Missionary Elenctics: Conscience and Culture

ROBERT J. PRIEST

Conscience is God-given and functions as an internal witness which ratifies the biblical message that we are sinners in need of salvation. Conscience contributes to repentance and faith, and plays a pivotal role in the sanctification of the believer. But conscience is also culturally variable. As a result cross-cultural missionaries seldom understand native conscience and frequently work at cross-purposes to it. This article suggests principles for the missionary who wishes to understand native conscience and contends that missionaries who follow these principles will find conscience to be a God-given ally in the tasks of evangelism and discipleship.[1]

The task of the evangelist is to proclaim a message we call "the gospel," a message which includes a mix of "theology" and "anthropology." That is, the message is about God—theology—but implies certain things about humankind—anthropology—as well, most notably human sinfulness and need of salvation. In proclaiming this message, the evangelist calls people to respond in repentance and faith to theological and anthropological truth.

In this paper I focus on the missionary evangelist's task of proclaiming the anthropological half of the gospel message—that half which tells us about our sinfulness and need of salvation. In explaining truth about God and his activity on our behalf, evangelists necessarily make reference to human realities as an explanatory base. They explain the meaning of the cross, for example, by positing the reality of human sin and deserved judgment (anthropological truth), in contrast to the holiness of God (theological truth). The convert is asked, not only to embrace new understandings of God, but to accept specific new understandings of self as reprehensible and unworthy

Robert Priest, Assistant Professor of Missions and Intercultural Studies at Columbia Biblical Seminary and Graduate School of Missions, is a Wycliffe M.K. who grew up amongst the Siriono Indians of Bolivia. As an anthropologist he did fieldwork amongst the Aguaruna of northern Peru and received his Ph.D. in anthropology at the University of California at Berkeley.

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sinner. We as Christians must directly confront and formally recognize that calling people to a new understanding of self as sinner is indeed part of our task.

This is not an easy task. People naturally desire to hold favorable views of themselves. Such psychological mechanisms as denial, rationalization, and projection are employed to protect oneself from a negative view of the self. The very sinfulness and depravity we are speaking of here pushes individuals to suppress the truth about themselves in unrighteousness. The proclaimer of unpleasant truths about the self is seldom appreciated and may well be hated.

It might be thought pardonable for an evangelist to shrink from such an unappreciated task. But fortunately the missionary evangelist has a God-given potential ally in the case of each person being evangelized—an ally in the task of persuading the individual of his or her own sinfulness, deserved judgment, and need of salvation.

This ally is conscience. A truth of Romans is that we are divided selves. At the very moment when an individual is resisting and hating a message about oneself, another part of the self may be assenting vigorously to the truth of the message. Romans 2 informs us that even those without the written law of God have consciences, and that their consciences "bear witness" to their own culpability and moral failure. That is, their consciences bear witness to the truth of the anthropological portion of the gospel message. When an evangelist stands outside a person and adequately proclaims God's message to that person, something inside that person—the conscience—bears witness to the reality of the anthropological truths proclaimed.

When Nathan confronted David with his sin, he told a story designed to get David's own inner sense of right and wrong passionately engaged—that is, he got David's conscience to work collaboratively with his external pronouncement of sin and judgment. David's conscience assented vigorously to the truth of David's sin, and David responded with remorse and repentance. In all effective evangelistic proclamation, I argue, there is an element of this appeal to conscience. The Holy Spirit works both through the externally proclaimed Word and through the internal faculty of conscience to bring about conviction of sin. In all true conversion one finds the individual conscience operative on behalf of repentance and faith.

But missionaries to people of other cultures, rather than rejoicing in their great ally, conscience, are more likely to express bewilderment, confusion, and dismay at the total lack of conscience, guilt, and sense of sin which they find. Even the consciences of native Christians seem not to be what they ought. Again and again one hears such refrains as, "These people don't feel guilt for their sins, only embarrassment if they're caught."

Many missionaries, then, perceive a lack of conscience among the people with whom they work. In actual fact, conscience is present and operative. Instead what missionaries are encountering and struggling with is the reality that conscience is culturally variable. An Apache does have a conscience, and it is powerfully active. But while the conscience of one Apache is likely to be quite similar to the conscience of another, it is likely to be quite different from the conscience of a Japanese or of an Anglo-American. It is this cultural

variability of conscience which raises profound difficulties for cross-cultural missionaries wishing to make an ally of conscience as they speak of sin, judgment, grace, forgiveness, and sanctification.

The Dutch missiologist J. H. Bavinck has called for a missionary science of what he calls "elenctics," a term, according to Bavinck (1960:221), derived from the Greek verb *elengchein*, originally meaning "to bring to shame," but later shifting in meaning "so that the emphasis fell more upon the conviction of guilt, the demonstration of guilt. It is this latter significance that it has in the New Testament." The word appears in such New Testament passages as John 16:8 where the Holy Spirit will "convict [elengchein = convict, convince, reprove, rebuke] the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment." The word is used elsewhere, for example, when elders are called on to rebuke (*elengche*) sinners and call them to repentance (1 Timothy 5:20). Bavinck argues that missiology needs to develop a "science which is concerned with the conviction of sin" and suggests we call such a science "elenctics" (1960:222). David Hesselgrave (1983; 1991:573-586) and Klaus Müller (1988) are two missiologists who have followed Bavinck in calling for the development of elenctics, though in fact comparatively little missiological reflection and analysis has until now gone into such a project. Central to such a project, I argue, should be an examination of conscience in relationship to culture and to missionary methodology.

The great missionary linguist Kenneth Pike has stressed the need for such a research agenda, writing of "a dream, a wish, a hope—that some scholars will help us to understand conscience better by careful, documented, cross-cultural research" (1979:8). Implicit in his dream, his wish, his hope is the recognition both that conscience is key in people's response to the gospel and that conscience is culturally variable. Implicit also, is the recognition of a serious lacuna in missiological understanding—a recognition that current understandings of conscience in relation to culture and to missionary elenctics are seriously deficient.

Having studied under Dr. Hesselgrave, and having read Pike (1979) and Wayne Dye's important article, "Toward a Cross-Cultural Definition of Sin" (1976), I approached my doctoral dissertation research in anthropology with the Aguaruna Indians of northern Peru with a deep interest in conscience. I focused on culture as a moral order, collected and analyzed moral discourses and moral vocabulary, examined shame and guilt, analyzed moral symbolism in myth and ritual, and studied native sermons and conversion narratives. As a Christian anthropologist who has just completed a dissertation touching heavily on such themes, I felt it would be helpful to me—and perhaps to others—for me to formalize certain aspects of my own thinking about conscience, culture, and missionary elenctics in a series of formal propositions. I invite your critique and hope I will encourage some to pursue further research, reflection, and analysis of these themes.

1. The faculty of conscience is culturally universal (Romans 2:1-15; 2 Corinthians 4:2; 1 Corinthians 10:25, 27).

Even those in societies without the written law, the Scriptures, operate

with a moral law "written in their hearts." As evidence of this, Paul points to the fact that all people enter into vigorous moral judgment of others (something which is cross-culturally demonstrable through empirical fieldwork) and indicates that they have an internal faculty of moral judgment which uses the same principles of moral judgment that one applies to others to bear witness against the self. Paul refers to this faculty as *suneidesis*, a term derived from the verb *sunoida*—itself a compound of the verb *oida*, "to know" and *sun*, "with." *Suneidesis*, which we translate as "conscience," may thus be glossed as "a knowing in common with, a co-knowledge." Conscience, Paul tells us, bears witness against the self. But with what does the witness of conscience agree? Not with the written law, in the case of those without the written law, but with the "law written in their hearts," that is, with the actual moral standards and norms utilized in everyday life in judging others. Yet, as Romans stresses, being fallen creatures we rebel against and fail to live up to our own consciences.

2. The faculty of conscience is a natural faculty and is thus capable of being studied, analyzed, and understood through empirical methods.

The faculty of conscience is God-given, but it is given through God's natural created order, not supernaturally and miraculously created and called into existence each time it is operative. Wayne Dye's outstanding article, "Toward a Cross-Cultural Definition of Sin," is the best practical treatment of these issues currently available. But it seems to me that his emphasis on this particular point potentially leads the reader astray. Dye rightly observes that the Holy Spirit does his work through conscience. But when his article seems to imply (1976:38ff.) that wherever conscience is operative one sees evidence of the supernatural work and moving of the Holy Spirit, he goes too far. An Aguaruna or an Apache is affected by his conscience as a natural faculty in contexts that have nothing to do with the supernatural activity of the Holy Spirit. Believers also may be bothered by a conscience which condemns for behavior God himself does not condemn. That is, conscience is a natural faculty not necessarily dependent on the special action of the Holy Spirit. Dye himself recognizes this when he acknowledges that the voice of conscience "cannot be exactly the same as the Holy Spirit's voice" (1976:32), though he then proceeds seemingly to contradict himself by conflating the two. I am convinced that this mistaken understanding of conscience has detrimental effects on missionary practice. That is, the notion wrongly implies that the workings of conscience are subject solely to the inscrutable and mysterious movings of the Holy Spirit and thus mysticizes what is in fact part of the natural order, the practical effect being to remove conscience from the realm of what may be studied empirically, analyzed, and systematically understood. And so missiology fails to study and understand what can be understood, and missionary practice remains grounded in ignorance of strategic understandings of conscience which are possible of attainment.

3. The content of conscience is fallible and variable.

Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 10:27-32 tell us that even amongst Christians, conscience is variable. Indeed, 1 Corinthians 8 contrasts conscience and knowledge, indicating that a person can have conscience/moral scruples about something which, in terms of ultimate truth/knowledge, is misplaced.

4. The content of conscience is directly dependent on learned cultural meanings, norms, ideals, and values.

Conscience in humans plays a role analogous to instinct in animals—the role of constraining and giving direction to behavior. While animals enter the world with a fully pre-programmed instinct which largely determines behavior, humans enter the world in a curiously unfinished condition. They must be taught what they should and should not do. Guardians of morality (most notably parents) in every culture expend great energy in teaching and instilling correct moral sentiments and values in their children. Such norms, sentiments, and judgments become internalized in conscience —which in turn serves to constrain behavior.

Conscience is shaped by meanings, norms, ideals, and values which are themselves culturally variable. While all cultures support ideas of ownership and thus recognize the concept of theft as wrong, for example, such cultures will vary enormously in what counts as theft. This is because cultures differ in their ideas of what constitutes ownership (temporary rights of usage versus an absolute and permanent right to dispose of as willed), of what may or may not be owned (words, land, trees, names, etc.), of who may legitimately be an owner of something (a child, man, woman, family group, corporation, tribe), and of what the owner owes to specific others (such as the right to pick an occasional fruit when hungry). Thus young Christians from my own culture may have consciences that torment them for behavior routinely practiced by early church fathers. The behavior I refer to is now considered a great sin—the sin of theft—specifically stealing words and ideas. We call it plagiarism. Living in a society with print, with social rewards going to those who personally demonstrate verbal and intellectual competence, Western societies have developed stringent notions of intellectual ownership. In such a context, unacknowledged quotation is indeed theft—though in some other cultural times and places, godly folk might have been surprised at the very idea that others would consider them sinful for such behavior. Again, if an ancient godly Jew were miraculously transplanted to contemporary California for a hike through the countryside, he would find that his innocent act of picking an occasional apple off of roadside orchards in good conscience might well rouse righteous indignation in the heart of the orchard's owner and might even land him in jail for theft. Again notions of ownership and, in this case of what owners owe to others, are culturally variable.

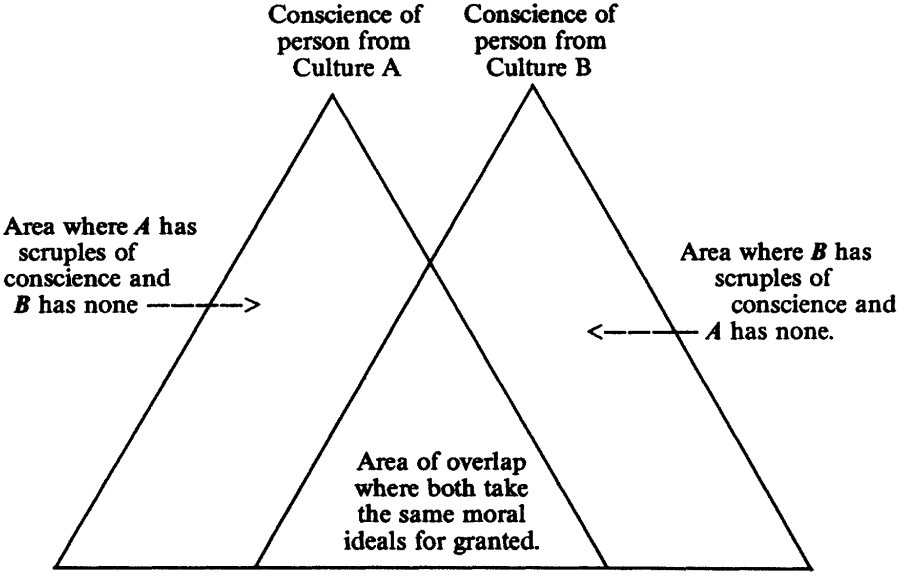
5. The content of conscience is likely to be shared by members of a given cultural group.

One Aguaruna will tend to feel shame and/or guilt for the same things

which cause another Aguaruna to feel shame or guilt. As will one Apache with another. Or one Japanese with another. The more culturally homogeneous a group is, the more this principle holds true. The critical variable here is culture, not society per se, since a society can be made up of many cultures. It is thus shared culture rather than shared societal membership which is predictive of shared conscience.

6. In an intercultural situation there will be *both* significant overlap *and* marked discontinuity between the consciences of interactants. But it is not the overlap which interactants will tend to notice. Rather it is in the area of discontinuity —specifically where one's own conscience speaks and the other's does not.

The following diagram illustrates this reality:



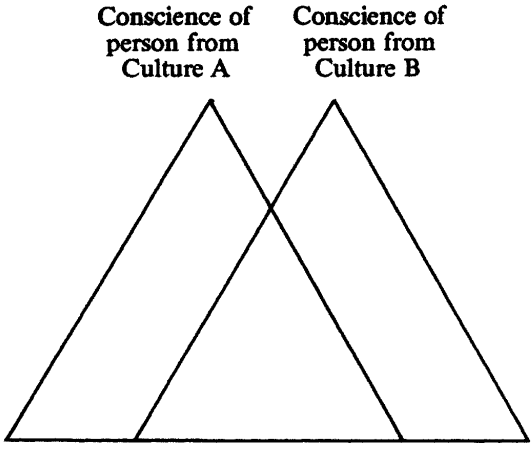
Between any two cultures there will be enormous areas of agreement on the moral nature of specific actions. The rightness of such moral norms will be so taken for granted by individuals that when they interact with others who also take such norms for granted, neither party is likely to consciously be impressed by others' recognition of similar norms. But when one interacts with someone who openly and unselfconsciously acts or fails to act in ways which violate one's own taken-for-granted norms—one notices in a hurry. An Anglo-American visiting an Eskimo village is struck by, and upset with, Eskimo "brutality" in beating their dogs. The Eskimo, on the other hand, sees the Anglo-American as someone with no capacity for patient endurance of physical hardship—someone who reacts to physical hardship with irritability, impatience, and with occasional outbursts of anger. Such behav-

ior is thought of as a great evil and as a failure of moral self-control. Neither is impressed by, or even notes, the existence of, and conformity to, shared norms. Both quickly note the behavior of the other that fails to match up to one's own conscience. Behavior is, after all, what missionaries see. Conscience is what they see with. What they do not see, because it is internal and not directly visible, is the conscience of the other person. Thus the case of a missionary in an African village who "saw immodesty" in the form of uncovered breasts. What she saw with, and took for granted, was her own conscience. What she failed to see was native conscience. Thus she failed to see what was really relevant which was that modest women cover, not their breasts, but their legs so that men not lust. In failing to see their conscience, she failed to understand that these people "saw immodesty" when they looked at her bare legs. For it was through the lens of their own conscience that they saw her.

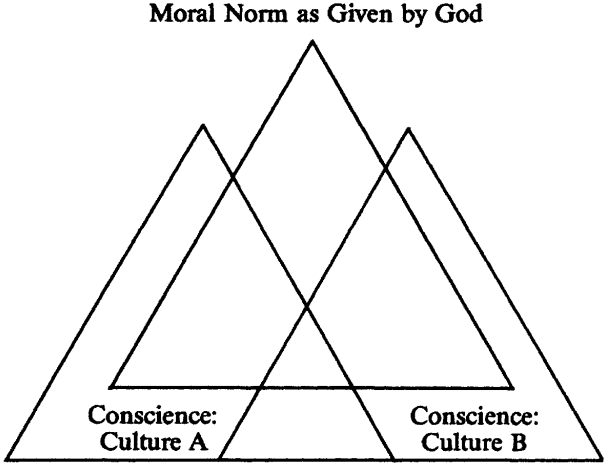
7. In an intercultural situation each interactant will thus tend to condemn the other morally for behavior about which the other has no conscience.

A North American going to live with the Aguaruna may be highly incensed at the occasional beating of an errant wife, at arranged marriages, at polygyny, or at the marriages of 13-year-old girls to 45-year-old men. For traditional Aguaruna each of these is perfectly wholesome and appropriate. On the other hand, the Aguaruna are angered when North American anthropologists or missionaries fail to share the food they are eating with visitors. Food is, above all things, that which must be shared. And when such foreigners are invited for a meal, they fail to exercise careful self-restraint in eating meat—a limited and highly valued food item. Self-restraint, in such a setting, implies consideration for the needs of others and self-denial on their behalf. Two of the worst things any Aguaruna can call another—*suji* (stingy) and *etsemjau* (meat glutton)—may thus be used to morally categorize even pious missionaries whose own consciences have never once alerted them to the moral evils of their behavior. And so, each condemns the other for behavior about which the other has no conscience.

When secular anthropologists observe the cultural variability of conscience, they are at somewhat of an impasse. That is, lacking a transcendent reference point, they are unable to get beyond the relativity of culture to any moral norms which are not simply those of some culture. That is, they are unable to explain why any one group's norms, or any single norm, should be preferred over any other. But the Christian has recourse to a transcendent reference point, the revelation of God himself. To retain the image of triangles, the Christian is not limited to observing the overlap and discontinuity of human triangles,



but is able to make reference to another triangle which is absolutely normative, because it represents God's view of the matter. The following diagram illustrates the change.



When we then examine the relationship of human conscience to God and his normative expectations of us, the following two principles appear to hold true.

8. The content of conscience is sufficiently close to God's own moral standards as to be God's initial reference point in revealing our own moral failures and need of grace.

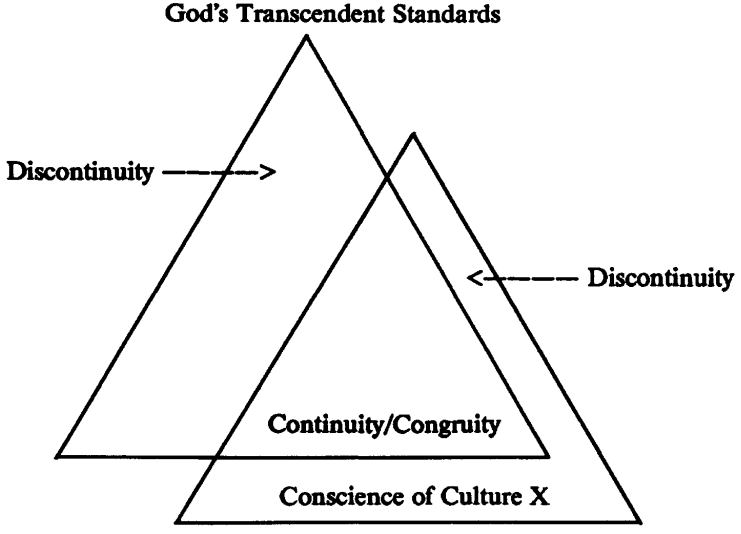
Again and again in Scripture, one finds the implication that God initially addresses us and our moral failures in terms of the norms and ideals which

our conscience already recognizes. "God will apply to you the same rules you apply to others," Jesus said (Matthew 7:2). In Romans 2, Paul makes clear that this principle of how God holds us accountable applies to those without the written law as well as to those with the Scriptures: the implication being that the conscience of those without the written law affirms, to a large extent, standards which overlap with God's own standards — standards, that is, which God himself recognizes to be good and true. Thus God points out the moral failures of Gentile peoples in terms which their conscience already recognizes. Sin itself is frequently defined with reference to one's conscious moral understandings and knowledge. "Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins," James (4:17) tells us.

In Scripture then, one's relationship to one's own conscience and what it affirms about the good and the moral is pivotal to one's own awareness of one's moral and spiritual condition. And so, for those whose consciences were shaped without reference to the "written law," it is to the actual operative standards of their own conscience (insofar as those standards coincide with God's own) that God appeals in convicting them of sin and of their need of grace.

9. While human consciences do extensively agree with and overlap with morality as revealed in Scripture, there are also significant areas of discontinuity between consciences as shaped by culture and what is revealed in Scripture. Conscience on its own is not sufficient to unerringly guide us into sanctified moral understandings.

The following diagram illustrates both the overlap and the discontinuity of conscience with God's transcendent standards.



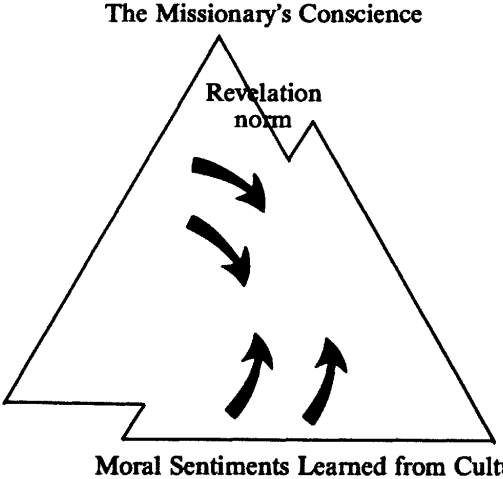
The Scriptures are clear that conscience is prone to error and that one aspect of the sanctification of the believer is that conscience is gradually

corrected by the written law—that the Holy Spirit uses the Scripture to gradually transform our mind, including its moral understandings, into the image of God's original perfect plan for us. The consciences of new Christians in any and every culture are going to be skewed in diverse ways (depending on the culture they are a part of) and will need correction by the Word of God.

10. The missionary's conscience has been shaped by his or her culture as well as by Scripture, and his or her conscience seldom clearly distinguishes the two.

American missionaries internalize deeply held moral ideas about punctuality, egalitarianism, individual rights, privacy, cleanliness, etc., which derive much more clearly from their culture than from the Scriptures. Seldom will a missionary intuitively be able to adequately distinguish which of his convictions are cultural and which are biblical. Even the vigorousness with which missionaries have condemned polygyny, required polygynists to divorce extra wives (though divorce is explicitly condemned in Scripture), and banned polygynists from baptism, church membership, and communion may derive as much from their culture (historically missionaries have come from monogamous societies) as from fidelity to Scripture (itself written in part by polygynists and without any direct prohibition on polygyny).

The following diagram suggests that missionaries' consciences will tend to function both on moral sentiments learned from Scripture and on moral sentiments derived from culture—each set of moral sentiments affecting the way the other is viewed, the two not being intuitively distinguishable to conscience. The missionary's conscience thus tends to address the full range of both domains—though it treats them as one domain, rather than two.



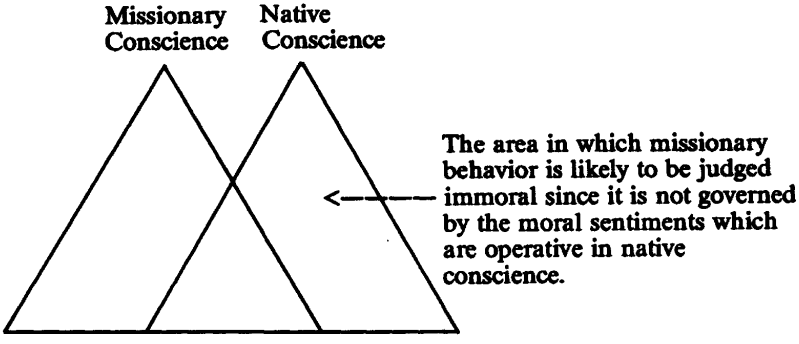
What complicates the situation is that Christians learn biblical principles in the context of specific cultural meanings and conventions. One learns about theft in the context of specific cultural conventions about ownership,

cultural conventions which are taken for granted but which are not, in fact, biblically normative. Or women are taught the importance of modesty (a biblical concept) in the context of miniskirts and see-through blouses. For the individuals involved, the moral principle gets fused with cultural conventions, setting the groundwork for problems when going to a field of service where radically different cultural conventions hold sway. For us to train our missionaries in Bible schools which stress modesty by specific rules addressing the permissible length of skirts (measured in terms of inches above the knee), for example, and then to send such missionaries out to radically different cultures (from tribals in grass skirts and uncovered breasts to Muslims with carefully veiled women) and expect them to figure out, on their own, the precise mix of culture and Scripture which has gone into their deeply held convictions of conscience about modesty is an unrealistic expectation. Missionary training institutions cannot afford to socialize missionary candidates principally through rigid moral codes—even if such codes involve legitimate extensions of biblical principles to a specific cultural context. They must give a great deal of formal attention to teaching about biblical principles in relation to varying cultural conventions. This, of course, requires extensive understanding, not only of Bible and theology, but also of culture.

11. In the cross-cultural context, the missionaries who attempt to live an exemplary life and "be a good witness" will naturally tend to do so with reference to their own consciences rather than with reference to the conscience of those to whom they speak. The result is that their actions—in areas addressed by native consciences but unaddressed by the missionaries (or differently addressed by theirs)—will tend to be judged immoral.

A missionary to Japan may have a strong commitment to truth and feel that telling the truth and letting the chips fall where they may, will provide a testimony of a godly life to people who morally fail in their commitment to truthfulness. But perhaps all that is seen by the Japanese—who stress the virtue of interpersonal sensitivity—is that here is someone who is boorish and insensitive to the feelings of others. "That missionary talks a lot about love, but sure doesn't practice it."

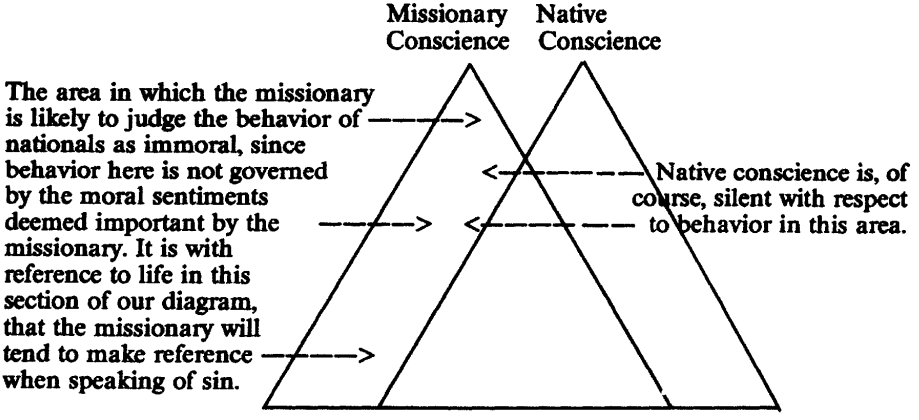
People naturally tend to evaluate others morally in terms of their own norms. The following diagram shows the area in which missionaries are most likely to be morally judged.



In discussing the integrity of his ministry and its witness, Paul writes (2 Corinthians 4:2) of "commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." If the "every man" in view is a Japanese, then we must ensure that our personal witness and lifestyle takes seriously his standards, and attempts to exemplify virtue by such norms. Only by cultivating the Japanese virtue and skills of interpersonal sensitivity is one able to "commend" oneself to the Japanese conscience. Only by cultivating the Aguaruna virtues of hospitality and of self-denial in eating meat will one be able to "commend" oneself to the Aguaruna conscience. Only by careful attention to, and observation of, Muslim codes of sexual modesty will Western missionaries be able to "commend" themselves to the consciences of Muslims. Only thus will such people infer that we are truly people of virtue, integrity, and love.

12. Missionaries, whose message entails ideas of sin and judgment, will naturally tend—as already noted—to speak of sin with reference to matters about which their conscience speaks and native conscience is silent—with the result that native conscience does not work to support the message.

Missionaries who speak of sin, as they must, will tend to do so with reference to their own understandings of moral virtue and with reference to observed behavior which violates those moral norms. As already noted (in No. 7 above), it is at the point where others fail to share our norms that we are most likely to observe behavior which transgresses our norms. Those who lack norms do not adjust behavior to take into account what, for them, does not exist. It is in this area, then, that the missionary initially will tend to be struck by, and speak to, sin. But speaking to sin in this area rouses no "Amen!" from listeners' consciences. The following diagram illustrates this.



The Aguaruna say that sometimes someone comes with a message which moves them to action, where there is an inner assent and response. At other times a message is brought and there is no such inner response. There may be nothing specific about the message which they can pinpoint as untrue or problematic; it simply fails to move them. They can explain it only by saying,

"this message is *sakam*—without taste/flat/tasteless." So it is with every message which calls for repentance and confession of sin, but does so with reference to things which the missionary deems sinful but which the listeners' consciences do not. With such preaching there is no spontaneous inner assent by conscience that this message is true. With such preaching there is no spontaneous inner assent by conscience that this message is good. The message is *sakam*, tasteless. Not only does such preaching fail to gain the aid of conscience, it may actually rouse the opposition of conscience. That is, people may reject the gospel, if preached in a certain way, because their own consciences tell them that the message they are hearing is a bad one. Thus a male missionary may call on pagans to repent of their polygamy—something Western culture associates with inordinate sexual lust. Yet in many such societies, polygamists add a second wife, not because of a new love interest, but because of the moral demands of the levirate. One's brother has died, leaving a widow and children who must be cared for. It is one's duty, perhaps even an onerous duty, to marry the widow and care for the children. A call to repent of action one has undertaken out of a sense of moral obligation rather than of selfishness may well be perceived as an immoral message, as a message appealing to one's baser self, rather than appealing to one's moral obligations. Indeed, some who want to escape the onerous obligations of the levirate may be the first to embrace Christianity as a legitimation of their selfish desire to rid themselves of a wife and children they must struggle to support. Of course, an acceptance of Christianity for such base reasons has nothing to do with genuine repentance and faith—though the missionary may well mistakenly see such a renunciation as evidence of self-denial in turning to the Lord.

Perhaps this principle would be "felt" more strongly if the situation were reversed—if America were the mission field being evangelized by, let us say, a particularly ethnocentric Iranian or Russian. Coming from a culture where genuine friendship and love is expressed by men kissing each other, such an evangelist might conceivably focus on American external behavior (men failing to kiss each other) as indicative of our lack of true love, and choose to preach of our moral failure as evidenced by our behavior here. He would even be able to marshall biblical teaching on his side. What, I ask, would be the likely American response?

The key factor here is that American conventional meanings are quite different from Iranian or Russian ones. The American military has recently declared that "any reasonable person" would infer homosexuality of two men holding hands, much less kissing. In fact it is not "any reasonable person" who would infer such, but "any reasonable American." American conventional meanings link such behavior to homosexuality. Most American males would reject with passionate moral revulsion any evangelistic message which implied the desirability of men kissing men. Their own consciences on homosexuality would compel them to do so.

Yet missionary preaching routinely does precisely this. It not only fails to gain the cooperation of conscience, but it rouses the active opposition of conscience.

13. Missionary proclamation which stresses sin with reference to that which the missionary's conscience deems sinful, and native conscience does not, has the effect of calling the listeners' attention to cultural discontinuity—implying that the call to conversion is a call to abandon one's own culture for that of the missionary. This confusion of gospel and culture has two possible results:

a. People refuse to convert because of the implication that conversion is a conversion from one culture—their own, which they are familiar with, successful in terms of, and believe is good—to the missionary's national culture—which is alien and may even seem immoral.

In most stable societies people are very resistant to any message by a foreigner which implies the superiority of a foreigner's culture and calls for abandonment of one's own culture for that of the foreigner. Yet missionary preaching which stresses good and evil in terms which consistently link the good to the missionary's own culture and its standards and the evil to the listeners' culture, will inevitably be perceived as just such a call to cultural conversion. The resistance aroused by such preaching may have little to do with resistance to the Holy Spirit and rejection of Christ, and a great deal to do with allegiance to one's own culture and society in the face of an invitation to a disloyal conversion to an alien culture.

b. Or people may choose to convert precisely because of the implication that conversion is a conversion from their own culture to that of the missionary —such conversion being a cultural conversion rather than genuine conversion to God in Christ.

In societies experiencing intense social problems, rapid cultural change and disorientation, etc., while simultaneously facing other societies with much greater wealth and power, people may very well quickly attach themselves to the person of the missionary expatriate from such a wealthy powerful society. They may listen carefully to the missionary's message and embrace it precisely because it stresses the evils of their system and the virtues of the missionary's system—hoping by a cultural conversion to acquire the secrets of wealth and power. Many a Melanesian society has done precisely this—exciting missionaries by their initial response, but later creating consternation and disappointment by leaving a religion which failed to bring them the "cargo" they expected their conversion to bring. Such conversions, of course, never went the route of true repentance and faith.

There are also practical difficulties with such an attempted cultural conversion. True cultural conversion is, of course, not genuinely possible. Aguarunas' or Russians' hope for making themselves over into the cultural image of America is utopian. Reality soon begins to force modifications of the hope. Extreme dissatisfaction with one's own culture combined with the utopian effort to make ones' selves into the cultural image of another is almost always a temporary phenomenon. A permanent commitment to such a posture, it is eventually discovered, entails a permanent position of inferiority vis-à-vis those one is attempting to imitate. Almost inevitably there is a backlash and people again come to affirm their distinct cultural identity. A church which is built on such temporary utopian hopes, and by its very identity is linked to a foreign culture, in purely practical terms has been built

on sand. A great deal more could be said here, but it would take us astray from our focus on conscience. And so we turn to our next point.

14. Preaching about good and evil in terms of missionary conscience rather than native conscience results in conversion and discipleship which bypasses native conscience and leads to converts accepting, relating to, and experiencing a new set of rules and norms—not through deep personal moral conviction, but as a new system of taboos.

Missionaries whose primary moral message concerns the evils of such things as polygamy, chewing betel nut, drinking manioc beer, and smoking are in danger of bypassing conscience and instituting a system of taboos. A taboo is an interdiction which, from the standpoint of moral understanding, seems irrational. A taboo is something to be observed, not out of a deep sense of the morality of the thing, but because of quasi-magical or mystico-religious benefits which accrue to those who observe the taboos. A church in which religious obligation focuses on a system of taboos rather than on deep moral and spiritual convictions of conscience is not a healthy church.

15. Conversion and discipleship which bypass native conscience may lead to superficial conformity or to a compartmentalized conformity.

Nationals recognize that the missionary has deep personal feelings about a matter which they themselves do not perceive as a moral issue. But valuing their relationship to the missionary, they may practice conformity in the presence of the missionary and in public religious settings, though in private they may feel no such obligation. When a whole church takes such an approach to the presence of the missionary, an institutionalized pattern of compartmentalization may emerge, where certain norms are observed in public religious settings, but where they fail to be observed in the privacy of the home.

In such settings missionaries may well observe native public conformity to standards which they are deeply committed to, and may well see such conformity as the key evidence of native conversion and commitment to Christ. When missionaries later inadvertently stumble across evidence of private nonconformity, they feel betrayed, accuse the nationals of hypocrisy, and perhaps suspect the genuineness of their conversion. The following is a pattern which may soon emerge in such a setting.

16. Conversion and discipleship which bypass native conscience may well create a situation where the missionary feels the need to take the role of policeman.

Recently a student of mine from the island of Palau told me of an early missionary, so incensed at Palauan believers' continued chewing of betel nut, that he carried a staff around the island with him with which he conked any transgressors he found on the head. And so the missionary ends up attempting to police behavior that he feels strongly about, but which his converts do not.

17. Conversion and discipleship which bypass native conscience often create a structure of dependency and paternalism.

Since, as Dye (1976:37) notes, "the things they hear from the missionary do not match the things they hear through their consciences," they learn to distrust their own consciences and feel the need for constant guidance by the missionary, and may slavishly obey "everything the missionary suggests or does, including brushing one's teeth and putting flowers on the dinner table. This inability to function independently greatly delays the development of an indigenous church."

18. Conversion and discipleship which bypass native conscience may well lay the groundwork for a breakaway, independent church (cf. Dye 1976:37).

Eventually, if converts have the opportunity to study the Bible for themselves, they may come to feel that the teaching they have received from the missionaries is quite different, both from what they find in the Bible and from their own sense of right and wrong, frequently ratified by the Bible. As a result a breakaway, independent church is formed. Dye (1976:37) comments on David Barrett's finding "that among the more than 6000 independent churches in Africa, a common reason given for separation was: The missionaries were living inconsistent lives. In terms of Romans 14, the Africans were tired of trying to live by someone else's conscience." It is particularly galling to be governed by, and condemned by, the consciences of missionaries when, by the standards of one's own conscience—frequently ratified by or congruent with Scripture—the missionaries themselves fall so seriously short.

HOW THEN SHOULD MISSIONARIES RELATE TO CONSCIENCE?

19. Missionaries need to understand the role that culture has played in the formation of their own conscience, and need help in distinguishing scruples grounded in transcendent biblical moral truth from scruples shaped, at least in part, by conventional cultural meanings.

When Otto Konig went to Melanesians of Irian Jaya, he paid a native to prepare a garden of pineapples for him. He inadvertently attempted an economic transaction based on alien principles—that if I give you something for your labor, I can expect you to forgo the fruit of your own labor. Konig was furious when "his" pineapples began disappearing. He brought in a police dog, closed the village store and then the medical dispensary, all in an effort to pressure villagers to quit stealing "his" pineapples. Eventually he learned that it was not the villagers who "stole" them, but one villager—the man who planted them. As the villagers earnestly stressed, "In our law the one who plants the food eats it." In his humorous book, *The Pineapple Story*, Konig tells how, after listening to Bill Gothard, he chose to give up his rights, gave the pineapples to God, and allowed others to take the pineapples at will. When the people learned what he had done, they attributed the deaths of their babies to their having inadvertently eaten "God's pineapples." And so they returned to Konig the right to determine the disposal of the

pineapples. The spiritual principle he learned was, "If I'll give my pineapples to God, he'll give them back to me."

While one can perhaps give Konig high marks for learning a difficult spiritual lesson, he must be given low marks in terms of cultural learning. From the beginning of the book to the end, he insists the pineapples rightly belonged to him—though of course he did choose to relinquish "his rights." He insists that the actions of others in taking them constituted theft. Throughout the book he considers the villagers "thieves." In cultural terms, he just doesn't get it. In terms of their normative order, the pineapples are not Konig's. They belong to the one who prepared the garden and planted them. Indeed it is the powerful missionary who is out of line by trying to claim and protect for himself that which he did not plant, and thus has no rightful claim to. Doubtless after several years of battle over these pineapples in which the missionary repeatedly enunciated the basis of his rights to the pineapples, the natives may have begun to understand the cultural logic on which his claims rested. And certainly in this case, the direction of cultural change was likely to be supportive of the missionary's economic cultural assumptions. But if the natives eventually learned to understand the cultural logic upon which Konig's moral sentiments rested, it seems clear that Konig was never able to understand and appreciate the cultural logic upon which their moral norms rested and was unable to recognize that his deep moral feelings about ownership rested as much on cultural as upon biblical principles.

American missionaries head overseas with deeply inculcated ideas and personal convictions about ownership and about how material things should or should not enter into interpersonal relations in a moral way. Their faculties of moral judgment—their consciences—rest, not merely on biblical absolutes, but in large part on conventional and culturally variable assumptions about such things as ownership and the place of material possessions in moral life. Moral convictions which rest on conventional ideas of ownership or on conventional meanings of dress and sexuality, for example, as well as on biblical absolutes—about such things as theft or modesty—are, to the person living in one's own culture, likely to be good, right and perfectly in order. But the same convictions, if vigorously propounded in another culture, may well be out of order, not because the biblical absolutes fail to hold true, but because they involve an admixture of cultural meanings and ideas which are conventional and no longer pertinent.

The individual whose scruples of conscience rest on faulty understandings is, in Pauline language, a "weaker brother." This, I argue, is what a missionary in another culture is if his or her convictions of conscience rest, in part, on conventional cultural meanings and ideas not valid in the new context. And while the spiritual well-being of "weaker brothers" should be a concern to fellow believers, this is a very different matter from elevating "weaker brothers" to positions of spiritual and moral authority, thus allowing them to lay burdens on others, not only too heavy to be borne, but which should not have to be borne.

The answer is to aim for missionaries like the apostle Paul who, though

a Jew, was able to dissociate transcendent ethical norms from Jewish moral scruples which were conventional and which were an inappropriate burden to lay on Gentiles. Of course, most Jews were not naturally gifted at such a dissociation. Nor are most contemporary missionaries. What is needed then is to have missionary training which helps missionaries analyze the foundations of their own moral convictions in terms of the mixture of the cultural and the biblical, and which gives attention to distinguishing transcendent biblical moral truth from its application in varying cultural contexts. Furthermore, in missionary recruitment there must be a careful weeding out of those who, through temperament or lack of training, are likely to be "Judaizers"—those likely to be "weaker brother" tyrants in cross-cultural contexts. We cannot afford to export "weaker brother" missionaries and inflict them on others. If Paul's discussion of this in the context of Galatia gives any indication of the seriousness of this evil, as I believe it does, then seminary professors and personnel secretaries have a solemn responsibility indeed in this area.

20. The missionary must seek to understand native conscience.

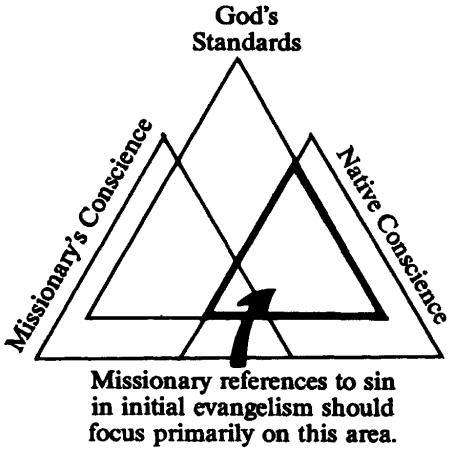
This is absolutely crucial. Everything else rests on this. It is upon this that a science of elenctics must be built. Conscience is psychologically and spiritually at the heart of an individual's awareness of the need of salvation, at the heart of an individual's initial response to God, and at the heart of an individual's ongoing spiritual life and mental health. Yet the discipline of missiology has failed to generate solid understandings of conscience as found in diverse cultures and sound missionary methodology resting on such understandings. Occasional lonely voices (Bavinck 1960; Dye 1976; Pike 1979; Hesselgrave 1983; Müller 1988; Priest 1993a) have been raised suggesting the importance of such matters, as we have noted, but they tend to be ad hoc, brief (i.e., a single brief article rather than multiple writings reflective of sustained attention over time), idiosyncratic (not linking effectively into a shared missiological discourse), and frequently fail to put the focus squarely on conscience as the object of study. In short, I argue that missiology lacks a coherent research agenda in this area. One searches missiology in vain for any systematic treatment of conscience in relationship to culture and to missionary methodology.[2] One searches American seminary catalogues in vain for any courses which systematically treat this.[3] Missiology, I argue, has failed to provide the intellectual and educational structure supportive of missionary success in understanding and correctly relating to native conscience.

Yet conscience is a God-given but natural faculty which is amenable to being studied, analyzed, and understood through empirical methods. A deep commitment to such understanding by the missionary will take him or her a long way. But conceptual and methodological tools provided by cultural anthropology have the potential for taking one a great deal further. The specifics of this I must leave for another time. Here I simply stress the principle: The missionary must seek to understand native conscience!

21. The missionary must seek to live an exemplary life in terms of the virtues and norms stressed by the people he or she is attempting to reach.

The missionary must follow the example of Paul in becoming all things to all people (1 Corinthians 9:22). Part of the adjustment required by this is adjustment to their moral sentiments and values. A missionary to the Utku, an Eskimo group, might naturally feel that by sexual purity, honesty, and vigorous defense of the Utku against outsiders who would exploit them, he or she was being a good witness for Christ. But the Utku are much more likely to evaluate the morality and virtue of the missionary by how much self-control, patience, and gentleness he or she exhibits in difficult circumstances—something which they place at the heart of their normative order (cf. Briggs 1970). A missionary who expresses "frustration," irritability, and occasional outbursts of anger is exhibiting the behavior of a three-year-old, or of a witch. Such a missionary would fail fundamentally to "commend" himself or herself to their consciences (2 Corinthians 4:2). But the missionary who exhibited such virtues would receive high marks and be listened to with deep respect.

22. In initial evangelism the missionary should stress sin, guilt, and repentance principally with reference to native conscience—*particularly that aspect of their conscience which is in agreement with Scripture.*



I argued earlier, from such passages as Romans 2, that God convicts the sinner in terms of moral norms recognized to be such by the sinner, the conviction then being ratified by their conscience. If God makes such an adjustment to human conscience, the missionary dare not fail to take into account such a needed adjustment. That is, the missionary dare not preach a message designed to convict the sinner in terms of moral norms which the sinner does not recognize to be moral. Instead we must, in initial evangelism (which speaks to our moral failures, need of grace, and which calls for repentance and faith) speak of moral failure in terms which conscience will

ratify. We must preach in such a way that native conscience functions as an independent inner witness to the truth of what is proclaimed about sinful selves. In this fashion conscience works with the missionary message. We must aim for sanctification of conscience after conversion, not as a prerequisite to understanding one's need of repentance and faith.

Perhaps I should point out here that just as individuals are divided beings having moral scruples, sentiments, ideals, and values internalized in conscience while at the same time having powerful immoral impulses and desires, frequently acted out, so cultures involve complexes of meaning and institutional patterns of behavior which move in two contradictory directions —one moral and the other immoral. This should not surprise us, since cultures are simply shared patterns of meaning and behavior which are created and sustained by morally divided individuals.

Think in terms of a specific example—that of sexuality in Aguaruna culture. Aguaruna men have clear and strong ideas about what is moral in the area of sexuality. But they also, on occasion, have powerful desires and longings which are clearly contradictory to their notions of the right and the good and yet which they act upon. Such contradictory impulses work themselves out in cultural patterns. Fathers lecture, correct, punish, and praise sons in ways which are supportive of moral norms. Myths are told which exemplify the dangers and evils of sexual transgression. Cuckolded husbands furiously protest and demand the punishment of transgressors. In village meetings everyone loudly affirms the moral norms and vigorously condemns transgressors. But there are other dimensions of culture, not for public display, which reveal another story. There is an elaborate "science" of how to seduce other men's wives and escape detection, which is secretly passed from one man to another. There is an extensive technology of love magic employed secretly and covertly under cover of night to allow one to successfully commit acts one knows to be wrong. Extensive magical songs exist designed to bend the desires of other men's wives towards oneself. This too is part of culture. But it is a part of culture which no father would teach to his son. It is a father's job to teach morality to his son. A father may himself employ love magic. He may even teach it to a nephew. But Aguaruna informants simply laughed in delighted humor at my naivety in supposing that a father would teach such things to his son—that he would, in effect, teach his son to be immoral. No, it is the father's job to represent morality to his son. (For further data on this, see Priest 1993b:354-487.)

And so one discovers in Aguaruna culture directly contradictory patterns. Paternal moral discourses, myths, and public village meetings concerned with village morality all uniformly stress a certain set of moral notions which a different part of the same culture (a complex set of ideas and skills secretly employed to aid transgression) implicitly violates. My point is this: it is native conscience that the missionary must take care not to fundamentally contradict in initial evangelism, not culture per se. In the case of the Aguaruna, it would be perfectly in order for a missionary to list the use of love magic as something which should be repented of. While this involves an implicit attack on one part of culture, it is an attack on something which Aguaruna

conscience will ratify—though individuals may be understandably reluctant to give up that which assures them illicit pleasures. In any case it is conscience, particularly when conscience is in agreement with biblical principles, which should provide our reference point in initial evangelism.

A side effect of this type of evangelistic preaching is that community moral leaders, even if they fail to become Christians, are more likely to be favorably disposed to a message which stresses things which they recognize in principle as good—just as Roman leaders in the book of Acts were frequently favorable to early missionaries whose message seemed to them to be supportive of the moral order. Such a favorable disposition of community leaders creates a positive climate in which evangelism may be pursued.

23. With conversion, the content of conscience is not instantly changed. But under the tutelage of a new authority—the Word of God—the conscience of the believer who is growing in sanctification will be gradually changed in certain needed areas toward greater conformity with the written Word.

With conversion individuals have a new allegiance (to Christ), a new motivation to live up to their own conscience (love for Christ and gratefulness to him), a new power for living up to their conscience (the indwelling Holy Spirit), and a new source of authority—the Scriptures—which exercises authority over their conscience and gradually corrects and deepens the moral insights and sensitivity of conscience. But the moment of conversion does not miraculously give an Aguaruna the same conscience as that of the missionary or that of an Utku, Apache, or Japanese Christian, or even the same conscience as that of a more mature Aguaruna believer. Sanctification is a process which affects the content of conscience. And it is a process. Central to that process is instruction in, meditation on, and submission to the Word of God.

It is worth pointing out that a conscience which is being sanctified is nonetheless a conscience which operates in terms of issues and conventional meanings raised in a specific cultural context. The conscience of a godly Aguaruna saint will still diverge in significant ways (though appropriate ways) from the conscience of a godly Japanese saint. Modesty for a godly Iranian woman will look quite different from modesty for a godly Sirionó woman, for example.

24. After conversion the believers' relation to their own conscience (which still differs from that of the missionary) remains central to their own spiritual well-being.

In our last point, we stressed that the consciences of believers are not free-floating and unattached to any authority. Simply having a clear conscience does not guarantee one is ultimately in the right (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:4). Believers' then are duty bound to be actively submitting their conscience to the instruction of the Scriptures. But while conscience is not infallible, Paul nonetheless treats conscience as central to one's spiritual and moral-psychological well-being.

Paul suggests in Romans 14 and elsewhere that believers with equal

commitment to the Scriptures will have differences of conscience over various matters, the differences commonly not being resolvable by a direct appeal to Scripture. There will be genuine impasses in terms of what people have deep convictions on. This is particularly true in a cross-cultural context. Paul's answer to divergent consciences, interestingly enough, does not involve an appeal to external authority. He does not suggest that if one party would just read their Bible more carefully the truth would be evident. Apparently believers can have equal allegiance to the Scriptures and still differ on many matters of conscience. Nor does Paul suggest that the external authority structure of the church should impose a forced settlement—an external forced settlement—which would not adequately address the internality of deep personal conviction. Instead Paul suggests that individual behavior needs to be measured by the variable faculty of conscience, that is, with reference to the conscience of each individual believer. He suggests that the specific behavior of individual believers has a direct bearing on their spiritual and moral-psychological well-being *in terms of whether or not it violates their conscience*, and not in terms of some other standard. If individuals violate their own conscience this has a damaging effect on their spiritual and moral-psychological condition. Their conscience is thereby "defiled" (1 Corinthians 8:7) and "wounded" (1 Corinthians 8:12). Paul writes of those who rejected "a good conscience" and who thereby "suffered shipwreck in regard to the faith" (1 Timothy 1:19). But another individual who, in some instances, performs the exact same action, but does so with the approval of conscience, suffers no such spiritual and moral-psychological ill effects. In the context of eating meat offered to idols, Paul contrasts the two: "Blessed are those who have no reason to condemn themselves [have no scruples of conscience] because of what they approve [choose to do]. But those who have doubts [scruples of conscience] are condemned if they eat" (Romans 14:22-23 NRSV). Two people perform the exact same act—one is blessed, the other condemned. The pivotal variable is conscience. Again and again Paul stresses in his writings the theme that conscience is critical in one's relationship to God. Even in defending himself to others, it is frequently with reference to his own conscience that he appeals, stressing that he has a good conscience in relationship to God (Acts 23:1; Acts 24:16; 2 Timothy 1:3; etc.). By such an appeal, Paul is claiming an inner sincerity, purity, and integrity in relation to God. Other New Testament writers stress the same principle. When 1 John 3:21 says, "Beloved, if our heart [read "conscience"] does not condemn us, we have confidence before God," this too is stressing that our relationship to conscience is pivotal to our own spiritual and moral-psychological well-being.

In the context of missions, one finds that the consciences of missionary and native believer are likely to be markedly divergent. On some matters the missionary will not have convictions of conscience about things which national believers will. On such issues, to use Pauline language, the missionary is in the position of the "stronger brother." On other matters the missionary will have convictions of conscience about matters which national believers will have no scruples on. In such a case, to stick with Paul's terms,

the missionary finds himself or herself in the position of "weaker brother." Paul's message to missionaries, in either case, is that they must respect the conscience of fellow believers which is at the heart of the believers' own spiritual and moral-psychological well-being. If there is evidence that the other is acting in good conscience—that their heart does not condemn them—then they should not only "have confidence before God" (1 John 3:21), being uncondemned (Romans 14:22-23), but they should be able to have uncondemned confidence in the presence of the missionary as well. When fellow believers have genuine differences of conscience, they must learn to receive each other without moral judgment—the operative principle here being "each to his own master stands or falls."

If missionaries wish to get a reading on the spiritual condition—love for God and obedience to him—of a national church in which the Bible is preached and taught, missionaries should not check whether behaviors match up to their standards (with respect to such things as modesty, cleanliness, gossip, laziness, etc.) but should ask themselves if national Christians are living up to/attempting to live up to what they themselves understand and of which they are morally convinced. Is there battle against sin in terms of what they do recognize to be sin? Is there remorse, repentance, and confession for failures which they themselves recognize to be such? If so, one has evidence that sanctification is occurring, and one should be able to be relatively carefree about differences of conscience.

Most missionaries need to give less attention to the correction of conscience amongst their converts and more attention to teaching their converts the importance of maintaining a right relationship with God in terms of their own conscience—the importance of a clear conscience toward God, of a conscience submissive to Scripture and sensitive to the Holy Spirit, of confession when conscience is violated, etc.

The centrality of conscience in the life of the believer is a theological and psychological truth which involves complex missiological implications which I have barely addressed. Suffice it to say that this truth needs to be taken into account in missionary methodology with respect to discipleship, counseling, church discipline, confession, etc. The varying implications of this must be discussed on another occasion.

25. The methods used by missionaries to disciple native converts must be grounded in:

a. a radical eschewing of any authority but that of Scripture.

Missionaries have no mandate to spread their culture. The only legitimacy to their crossing cultural lines with a message for others is that the message is not their own, does not derive from their culture, but that it is God-given and thus transcends cultural variability. Missionaries who firmly settle on the Scripture alone as their authority will utilize methods appropriate to that. I would suggest that such a commitment favors the use of inductive approaches to biblical teaching, rather than deductive. That is, teaching should stick closely to the text of Scripture and should not involve the importation of complex doctrinal systems or the importation of whole

codes of behavior, learned in home churches, Bible schools, and seminaries. The Pharisees attempted to systematize their understanding of the implications of Scripture. Such systems were easier to refer to and transmit than the text itself precisely because they were systems. Yet Jesus indicates that such efforts to develop systematic codes inspired by Scripture nonetheless involved human admixture. That is, he refers to them as "traditions of men" and accuses the Pharisees of "teaching as doctrines the precepts of men" (Mark 7:7). Since such systems arise in interaction with specific cultural and historical contexts, it is doubly dangerous for us to place human moral codes and systems of doctrine at the center of our cross-cultural discipleship methodology. Our authority must be Scripture and Scripture alone.

b. a deep humility which recognizes that, as a cultural expatriate, one is not in a good position to authoritatively and unilaterally declare how biblical principles should be applied to cultural particulars.

I will not repeat what I have stressed throughout this paper. My only additional comment here would be that the missionaries, by virtue of being the ones who comes with the original message, or by virtue of being respected for their nationality, education, etc., may often be asked to speak authoritatively to important issues. However, being from another culture, with all that this involves, they are the wrong persons to authoritatively address specific issues of lifestyle. They need to be humble enough to recognize this, and concerned enough about a healthy independent church that they refuse an inappropriate scope of authority. They need to turn many appeals for authoritative answers back into questions for believers and for native church leadership to address. People wanted Jesus also to take on roles which were not appropriate for his calling. On one such occasion Jesus answered, "Who made me the judge over you?" Missionaries need to learn, like Jesus, to reject seductive offers of an inappropriate scope of authority.

c. a serious respect for the consciences of believers and for the work of the Holy Spirit and Scripture in directing their consciences.

One further implication of this respect, combined with personal and cultural humility, is that missionary methods should foster relationship patterns between the missionary and native believers, especially between the missionaries and church leadership, which are highly egalitarian rather than hierarchical. Hierarchical relationships, particularly if intrusive into the specifics of everyday life, work against the type of healthy native conscience which is important. Some forms of discipleship pair individuals into hierarchical relations which may involve extensive and intrusive probing in the other person's life and an extensive amount of authority over the other individual in matters of lifestyle. I am convinced that such methods, especially when the "discipler" is of a different culture from the "disciplee," almost invariably leads to the violation of many of the principles stressed in this paper.

Conscience is not perfect, but it is God-given and fulfills crucial functions. Conscience contributes to an awareness of spiritual need for God and for his salvation. It contributes to repentance and faith. It plays a pivotal

role in the sanctification of the believer. The missionary who fails to understand native conscience and works at cross-purposes to it wreaks havoc. But the missionary who understands and works with native conscience finds conscience to be God's great and good gift, an ally which works to support repentance and faith, the sanctification of the believer, and personal conviction and independent initiative amongst the leadership of a vigorous indigenous church.

Notes

1. I would like to thank Ken Mulholland, Robertson McQuilkin, William Larkin, Brad Mullen, Tom Campbell, and David Mash for reading an earlier draft of this paper and offering helpful suggestions.

2. Though it lacks as clear a focus on conscience as I might like, Dye's article is the closest we have to this.

3. My own missions course in **Sin, Shame and Guilt** would be an exception. In Germany the situation appears to be different. The missionary anthropologist Lothar Käser and missiologist Klaus Müller both address this subject at length at the graduate missionary training institution *Freie Hochschule für Mission der AEM* in Korntal, Germany—with Dr. Müller teaching a whole course on missionary elenctics.

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