The development of A.G. Hogg's theology in relation to non-Christian faith: its significance for the Tambaram meeting of the International Missionary Council, 1938

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Abstract: In the course of his work on J.N. Farquhar's contribution to Protestant missionary thought in India before 1914, Eric Sharpe became convinced that A.G. Hogg had much to offer to the study of missionary theology between 1900 and 1940. Sharpe's interest in Hogg led him to publish a small book in the Confessing the Faith in India Series on The Theology of A.G. Hogg. At that time, Sharpe hoped to produce a larger study on Hogg. He since has been prevented from this by the limitations of time and the demands of a heavy work schedule. This study does not follow the development of Hogg's thought in perhaps the same way as Sharpe might have done, but it is due to his cooperation and consent that it has been undertaken at all. The idea for the study, however, was suggested by my supervisor, Professor A.F. Walls, who suspected that there was ground for real consideration in Hogg's contribution to missionary thought, particularly in the light of the Tambaram debate. Since C.F. Hallencreutz published his definitive work on Hendrik Kraemer's development towards 1938, and later produced a small book on the trends of thought at Tambaram and after, Hogg's place in the Tambaram debate has required a detailed analysis. Was Hogg merely one contributor among others, one, moreover, who should be grouped among those liberal theologians who drew a direct line from the revelation in the other religions to the Christian revelation Or did Hogg offer a distinctive standpoint which makes his significance for the Tambaram debate greater than has been recognized previously This question is at the core of our study. But in the end it does not define our whole purpose. Ultimately, it is Hogg's missionary theology which we must consider, and that means tracing it right from its beginning in 1903. Moreover, the Tambaram debate merely focused attention on what is the critical issue for any missionary theology, namely, how the Christian is to regard the religious life and experience of those who seek God outside of Christ. Hogg consistently sought to answer this question, but at Tambaram offered his resolution as an alternative to the argument of Hendrik Kraemer's The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World. The study of Hogg's participation at Tambaram thus enables us to evaluate the lasting theological significance of his contribution to missionary thought.

Its words have inspired the occasional saint to a life of heroic service, purity, self-sacrifice, or martyrdom; they have elevated whole communities of ordinary people to extraordinary expectations of moral exertion and mutual caring. But its dark sayings have also enchanted otherwise sober and pious souls to terrible beliefs and acts: the defense of slavery, murder, genocide, madness, suicide. 1. The International Theological Commission has had, on several occasions, the opportunity to reflect on the relationship between faith and culture. In 1984 it spoke directly on the inculcation of faith in its study on the mystery of the Church, which it produced with a view to the extraordinary synod of 1985.2 For its part, the Pontifical Biblical Commission held its. The significance of this word nature varies moreover with the different conceptions of the natural sciences, of philosophy and of theology. 23 On Pentecost day, the breaking in of the Holy Spirit inaugurates the relation of the Christian faith and culture as fulfillment in flower: The promise of salvation fulfilled by the risen Christ filled the hearts of believers by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit himself.