

travel throughout the empire and expect humane or at least civil treatment. The same was true, very much later, for the missionaries of imperial Spain and Portugal.

In a sense, the cultures these missionaries visited had almost no choice but to receive them—at least externally. That Latin America is a troubled area for Christianity now, seems to show us just how deep Christianity was able to penetrate the hearts and souls of men. Yet in that continent, one can say, a dominant Christian culture has taken root, if we judge it according to the implicit external standards put forward by Mastra, without reference to the demands of Christian love which, to be fair, he also cites. In a way, therefore, contextualization of the Gospel can be achieved even without emphasis on the content of the Gospel itself. All it needs is a culture's *openness* to different ways of doing things and of believing, which in the cases mentioned, was facilitated by an imperial structure.

Latter-day missionaries can be said to have faced cultures which are less open, which have been less exposed to an international experience. Sometimes (as in India's case) they were former centers of Empire themselves . . . and Majapahit itself was also one.

These factors and many more need to be considered by those who will follow Mastra's steps in our own times.

Paul G. Hiebert

School of World Mission
Fuller Theological Seminary
Pasadena, CA., USA

In reviewing Mastra's article, one is encouraged by the serious efforts of the Gereja Kristen Protestan di Bali to contextualize the Gospel in Bali without losing its essential message. Of particular note is Mastra's recognition that the Holy Spirit is as much at work in the Balinese church as in other churches around the world, that a wide range of indigenous media (such as drama and dance) can be used to convey the message of the Gospel, and that the Christian conversion does not equal cultural conversion. Moreover, Mastra hints at some of the deeper issues of contextualization by pointing out one of the fundamental differences in world view between Bali and the West, namely, that the Balinese tend to think more in terms of concrete, real-life situations than in abstract philosophical concepts detached from life. One suspects that there is a great deal of truth to this, although the difference may be in part due to a comparison of western elites (and missionaries and church leaders are among these elites) for whom the rationalization of beliefs is an important task, and the common peasant of Bali for whom the concrete situations of everyday life are more pressing. One might also find a less cerebral approach

among lay Christians of the West.

There are several areas where Mastra's study raises questions that require further analysis:

1. The adaptation of Hinduism to Bali is presented uncritically as an example of contextualization. To the non-Hindu, Hinduism in Bali does seem to be a good case of adaptation. But there are at least two ways in which this is not the case. First, Hinduization is clearly incomplete. Not only have a great many Balinese forms and symbols remained, but so have many of the traditional gods and spirits that appear to reside in a religious cognitive domain largely untouched by Hinduism. Furthermore, the tensions between the Brahmana and Wong Majapahit suggest that the institutional assimilation is also incomplete. Second, even though Hinduism with its theological relativism has tolerated a wide range of beliefs, it is not certain that Balinese Hinduism would be accepted as a valid form of Hinduism by orthodox leaders in India. They, too, face the central question of contextualization: at what point has the process gone too far and the essential message of the religion been lost? One suspects that for many leaders in the orthodox schools of Hindu thought, Balinese Hinduism has gone too far and ended in a Hindupagan syncretism. Thus the example of the adaptation of Hinduism to Bali becomes a part of the question and not the answer. One must ask, is Bali Hinduism truly Hindu?

2. Further discussion of the "foreignness" of the Gospel is needed. Clearly we must not confuse the "offense" of the Gospel with presenting the Gospel in an offensive manner. Moreover, we must not cling to foreign cultural trappings under the guise of preserving a "true" form of Christianity. But is there not an "offense" inherent in the Gospel, not because it comes from a foreign culture, but because it comes from heaven? Is there not a danger when the church is so well accommodated to fit the local culture (as possibly in the West) that it loses its prophetic voice calling that culture to righteousness? Clearly the church in Bali is not in danger of such accommodation, but it can sacrifice the heart of the Gospel in its efforts not to be offensive to the listener.

Just what is the offense, and how far one can use local beliefs without at some point challenging them, is, of course, part of the question at hand. The use of Paul's message on the Areopagus as an example is not without its problems. Some such as E. Stanley Jones (1968:107) feel that Paul's preaching in Athens was an experiment in contextualization that failed, for Paul left hurriedly without leaving behind a church, and we have no record that he used this approach elsewhere.

3. Finally, any theory of contextualization is closely tied to a particular view of conversion, and it would help if the author would share how he conceptualizes this taking place. If conversion is the acquisition of a certain core of information and the affirmation of certain beliefs, then contextualization becomes the substitution of certain traditional ele-

ments of knowledge and belief with the new ones. If, however, we follow Kuhn's (1970) lead and suggest that religion is a paradigm, conversion becomes a change in Gestalt—a totally new way of thinking about the world. In such a change, many or even most of the traditional items of information and beliefs may continue, but now their meaning and place within a person's total explanatory system is reinterpreted in view of the organizing center. The question then becomes not only what old beliefs and practices remain but what meaning these now have to the new Christians.

The value of Mastra's study is the fact that it presents us with a concrete situation in which the church is struggling with the issue of contextualization. Only as we study a great many such specific cases will we discover the many dimensions of the question and some of the principles that can mold our answers. At the present we can only be quick to listen and slow to judge.

Charles H. Kraft

School of World Mission
Fuller Theological Seminary
Pasadena, CA, USA

I much appreciated the author's call for outsiders to show respect for non-western cultures. I believe that the showing of such respect is required by Christianity in obedience to the golden rule at the cultural level. Westerners have withheld such respect out of a failure to understand that western Christianity is contextualized Christianity rather than essential Christianity. Mastra helps to awaken us to this fact.

Nevertheless, the mere giving of "new names to the spirits and the deities already believed in by the people" is not the kind of contextualization that Christianity seeks. Our Gospel does not recommend the mere replacement of one set of cultural forms by another set of cultural forms. The western cultural domination that Mastra rightly condemns in this context is, however, equally to be shunned. Toward the end of assisting all of us to better understand how to avoid erring at either of these extremes, I would like to raise several crucial issues touched on in Mastra's paper.

1. The first is the distinction between what I have labeled "formal correspondence churches" and "dynamic equivalence churches." True Christianness exists, we believe, not in the imitation of cultural *forms*, but in the use of appropriate cultural forms to convey an *impact* within the culture equivalent to the impact that the early churches had on those who participated in the cultures in which they operated.

2. Secondly, a distinction must be made between faith-allegiance and religious forms. Mastra uses the term "religion" in a traditional but indistinct way to cover both (a) the basic allegiance around which any religious system is centered, and (b) the system of cultural forms in terms of

which that allegiance is expressed. Mastra rightly advocates that Christianity learn to employ the religious forms of Bali culture. I don't believe, however, that he intends to imply that Bali converts from Hinduism will as Christians be able to maintain their allegiance to the Hindu deities. The use of the term "religion" to cover both allegiance and religious forms obscures the fact that in order for people to become Christian they must change their allegiance from whatever it was to a faith-commitment to the true God through Jesus Christ. Once that allegiance has been changed, the attitude toward the cultural forms that previously had been used to express another allegiance can be one of adaptation rather than one of rejection. Contextualized, dynamic equivalence Christianity may be idealized as a deep level faith-allegiance to God through Christ expressed in cultural forms that are appropriate (largely indigenous) to the receiving culture.

3. A third distinction is that between a *continuity of cultural forms* and the *discontinuity of faith-allegiance*. In many cases, in this country as well as in Europe, the domination of some outside body has produced the opposite—a discontinuity of cultural forms that masks a rather large measure of continuity of the pre-Christian faith-allegiance. The biblical position, however, is that there must be a newness of faith-commitment at the allegiance level, though there may be a large measure of continuity in the surface cultural forms that are employed to express that faith.

4. Christianity is not against culture change as long as the new forms adequately function to meet the felt needs once met by the displaced forms. In non-indigenous Christianity very often the new forms are simply form substitutes rather than "functional substitutes." They do not, therefore, satisfy the emotional needs of the new Christians. Even Christians, then, feel that they must at times resort to the employment of cultural forms maintaining their ties to pre-Christian indigenous allegiances to meet their needs. In developing dynamic equivalence Christianity, therefore, great attention must be given to the development of a Christian experience within indigenous cultural patterns that provides psychological and spiritual satisfactions that are equivalent to or greater than those experienced as a function of the previous allegiance.

5. In non-western societies particularly (including those of biblical times), the development of such equivalent satisfaction is often closely related to the resolution of what might be labeled the "power problem." Mastra rightly decries the intellectualization of Christianity. The most serious problem in this regard is, I believe, the fact that westerners have allowed *thinking about* Christianity to replace the *power confrontation* between God and whatever was the object of the convert's previous allegiance. For many peoples true doctrine is not an adequate functional substitute for the power relationship they once had with their previous deities. Even in the area of the contextualization of theology,