



Dear Sir/Madam:

I just received your letter of December 28, 2003 with a complimentary copy of the journal for the period from October-December 2003. Well done, and well formatted, and I'm impressed!

Would you please send me the back issues for the years 2001 through 2003, and enroll me as a subscriber for the year 2004?

Shalom!

Jacob D.

Dear Ralph Winter,

Congratulations on your 20:4 issue of IJFM. . . I particularly liked your identification of the frontier of the Religion of Science and the challenging articles on science. One thing I hope that you will do in the future is explain how the religion of science was expanded from the natural sciences to include the social sciences (after a couple of centuries). As Rodney Stark

points out, natural scientists are more likely to be believers than social scientists. (By the way, I am so glad that you are encouraging people to read Stark's recent books.) As dramatic as the struggle has been between theology and the natural sciences, I believe that an even greater struggle is going to be between theology and the social sciences. After all, theology is very interested in human behavior and this is what the social sciences seek to explain.

Some time ago (1972) I came back from the mission field in Taiwan with the desire to find some explanation for the great variations in receptivity to the gospel that we had seen. My view has been that the social sciences should be a useful tool to help us "read the world" of human behavior, also based on God's creation, just as is natural creation. However, human behavior is more difficult to study than rocks and trees, and human behavior incorporates resistance to God. But then nature has also been affected by evil, as you have pointed out in relation to diseases.

My view has come to be that theology must be able to incorporate scientific knowledge, although science cannot incorporate theology because of different methodologies. This incorporation is a

dynamic process since scientific knowledge is not fixed and is constantly being changed and elaborated. All scientific theories are subject to public challenge. This "humility" is part of the power of science. Theology is not subject to public challenge in the same way since its assertions can not be examined and demonstrated empirically.

Evangelicals have seen the utility of at least one of the social sciences, anthropology, to a greater extent than most Mainline churches. However, they have tended to neglect the more theoretical approach found in sociology. In the meantime, the Mainline seminaries have continued to be dominated by the humanities, the oldest and most prestigious area of knowledge, at least traditionally.

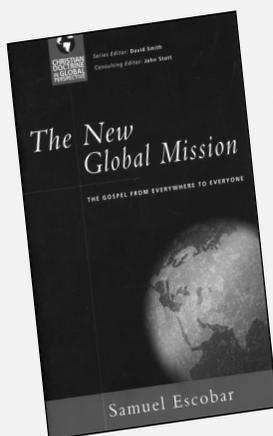
I know that you have recognized the value of the social sciences and so my suggestion is that you continue the discussion of the frontier of the Religion of Science, but include consideration of how we can make good use of the social sciences.

Thank you for your good work,
Bob (Montgomery)

The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone

By Samuel Escobar, Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. 2003, 190 pp., ISBN 0830833013

—Reviewed by Ralph D. Winter



Here is a readable book by an alert Latin scholar that is brimful of quality insights about mission. However, it is strangely alienated from most all of the actual, real bustle and activity of mission agencies and missionaries. In one paragraph at the very end he effectively dismisses 80 to 90 percent of the actual world of missions by means of the categorization of "managerial missiology" (see Levi DeCarvalho's analysis of managerial missiology entitled "What's Wrong with the Label 'Managerial Missiology'" in IJFM 18:3). It is as though any attempt to understand the dynamics of mission is worldly or secular. He does not even speak enthusiastically about non western missions. You could get the impression that mission agencies are something we could and perhaps should try to do without. At one point he speaks of the "shock" Latin American students had when they heard that Billy Graham people were estimating an "X" percent response in a planned series of meetings and were making quantitative plans to meet that size of need. Thus, it is almost as though planning processes themselves are unhelpful. The evangelism of university students is a significant background for him personally and for much of what he says. But that is not all we need. Yet this is a valuable book for what it does say, sensibly and knowledgeably, and in most respects Escobar is a serious and reliable thinker.