

Dr. A. A. MacRae interviewed by Jim Neher 7/5/79

I might say a word about how my objectives developed. When I was in college I read about the Jesuits and how they tried to study all sorts of things in order to bring them to bear on the advancement of what they believed. It stimulated my desire to find evidences in history of the influence Christianity has had. Evidences to bear on presenting the truth of Christianity.

I thought of that ideal, only I thought of a Protestant society of Jesus. The idea of gathering facts and evidences to indicate its truthfulness. Then my father said to me once when I mentioned it to him, he said, Oh, stick close to the Bible! My mother said she thought it was very unusual for my father to speak that particular way, but it had very considerable influence on me then.

I'm not sure when I shifted from thinking of history with that apologetic viewpoint to thinking more specifically of biblical studies. In fact in my first year at Princeton I went up to see a famous history professor at Columbia U. with the thought I might take graduate work with him after I finished seminary. At Princeton Seminary I took one year of work at Princeton U. toward a graduate degree in history, and then I shifted to semetics.

I got more and more to feel that I wanted my support to be directly on the Bible. I saw a great importance from an apologetic viewpoint of the Scripture and of the OT and of the studies related to it. I'd given a good bit of my time to the study of ancient history in relation to the Bible, but I have not worked into what I thought of at that time showing the influence of Christianity in making various countries way ahead of other countries and the part that it has played which I think has been a very real factor.

The Protestant countries are those in which the greatest economic advances have been made, and in which there has been the greatest development of modern civilization. To how great an extent this was due to the character developed by Christian teaching, to how great an extent it was due to individual initiatives in the development of which Christian teaching had a part, to the atmosphere of liberty which Protestant teaching certainly had a very definite part, and to how much it was due to the specific, direct blessing of God it would be pretty hard to tell, hard to divide them out.

The fact remains that it is the Protestant nations which have made the great advances. I remember reading Macaulay once speaking about the fact that at the time of the Renaissance, in S. Europe, Italy particularly, and Spain-- in S. Europe was the great advanced area. And N. Europe seemed like a rather backward section, of the world. Yet in the three centuries since