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## Playbook: For Christian Theatre (Book Review)

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in the past, have much in common with many countries of the world which have suffered or are suffering the savage oppression of internal rulers and foreign imperialist rulers. The experience accumulated by our Party in the seizure of power by the people, in the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the construction of socialism is a concrete example and aid to these peoples. The victories and successes achieved in the People's Socialist Republic of Albania have their basis in the Marxist-Leninist theory, by which it is inspired and which the Party of Labor of Albania applies in practice (p. 456).

It also stated that Albania will always defend ideological purity and actively participate in world revolution as the proper leader of the Third World.

### III

What emerges in both books is an ideological struggle between China and Albania for the right to seek to gain the leadership of the developing countries. Thus two important editorials from the Albanian party daily *Zeri i Popullit* were included in the Teng biography opposing both the rapprochement between Tito and Khrushchev in 1963 and the Chinese "three worlds" theory in 1977 (texts, see pp. 177-216). The strategy of Teng Hsiao-Ping in attempting to gain support in the West and the Third World has been to emphasize the Soviet threat and the need for domestic modernization. The Vice Premier has tried to avoid basic political questions of communism versus democracy, while appealing to secular pragmatic indifference

*The Playbook: For Christian Theatre*, compiled and edited by Hans Altena. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Young Calvinist Federation, 1978. 49 pages, \$2.95. Reviewed by Michael Stair, Instructor in Theatre Arts.

Christians put up with some very inadequate theatre. Except for the few authors who become famous by leaving their Christian viewpoint behind, the Christian audience looking for an emotionally moving piece without a "hit you on the head message" can expect little but neglect, or at best, rare viewing experiences which are truly stimulating. No one is to blame for this. We are simply too saturated, too patterned to notice the difference between "television type" entertainment and drama with a purpose. Much of the finest drama written today is left unseen by the majority of Christian theatre goers. That Christian theatre has historically found the source of its

to the Gospel-Revolution antithesis. Hoxha's approach has been an appeal to ideological purity and to his rigid brand of communism. Given Albania's status as a mini-power with a population of two million, Hoxha could hardly do otherwise. The clash between the positions of Teng and Hoxha is related to conflicting party idolatries both claiming to have "the truth" as well as to the collision of national interests. China no longer needs Albania diplomatically and ideologically and Albania no longer agrees with China ideologically. The Hoxha book is a corrective from within the communist movement to the current uncritical attitude toward China. Since 1978 Hoxha has been actively building an independent Marxist-Leninist world movement with headquarters in Tirana. This means that the left-wing politics of the Third World, as well as elsewhere, is getting more complicated with more radical splinter parties. The tension between Albania and China now influencing the world communist movement is a current example of the Revolution within the Revolution. By day Enver Hoxha is the Albanian party leader, but by night he dreams he is the new Stalin with international influence. *Imperialism and the Revolution* is Hoxha's claim to be the ideological successor to Mao Tse-Tung as the world leader of the radical communist movement. From the Chinese viewpoint the Tirana regime favored the radical Gang of Four jailed after Mao's death. Both books make clear that politics is not just politics, but politics based on a world view. In this case it is a consistent rejection of the Gospel in favor of two similar but clashing brands of unbelief now being exported to the Third World. Such spiritual darkness, either from Teng or Hoxha, must be recognized and properly critiqued since it is basic to the modern world.

greatest strengths in church drama is an old story. It would be foolish to insist that only the Chancel Theatre is worth seeing, but it would be just as wrong to assume that the work published each year by Samuel French represents the extent of Christian theatre being written. We must make the effort to find out what is available.

Consider *The Playbook: For Christian Theatre*. Now in its second year since publication, with seventeen scripts and two preparatory essays, it could be one of the most useful publications available to Christian youth leaders. And yet it probably will not make that much impact on the Christian theatre scene as a whole. There are

several reasons for this probable obscurity. First of all, *The Playbook's* scripts are short and undramatic; they are more than clear enough for the chancel, but a bit too preachy for the stage. Second, all but a couple of the scenes follow television plot lines. The whole story comes to maturity in less than 15 minutes, leaving little time for building meaningful characters. And finally, in most of the scripts the authors' overriding intentions seem to be to *say* something rather than *play*

*Husband and Wife: The Sexes in Scripture and Society*, by P. DeJong and D.R. Wilson. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979. 224 pages, \$6.95. Reviewed by Richard Buckham, Assistant Professor of Psychology.

De Jong and Wilson's *Husband and Wife* is a welcome addition to the already extensive literature by Christians on topics and issues relative to maleness and femaleness, sexuality and sex roles, and male-female interaction. Both professors at Calvin College (De Jong in Sociology, Wilson in Anthropology), they have authored a book that is both Christianly directed and responsibly sensitive to the theoretical positions, empirical data, and normative issues related to their subject matter. The value of the book is further enhanced by the inclusion of discussion questions and annotated references at the end of each chapter.

There are several major thrusts to their book. First, they contend with a number of "myths" Christians (and non-Christians as well) hold regarding the sexes in society and Scripture. For example, they would contend with the frequent assumption (by both Christians and non-Christians) that the Bible supports the notion of divinely mandated differences in the tasks males and females are called to perform. Such task differences as do exist between males and females, assert De Jong and Wilson, are due to reproductive and biological differences and social influences on sex role development, not divine fiat. Another myth they demolish by biblical exegesis is that there are divinely *mandated* biological differences which render males superior to females. They also appeal to the social scientific research on such matters. As they state it:

One would be hard put to argue on the basis of this evidence that men are biologically destined to be providers while women are biologically programmed to care for children and the household. Admittedly, the biological research is not definitive; perhaps other biological differences between the sexes are yet to be discovered. However, the research that has been done

something. The scenes make good object lessons but are shallow examples of provocative drama.

Nevertheless, I hope that the public response to the book is good. In the past few years, the churches and schools of our denomination have been scratching to find playable material. *The Playbook* is a collection of drama which makes no bones about taking a stand. Perhaps in this, our embryonic stage, it is the most palatable food available.

has failed to find clear biological differences that would better fit the sexes for certain tasks or roles in society rather than others (p. 62).

Furthermore, they make the following related claim:

The fact of pregnancy also throws some light on the question why men rather than women inevitably held the positions of authority in nonmodern societies . . . . Religious, governmental, or military leadership requires either constant attention or immediate attention at unexpected times, or perhaps both. It would have been very difficult for women to function in these roles, being pregnant so much of their adult lives and having small children to care for. What's more, the major form of nourishment for infants and young children in these societies was mother's milk. This meant that women were limited to those tasks that would allow them to be near their young children (p. 73).

A second major thrust is their argument that the correct biblical understanding of male and female interaction has been undermined by the attitudes and customs of our own culture. For example, in reference to modern American society and Paul's understanding of "headship" they state the following:

It is not easy for modern Americans to understand what Paul was emphasizing with this metaphor of headship. First, we come to this passage with a cultural heritage that includes the man as "the head of the house." To most Americans, the head is the one who has the "say-so" in marriage; but to Paul, headship