re-evangelization of Russia can therefore be undertaken apart from the Russian Orthodox Church. That is in any case the conclusion of experienced Protestants such as Reimer, Penner and Muller.<sup>4</sup>

Because the Russian churches (both Protestant and Orthodox) are very poor, there is a serious danger of creating "a new dependent class of 'rice Christians.'" In this respect serious warning signs are flashing, reminding us of lessons we should have learned from mission history."<sup>5</sup>

But there is also the problem that the Russian Orthodox Church tries to become a new state church. On the other hand, the Protestants are divided and are becoming more and more divided. There are already at least six separate Protestant seminaries/Bible schools operating in the St. Petersburg area alone. Some have very little relationship with the Orthodox Theological Academy. Saayman concludes his article by stating:

(The) First World has seemingly learnt very little from the total Third World mission experience of more than two centuries. Is it still acceptable at the end of the twentieth century, with the benefit of two hundred years of hindsight, to formulate mission policy "on the run," during tea breaks, between evangelistic meetings, between planning committees for church planting and rescue missions?

Saayman's analysis is complemented by an article by Archpriest Vladimir Federov, Vice-Rector of the Russian Christian Institute of Humanities in St. Petersburg. Different from Saayman, this Orthodox clergyman puts not all the blame on the side of the western missionaries. He criticizes his own church for her letargy and lack of information.<sup>6</sup> He does not go so far as Saayman who writes,

Is it not urgently necessary to revive the call for a modified moratorium on Western missionaries to the Third as well as to the (previous) Second World? ... I wish to make it very clear that I understand "moratorium" in a specific sense: not as a call to stop mission altogether, but as a call to stop doing it the way it is done now, and to start doing it in a totally different way.<sup>7</sup>

The following is an attempt at thinking theologically on this *different way*. In order to do this, I translate Saayman's alarming analysis into theological categories. What we see in Russia and indeed in many other parts of the world is a conflict between differing kinds of Christian syncretism. The western missionaries present a western European/ Christian or an American/Christian syncretism. This foreign syncretism clashes with the indigenous Russian/Christian syncretism. All of their representatives find proof texts in the Bible by which they try to prove that theirs is not a syncretism but the biblical message in its purity. *We* do contextual theology, so it is said. *The others* fall victim to syncretism.

That is a naïve but very common way of looking at things. One forgets that *all* Christian churches are by definition syncretistic. The problem is only that we do not recognize our own syncretism as such. Leonardo Boff is certainly right when he writes, "Christianity is a syncretism *par excellence*."<sup>8</sup>

## **2. Christianity as a Syncretism *par excellence***

There is, for instance, no question that the different forms of Pentecostalism are syncretistic: the transformation of Shamanism into Korean Pentecostalism, the black and African roots in American Pentecostalism, the Africanization of Christianity in Congolese Kimbanguism and in South African Zionism, the excavation of old Mexican cultural elements in Mexican Pentecostalism, the integration of popular religion in Chilean Pentecostalism, etc.<sup>9</sup>

However, so are *all* forms of Christianity, in particular western Christianities. The question is not: Syncretism, yes or no? but: What kind of syncretism? Remember the example of the exile.<sup>10</sup> The Israelites came to Babylon with the theology of the Yahwist. They brought with them a nomadic religion which quickly became dysfunctional in the new context. In order to understand this situation, one has only to remember the different parties in the exile.

The first was the "party of the old-time religion." They said, "If it was good enough for father Abraham, it's good enough for us. We know that the world is an oasis, that's how it

is written in our holy books. Yahweh has led us out of Egypt. What the Babylonians say is darkest paganism."

The second party was the party of philobabylonian Jews. They said: "Perhaps once upon a time Yahweh saved us from Egypt, but now he is vanquished. The temple is destroyed. The aristocracy has been led into captivity. We have saved a few remnants of our old documents. The Ten Commandments? What a joke! The Babylonians have them too and in an updated version. Babylon is the victorious cultural and military power. Their science explains the world."

The third party was a minority. Their views are documented in Ezekiel, in some psalms and above all in the Priestly Codex (P). They said: "We do not quarrel with the Babylonians on the origin and shape of the world. Perhaps they are right. Only, they should be a little more consistent and a little more critical, for there is no evidence of a goddess of chaos, as they pretend. The water which surrounds the world is not a goddess, but simply H<sub>2</sub>O. Sun and moon are not gods, they are lanterns (*oroth*). Blood is not the blood of a god as the Babylonians say. All these are biological and physical phenomena. They are things, not gods. And they function according to God's law. They are made by him but not identical with him." In fact, these insights are the basis of our natural sciences for as long as the moon is a god one cannot walk on him. As long as water is a goddess, one cannot submit it to electrolysis. These are things and therefore open to human investigation and manipulation. That this approach to nature also has its drawbacks is another question.

It is clear that the Jews would have disappeared in Babylon if only the two first parties had existed. We owe it to the third party that the biblical tradition could continue. It is an example of a theologically responsible syncretism. We find more such syncretisms in the Bible. The temple, for instance, was built according to Canaanite plans, by Canaanite craftsmen and architects. Only, where the idol had stood in a Canaanite temple, there was the ark and the tablets of the commandments, the signs of the covenant of God with his people.

If we turn to the New Testament, we find the same kind of syncretism. Matthew was audacious enough to state that the *magoi* (not kings) found their way to the cradle of Jesus on the basis of their pagan astrology, whilst the Bible-reading scribes in Jerusalem tried to kill little Jesus. Matthew could only be glad that he did not have to submit his Gospel to a theological commission, Pentecostal or otherwise, for approval. He would have failed.

As we shall see later, Paul too does not shy away from syncretism. His famous thirteenth chapter in 1 Corinthians is a collage of contemporary religious sayings (as one can find out by consulting any critical commentary). He even manages not to mention Christ in the whole chapter. It only becomes Christian through its inclusion in 1 Corinthians. The popular ring in 1 Cor 13 is perhaps the reason why so many marriage couples choose it as a text for their wedding.

The same applies to our modern churches, whether Catholic, Protestant or Pentecostal. They are examples of syncretism. Examples: Since Thomas Aquinas, we have accepted the methodology of logics of a pagan philosopher (Aristotle), in particular the evangelicals who say that all statements in the Bible must be harmonizable in order to be true. The supposition that logical consistency is a sign of the truth is certainly not a biblical but an Aristotelian philosophical insight. At our universities and Bible schools we function according to the laws of coherence and logic. Otherwise, we would not fit into this culture. However, this becomes fatal when we think that our *forms* of thinking are the thing itself, if we forget that there are cultures - e.g., the Chinese, the Hebrew, the Old Mexican - which do not know Aristotle and do not operate according to these laws. In more recent times, even some mathematicians and physicists have found out that the laws of logic and coherence, the laws of uncontradictibility are only true in a limited way.<sup>11</sup> And furthermore, we experience in daily life that somebody can be inconsistent but reliable. Ask any married man or woman about that. And there are persons who are totally consistent - they function like a computer - yet they have proved to be unreliable. Ask anybody who has lost his job in the last months. They experience that type of logic as a brutal law. On the other hand, the Bible is in places not consistent, but it is reliable.

It is also well known that our rites and festivals (Christmas, Easter), even the names of our days (Sunday, Monday, etc.) do not come from the New Testament but from our Celtic and Germanic forefathers, just as the form of our sermons, just as our church buildings which are often built on the foundation of pagan temples. Our Christian rites and festivals carry with them a great heritage from our pagan past. Think of our marriage ceremonies and funerals. They too go back to pagan patterns. The early Christians did not conduct funerals. "Let the dead bury their dead," they said. Christ disturbed every single funeral where he was present by raising the corpse. From this I do not draw the conclusion that pastors have to resurrect the dead instead of burying them. What is necessary is the adaptation to a new situation or, in other words, a theologically responsible syncretism. We no longer expect the *parousia* around the corner as the early Christians did. Therefore other forms of witness are demanded from us.

### **3. Religion As a Business**

Over twenty years ago we were promised a totally secularized future. The contrary is now the case. Europe is flooded by one religious wave after the other. "We cannot be unbelievers.... In order to carry through atheism one would need a deep religious commitment."<sup>12</sup> No theological discussion can do away with this fact. Religion - not just Christian religion - is part of humankind. That is why religion has to be dealt with in the same way as other givennesses of creation, like trade and commerce, *eros* and friendship.

Think of the confusion we create in people who have had religious experiences, spontaneous healings, visions or dreams. We western theologians have not been trained to deal with such experiences. So we send these people to the psychiatrist. And when this type of theology is exported to Asia it is simply a catastrophe.

That is why those people who have religious dreams do not go to the pastor but to the psychiatrist or to self-appointed gurus from overseas. Those who yearn for religious experience, for direction in their life and for fellowship, go to a charismatic prayer group, or to a Yoga class. They make a pilgrimage to the monks of Taizé, to an Indian Ashram, to a Tibetan monastery, to a Philippine ghost healer or to the German Kirchentag. But they couldn't care less about the parish around the corner. "Amongst all my patients under the age of forty, there is not one whose final problem is not a religious one," said Carl Gustav Jung.<sup>13</sup>

So also in the west, religion will not die out. The question is only in whose service will it be? Will it serve the thirst for self-realization, for inner peace of the modern westerner? Nowadays westerners have houses, cars, and clothes in abundance. Now they are seeking inspiration in drugs, in exotic tastes, in extraordinary images and sounds, in rebirthings into a former existence, in therapies and exciting feelings. The one who can "sell" feelings does good business. It is no longer a disgrace to lose possessions but it is a disgrace if we have not tried out the newest fashion in religion. Harvey Cox calls this "spiritual gluttony."<sup>14</sup> In the past, one made a journey to Africa. Nowadays one makes a trip into transcendence. After the commercialization of sex we are now watching the commercialization of religion.

With religion one can earn a lot of money, and not only in America. The clients deliver both capital and raw materials. The data banks of the business-people of the electronic church are sold and hired to political organizations and commercial mail order enterprises.

It is obvious that the western churches protest against this religious weed, against this banalization of the Holy, this commercialization of religion, and with reason - but without success. The pastors are unable to fight against the religious multi-nationals. For in this matter it is true as in everything else: The best critique of the false is the praxis of the true.

What is this praxis of the true, how do we soberly and biblically deal with this religious boom? What is a theologically responsible syncretism in this situation? Good guides for this are the biblical authors. But we will not discover their secret if we say: "The New Testament has no funeral liturgies, no military chaplains, no Sunday Schools, no theological seminars, no infant baptism, no Christmas trees, no doctrine of the trinity, no church bells; therefore all these things are wrong." We will discover this only if we ask: How did the biblical authors deal with the religious context of their time?

We will then discover that the biblical authors give differing answers, according to the situation in which they were. That means, there is not only one syncretism but also many, depending on the partners with whom we speak. After all, we have four Gospels which emerged in different cultures and situations. In certain ways their content is identical, but in others not. What they have in common is the way in which they dealt with their surrounding religious context. We shall now examine this on the basis of a concrete example.

## 4. The Syncretism of Colossians

I quote the hymn in Col 1:15-20 without the interpretations and corrections by the author of Colossians:

*He is the image (eikon) of the invisible God,  
the first-born (prototokos) of creation  
for in him everything was created in heaven  
and on earth, the visible and the invisible.  
Through him and for him everything is created.  
He is before all  
everything has in him its coherence.  
He is the head of the body.  
He is the beginning (arche), the first-born of the dead;  
for in him all the fullness (pleroma) wanted to live,  
and to reconcile everything through him and for him,  
making peace on earth and in heaven.* [15](#)

This is a quotation from the "New Age Hymnal" (the esoteric song-book) of the Church at Colossae. We can understand that this hymn was sung in the Colossian church in honor of a godhead which was present in the whole cosmos ("he is the head of the body"). For the Colossian Christians, this was certainly Christ, although Christ is never mentioned in the hymn. Perhaps it was once a non-Christian hymn.

The hymn is sung by people for whom the world, the body of the cosmos, is torn asunder. The streams of harmony are disturbed. The cosmos is in uproar with itself and must be reconciled. Even the very existence of the cosmos is in question. [16](#) The battle of the natural elements against each other shows itself in catastrophes which threaten to lead to a general collapse of the whole world. People are the victims of this shaky world. They experience themselves as prisoners of a nature which is in turmoil.

We know the New Age literature of that time fairly well. It is full of gripping complaints on the sorrowful existence of humanity. One can do nothing about it. The famous psalm of the Naassenes [17](#) - a pagan hymn - complains like this:

*The soul is like the timid game  
ever hunted over the earth by stern death  
proving his power ceaselessly in the long chase.  
If today in realms of light, then tomorrow sunk in sorrow.  
Father, look down and bless this sore afflicted being,  
as she wanders far from home, aimless across the earth and grieving.  
She wants to flee the bitter chaos, but she knows not any way out.*

That then is the situation in Colossae, but how does the author of the Epistle to the Colossians react? For brevity's sake I call him Paul. What does Paul do with this text?

First, he accepts the mythical (and for him foreign) language - very different to many of today's theologians. He tries to answer in the language of the Colossians and deals with this popular New Age religion in the Hymn Book of the Colossians. At the same time, however, he essentially corrects this popular religion by his interpretative changes, as well as through the interpretations which he adds at the end of the hymn.

Let me give three examples:

The Colossians sang: Christ is the head of the cosmic body. Paul corrects and writes: Certainly, Christ is the head of the body. But the body is not - as you think - the world. The body, this is people, that's you the Colossians. The body is the church (he adds *tes ekklesias* in v. 18). Through you, you Colossians, Christ executes his headship - an unexpected statement if one realizes the small number of Christians in Colossae. They were a little sect and relatively unimportant in the Roman Empire.

The Colossians sang: Christ has reconciled cosmos and forces, people and powers through his resurrection. Paul adds: Certainly, he is the first-born from the dead and has reconciled us. He reconciled us through "his death in his body of flesh" (v. 22). That is a massive formulation which should make sure that the first-born of all creation, the image of the invisible God is the very same one who died a lamentable death on a cross at a given time, at a given place. He is not just a principle, a cosmic power which operates in the world. He is also an historical person.

The Colossians sang: The chaos in the cosmos must be overcome. Something must happen to this world. Paul answers: Certainly, our world is sick and must be healed, but healing does not happen through mysterious cosmic powers, but through people, who follow the one who died on a cross, that means through reconciled and reconciling people.

What does Paul do here? He accepts provisionally the syncretism of the Colossians and transforms it into a theologically responsible syncretism. He *socializes* their syncretism, focussing on people, not powers. The New Age syncretism is not left in its beautiful isolation. Paul specifically mentions the details of everything that is under the lordship of Christ. Already this concrete list makes clear that the thrones and lordships, the powers and radiations - the laws of economics and technology,<sup>18</sup> but also the rays of stars, crystals etc. - that they may no longer play the same role which they had played so far in Colossae. The will of this Lord to rule over everything includes the life of those to whom the Epistle is written. That is why Paul can no longer speak ahistorically. He *historises* their syncretism, focussing on the cross of Jesus and on a concrete Christian community. Even more, the author must speak of himself. The power of Christ, which penetrates the whole world is not a mysterious cosmic power but the power of the word and life of the apostle who fulfills his ministry in the shadow of the cross, which means to perspire and freeze, to go hungry and thirsty, to be beaten and ridiculed. Thus he walks along the roads of the Roman Empire. This theologically responsible syncretism anchors the Colossian New Age syncretism not in a myth but in the fact of the cross. Of course, Paul knows that the Gospel also means deliverance from cosmic powers. He does not reject

the mythical poetry of the Colossians out of hand: instead he anchors it in the factual event of the cross.

## 5. Questions to Asian Pentecostals

If Asian Pentecostals have followed me so far they will have realized that I argued within a western context. However, now this west is subjected to a religious invasion from the East. We are more and more facing a multi-religious and multi-cultural situation in Europe. This is new for us. But it is not new for Asian Pentecostals. For most of them, this is their daily experience. So, I thought, perhaps they could give us a hand, how to deal with this new situation. Here are my questions:

First, how are Asian Pentecostals dealing with the fact that "story telling" is a primary way of doing theology in the Bible (cp. the parables of Christ) *and* a primary mode of communication in Asia.<sup>19</sup> In fact, that is not only true for Asia. It is also true for Europe including University education. Only, we are slow to realize it. We believe, that "story telling" is a primitive way of doing theology not worthy of the lofty levels of an academic education. This misunderstanding is only possible because we have not developed "story telling" to a highly scholarly level, for instance to the level of doctoral research. I, for my part, used "narrative theology" with good academic results at the university.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, narrative theology is also a contribution to "democratization of theology."<sup>21</sup> It allows lay people to participate in critical and complex theological thinking. Perhaps it would also give women a better chance in Pentecostalism.<sup>22</sup> That is not to say that women cannot do abstract, conceptual and propositional theology. But could it be that - because many of them explain the Gospel to their children - women are better qualified to do narrative theology on an academic level than men. So my question is this: What are the experiences of Asian Pentecostals with narrative theology on an academic level? (That they use this method in the pulpit is self-evident).

Secondly, how are Asian Pentecostals dealing with the fact that many of their family members (parents, children, in-laws, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and grandparents) are members of non-Christian religions? How do they for instance celebrate Christmas in the family? Or do they not? Do they celebrate some of their relations' religious feasts with them? Or do they not? On what criteria do they base their decisions? How do they deal with the widespread belief in re-incarnation (also in Europe)? How do they interpret the healing miracles in other religions? And how do they understand the obvious spiritual qualities in some of the Buddhist monasteries? These questions become more and more important for the European churches, Pentecostal and others. Perhaps some of the European and American theologians are too lighthearted in their tolerance towards non-Christian religions (after having condemned them in the last century). What contribution do Asian Pentecostals have to offer on these vital issues? Is it possible that God speaks also through non-Christian religions? After all, the pagan Persian king Cyrus is called a Christ (Isa 45:1, "anointed," Messiah, Christos). Balaam's ass had to prophecy because the prophet was stubborn and the already mentioned *magoi* in Matt 2 found the way to the cradle on the basis of their pagan astrology.

Thirdly, Wonsuk Ma asks the question: "Is traditional western theology adequate to answer some non-western questions, such as 'what do we do when there is a drought, and people expect God to be able to bring rain?'"<sup>23</sup> That is no longer a non-western question. Modern technology has destroyed the ecological balance of the world. A collapse of the climate threatens the world - not unlike the fears of the people in Colossae. The culprits are mainly the western industrialized nations and here in particular the US who stubbornly refuse their responsibility to reduce their output in CO<sub>2</sub>. I have discussed this question with industrialists and scientists and all of them told me: The energy problem is technically solved. We have drawers full of plans for alternative energies and for an alternative solution of the traffic problem. We can build cars that use only a fraction of the fuel which they use now. This is not a technical but a political problem. As long as we are not forced by a political will, we shall go on selling the old highly poisonous stuff to the west and to the East. Now, what is the answer of Asian Pentecostals to the initial question knowing that many - not all - of the climatic catastrophes are human-made? Knowing that some of the Pacific islands and large coastal areas in Asia will be flooded, how do Asian Pentecostals face the forthcoming collapse of the climate? And how do they inform their fellow Pentecostals in Europe and America? What do they expect from them, especially those who are in influential positions?

## 6. Capitalism

The fourth question is the most important one. I am looking for help from Asian Pentecostals on what I consider the most dangerous syncretism (most dangerous because it is unconscious), namely the syncretism of Christianity with capitalism. Part of this essay was presented to the European Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Conference in Prague (1997). With flimsy excuses the final part of the paper was suppressed. Why? Something is refused when it is either highly relevant or highly irrelevant. Which one it is I leave to the reader. The organizers of the conference preferred to sing "Hallelujah" and to pretend that when the Holy Spirit comes things will get better. That is of course true but I would like to know: How does this Holy Spirit enlighten us this difficult issue.

I want to give some background on this question. It is based on the work of Jane Collier, a lecturer in economics at the University of Cambridge, who under my supervision wrote a doctoral dissertation on the topic: Can managers and economists be converted?<sup>24</sup> By conversion she meant not only a religious experience but, following Lonergan, also a cognitive process.

Jane Collier was disappointed that church leaders always argued morally on television when they commented on economics, instead of tackling the technical arguments of the economists. They used *their* language instead of using the language of the economists. Moral arguments are in this instance irrelevant because the economists say: The mechanics of economy are given. Whether we like it or not, the Thames flows downwards into the sea. No argument, whether theological or moral, can change this law of nature. It is the same with the free market system. It functions according to given laws of nature.

Instead of arguing morally, Mrs. Collier took up this technical argument and said: Economics is not a neutral science which informs us on the mechanism of economy. It uses hidden and open prejudices and value judgments. These value judgments Mrs. Collier calls "the culture of economism." In our biblical example they would correspond to the thrones and powers, the cosmic forces of the cosmos. Mrs. Collier proves that these value judgments function only as part of a secular faith option, a religion which believes to be a science. Her disappointment with the church leaders was based on the fact that they argued morally instead of calling economists to scientific honesty. One cannot expect economists to be moral. But one can expect them to be good scholars.

And that is what Mrs. Collier does in her work. She remains strictly within the framework of economics and shows how their decision - like all so-called scientific decisions - are always also determined by faith options. She shows convincingly that the culture of economism is a faith option. That is the right of economists. Otherwise they could not function. Only they should call their faith option a faith option and not a given scientific law. In her chapter on conversion, Mrs. Collier proceeds to show that there are also other faith options for economists, namely those which do not "believe" in the powers and thrones and reckon with the fact that Christ has taken their authority away.

Here we have a theologically responsible syncretism. The gods of capitalism are not denied. The worldview of the free market economy is not denied *a priori*. Like Paul in the epistle to the Colossians, she does not say: Your mechanisms and powers are not in the Bible, therefore they do not exist. Instead she regards this worldview as open for a theological syncretism. So she does not recognize the absolute power of economy; she sees them as belonging to the created world, which means that they can be questioned, changed and re-arranged. On the basis of this, she says to the economists: Economics is not - as you say - an objective science, but a faith option. We can prove this to you by the very instruments you use. We want to show you the consequences of your system. Is it really the best system that you can come up with? We theologians do not know which would be a better system. But we call on your scholarly ambition to come up with something better. If you put *your* faith aside for a moment you might come to other insights.

A system which depends on producing enormous surpluses on the one hand and miserable hunger on the other, which needs the stimulus of a huge arms industry and produces armies of unemployed - such a system can surely not be the best you can think of! A system which forces a little girl of twelve to write the following poem cannot be the best which you can invent:

*My mother is called sorrow.  
In summer she cares for water.  
In winter she cares for coal  
and the whole year through for rice,  
During the day she cares for daily food,  
during the night she cares for her children  
and each day is filled with sorrow.*

*That's why my mother is called sorrow  
and my father is called raving madness through drunkenness.  
And I am called tears and sadness.*

## 7. Conclusion

To come back to the beginning of this article, it seems to me that missionaries from the west are hardly qualified for missionary work in Russia or elsewhere as long as they do not recognize that their own culture of economism is highly idolatrous, and that their own churches and theologies are heavily syncretistic. Perhaps one of the more important missionary tasks would be to ask: What would be a theologically responsible syncretism between Christianity and capitalism? This question is not asked insistently enough - certainly not in missionary circles - despite the fact that the so-called free market economy is certainly not in line with the teachings of Christ and his apostles.

So, my question to Asian Pentecostals who have experienced both the blessings and the curses of modern capitalism and many of whom are now in responsible positions<sup>25</sup> is this: What, in your opinion, are the ingredients of a theologically responsible syncretism between capitalism and Christianity in your culture? What has to change and what should be kept? With whom do we have to hammer out such a type of syncretism? Or do you perhaps say - as I have heard many times in charismatic circles-: The Holy Spirit, which we know, is silent on this question. He only judges that which happens in the *bedrooms* and not that which happens in the *boardrooms*? Is that the Holy Spirit in which we believe?

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## References

<sup>1</sup> Published originally in a different form under the title "A Plea for a Theologically Responsible Syncretism," *Missionalia* 25 (1997), pp. 5-18.

<sup>2</sup> William Saayman, "It Depends on How They Come: Some Preliminary Reflections on Foreign Mission Assistance to Russia," *Missionalia* 24 (1996), pp. 249-60. Saayman is the General Secretary of the Southern African Missiological Society and the head of the Department of Missiology, University of South Africa, Pretoria.

<sup>3</sup> Saayman, p. 249.

<sup>4</sup> Saayman, p. 256.

<sup>5</sup> Saayman, p. 257.

<sup>6</sup> Vladimir Fedorov, "New Religious Movements: An Orthodox Perspective," *Current Dialogue* 31 (Dec. 1997), pp. 2-20, published by WCC, Geneva.

<sup>7</sup> Saayman, pp. 259-60.

<sup>8</sup> Leonardo Boff, *Igreja, carisma e poder* (Petropolis, Brazil: Voces, 1985). English translation: *Church, Charism and Power: Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church*, trans. John W. Diercksmeier (London: SCM, 1985), pp. 92ff.

<sup>9</sup> This is of course a sweeping statement. It is discussed and substantiated in detail in my *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*, rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997).

<sup>10</sup> Walter J. Hollenweger, *Conflict in Corinth: Memoirs of an Old Man* (New York: Paulist, 1982). Indian edition under the title *Memoirs of a Babylonian Exile* (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1985). Indonesian edition under the title *Konflik di Korintus & Buku kenangan seorang tua, Dua certia yang memben terang tentang cara Kitab Suci ditulis* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Yayasan Kanisius, 1984).

<sup>11</sup> This epistemological problem is discussed in detail in Hollenweger, *Geist und Materie*, *Interkulturelle Theologie 3* (Munich and Gütersloh: Chr. Kaiser and Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1988).

<sup>12</sup> Ernst Lange, *Predigen ist mein Beruf* (Stuttgart: Kreuz Verlag, 1976), p. 83.

<sup>13</sup> Carl Gustav Jung, "Ueber die Beziehung der Psychotherapie zur Seelsorge: Psychoanalyse und Seelsorge (1932/48)," *Gesammelte Werke IV* (Zurich and Stuttgart, 1963), pp. 355-83, quote, p. 362.

<sup>14</sup> Harvey Cox, *Turning East - the Promise and Peril of the New Orientalism* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1977), p. 133. See also the clear and strong criticism of Pentecostal scholars on some of the more flamboyant "healing evangelists," resumé in Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, ch. 18 ("Signs and Wonders").

<sup>15</sup> I used the commentaries by Ed. Schweizer, *Der Brief an die Kolosser* (Zurich and Neukirchen: Neukirchner Verlag, 1976) and Joh. Lähnmann, *Der Kolosserbrief. Komposition, Situation und Analyse* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1971).

<sup>16</sup> See pp. 55-56 for the discussion on Wonsuk Ma.

<sup>17</sup> The Psalm of the Naassenes is a contemporary hymn "directly suited to performance in the theatre," in A. von Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1931), p. 438. For an English version of this psalm see *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, V, p. 58 (Hippolytus V, lo. 2)

<sup>18</sup> See below the discussion on capitalism, pp. 57-59.

<sup>19</sup> Wonsuk Ma, "Toward an Asian Pentecostal Theology," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 1 (1998), pp. 15-41, quote, p. 22. See also Hollenweger, "Theology and the

Future of the Church" in *Companion Encyclopedia of Theology*, eds. Peter Byrne and Leslie Houlden (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), lo. 17-35. On evangelism not only *at* but *with* those together we want to evangelize see Hollenweger, "Evangelism - a non-Colonial Model," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 7 (1995), pp. 1-22.

<sup>20</sup> An example in chapter 9 in the book mentioned note 9, "England: Interaction Between Black and White in Theological Education."

<sup>21</sup> Wonsuk Ma, p. 29

<sup>22</sup> Wonsuk Ma, p. 30.

<sup>23</sup> Wonsuk Ma, p. 35 n. 38.

<sup>24</sup> Jane Collier, *The Culture of Economism: An Exploration of Barriers to Faith-as-Praxis*, Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity 65 (Frankfurt, New York: Peter Lang, 1990).

<sup>25</sup> William W. Menzies, "Reflections of a Pentecostal at the End of the Millenium: An Editorial Essay," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 1 (1998), pp. 3-14, quote, p. 12.