

PERSPECTIVE NINE

MEANWHILE, THE ROMAN CATHOLICS

Centuries before Ziegenbalg came to Tranquebar or Carey to Calcutta, the Roman Catholic orders engaged in mission. One thinks of Francis of Assisi (1181-1226), Raymond Lull (1235-1316), John of Montecorvino (at Peking in 1294), Francis Xavier (1506-1552), Robert de Nobili (1577-1656). Roman Catholic missionary work stood as a rebuke to early Protestantism which, prior to 1792, had few expressions of mission.¹ Its missionary activity also is an expression of belief. "Missionary work is a necessary task of the Church, because it is essential to its very nature."² Her faith has been a motivation for the missionary effort which has continued into the present period. "The number of Christians in the missions has doubled in the period between 1949 and 1961. . . . The proportional position of the Church has definitely advanced: from 10% to 15%."³ This growth of the Church is the result of the missionary implantation of the Church and its subsequent nurture and development.

The classical concept of the missionary has experienced some recent modification. Nevertheless the Roman Catholics continue to have a precise understanding of the nature and purpose of missionary activity. "The missionary is he who, leaving to others the care of the baptized community united in the Church, sets to work among a people of whom few or none have been baptized and united in a hierarchical Church."⁴ Wherever he is in the world (and the emphasis, says Masson, is not on the physical leaving of a place), the missionary is one who "carries the visible Church beyond itself to all mankind."⁵

It will be helpful to survey briefly the classical Roman Catholic mission thought prior to the Second Vatican Council, then note the impact of Vatican II with special reference to India as well as some further developments. This procedure, while

admittedly limited in scope, will serve to indicate some of the important implications especially relevant to mission in the Third World in this present ecumenical era.

The missionary approach of classical Catholicism is indicated in a number of its decrees and encyclicals. As early as the 6th century Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) instructed the missionary Augustine of Canterbury, who was engaged in the conversion of England, regarding the utilization of pagan temples for Christian worship. "By no means destroy the temples of the gods but rather the idols within those temples . . . Place altars and relics of the saints in them. For if those temples are well built, they should be converted from the worship of demons to the service of the true God."⁶ Likewise local practices such as religious feasting were to be converted and retained with new Christian meaning. The object is to permit easier passage into the Christian faith. Other decrees were not always so lenient. In 1215 the Fourth Lateran Council ruled that Jewish converts to Christianity must "abandon altogether the observance of their ancient rites."⁷ A 1434 decree, however, urged love and sympathy toward the Jews "and other infidels" in order to "win them to Christ."⁸ The object of missionary activity is "not only to increase the number of those who know and adore Him . . . but also to bring as many as possible under our Saviour's sweet yoke."⁹ As the Pope indicated in his 1926 encyclical, "What . . . is the purpose of the missions, if not that the Church of Christ be established and solidly rooted in those immense (missionary) regions?"¹⁰

Explicit in traditional Roman Catholic dogma is the teaching that there is no salvation outside the Church. The Pope in 1854 reminded the Cardinals that "no one can be saved outside the apostolic Roman Church, that the Church is the only ark of salvation."¹¹ Nevertheless Catholicism has always made room for the exception. Thus for those who "suffer from invincible ignorance" of the Catholic faith,¹² may become the recipients of grace through the baptism of desire.

To gain eternal salvation it is not always required that a person be incorporated in reality (*reapse*) as a member of the Church, but it is required that he belongs to it at least in desire and longing (*voto et desiderio*). It is not always necessary that this desire be explicit. . . . When a man is invincibly ignorant, God also accepts an implicit desire.¹³

Inevitably Roman Catholic ecclesiology determined the attitude toward the world religions. The first Plenary Council in India in 1950 modified the traditional severity by emphasizing positive values in the religions. "There is truth and goodness without a witness to Himself, and the human soul is naturally drawn toward the one true God."¹⁴ Nevertheless the Council acknowledged "the inadequacy of all non-Christian religions," indicating the unique role of Christ—"there is no salvation by any other name."¹⁵

The theologians show a similar understanding of the necessity of Christ. Couturier deals with the question as to whether non-Christians are in fact saved, perhaps through Christ alone without the role of the church. He replies: "In that case, the preaching of Christ by the Church would no longer be urgently necessary, and would seem to be dangerous rather than useful."¹⁶ Salvation is only in Christ, mediated through the Church. This necessitates mission. "An access of light does not facilitate salvation so much as increase responsibility."¹⁷ God takes the initiative for man's salvation. "The missionary activity of the Church is to be understood only in the light of God's plan for the human race."¹⁸ That plan involves the activity of the Church by which it plants itself "not only where it has never been before, that is among non-Christian peoples, but also where it exists in an incomplete state, as among heretical and schismatic Christians."¹⁹

Recent missiology has tended to stress the Church itself as the instrument of mission. Some theologians have stated that the Church is missionary by her essence, i.e. in everything she does.²⁰ Concurrent with the publication of the epochal book, France, Pays de Mission, came the idea that mission is everywhere although the distinction was retained that "the mission is something very precise and quite distinct from a parish."²¹ Other theologians began to speak of mission, not merely as planting the church geographically, but as proclamation and acculturation with reference to the entire human milieu.²² These several themes were to find full expression in the Second Vatican Council.

SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

The Second Vatican Council is the momentous event of the 20th Century for the Roman Catholic Church, and its impact reaches far beyond the confines of Catholicism.

The Second Vatican Council bears the stamp of beloved Pope John, the 'interim' Pope who surprised the world by calling this unexpected council. Vatican II could never have happened without 'liberal' Pope John who so imparted his character to the Council that he set it in a direction from which his more conservative successor could not turn it back. John metaphorically opened the doors and windows and let a fresh wind blow through the Vatican. It was time, he declared, for 'Aggiornamento': the Church must update itself.

'Aggiornamento' was intended to bring the Church into the 20th century. Did John succeed? Apparently so for we speak of a 'New Catholicism' since Vatican II! The Protestant theologian, Berkouwer, in *The Second Vatican Council and the New Catholicism* speaks of this new open Catholicism as manifesting a new openness toward the Bible, Jesus Christ, and Protestants. The Roman Catholic Church, since Vatican II, has experienced not only renewal but radical transformation with sometimes negative as well as positive results.

The Council produced sixteen documents beginning with the decree, *Lumen Gentium* ("the Light of All nations"). Gone is the triumphalism so characteristic of the past. The Church is now the "Little Flock, weak and sinful," in need of renewal and purification.²³ Nevertheless the "Little Flock" is the "instrument for redemption" for those who have not received the Gospel, especially the Jews and Moslems.²⁴ The missionary activity of the Church is the missionary work of proclaiming the Gospel for all men. "The obligation of spreading the faith is imposed on every disciple of Christ."²⁵ A Protestant commentator said, "This emphasis on the Church and her renewal for mission in the world is what gave Vatican II its most distinctive character as a Council."²⁶

Two documents are specifically concerned with mission. The first is the *Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church*, known by its Latin title *Ad Gentes*.²⁷ Its definition of mission is clear. "Missions" are declared to be "those particular undertak-

ings by which the heralds of the gospel are sent out by the Church and go forth into the whole world to carry out the task of preaching the gospel and planting the Church among peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ."²⁸ The purpose of missionary activity is "evangelization and the planting of the Church among those peoples and groups where she has not yet taken root."²⁹ The primary means of carrying out the mission "is the preaching of the gospel."³⁰ This mission is obligatory and has a clear objective: "The mission of the Church, therefore, is fulfilled by that activity which makes her fully present to all men and nations."³¹

Ad Gentes carefully distinguishes between mission which is directed outward toward non-Christians and pastoral activities which are "exercised among the faithful."³² Vatican II highlighted the task of taking the gospel to the two billion human beings who had not yet heard the gospel message.³³

The implantation of the Church is to be understood as a means to further evangelization. "It is not enough for the Christian people to be present and organized in a given nation. They are organized and present for the purpose of announcing Christ to their non-Christian fellow-citizens by word and deed, and of aiding them toward the full reception of Christ."³⁴ Nothing less than full missionary work of the Church. Let them send their own missionaries to proclaim the gospel all over the world, even though they themselves are suffering from a shortage of clergy."³⁵

The Second document of missionary significance is the *Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions*.³⁶ Briefly summarized *Nostra Aetate* emphasizes commonality: "For all people comprise a single community, and have a single origin."³⁷ The document pays tribute to the "perception" and "profound religious sense" found in Hinduism, Buddhism and other religions.³⁸ An attitude of respect must be maintained: "The Catholic Church rejects nothing which is true and holy in these religions" whose teachings may reflect "a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men."³⁹ Special reference is made to Muslims and Jews. The document repudiates all persecutions and emphasizes the dignity of all human beings.⁴⁰ At Vatican II the Roman Catholic Church repented of

past wrongs, and affirmed the path of dialogue and collaboration with other religions in order to “acknowledge, persevere, and promote the spiritual and moral goods found among these men, as well as the values in their society and culture.”⁴¹

What has been the outcome for the mission of the Church of these diverse emphases? For truly the documents of Vatican II represent a diversity rather than a unanimity of theology and expression in the modern world.

POST-VATICAN II

Two trends follow the Second Vatican Council. Each has ramifications beyond the Roman Catholic Church. Both have implications for the Church’s mission.

Trend one represents the classical position. Historically Catholic missionary activity centered in the planting of the Catholic church among the nations. Father Eugene Hillman represents the classical position when he speaks of the missionary task as “a successive achievement of the aim to bring about, in one people after another, the progressive preparation for the final advent of the Lord at the end of this world and to establish the sign itself of this advent.”⁴² The ‘sign’ is, of course, the Church itself which must be planted. In other words there must be tangible results of the missionary activity among all nations. “The missionary sign of the end is achieved simply when the Gospel has been preached to all peoples, when the ‘door of faith’ has been opened to all nations, when a solid foundation has been laid for the visible Church once for all in every nation.”⁴³ Missionary activity is distinctive in its aim and duration. “When the Church has once been firmly set up among a people, her missionary task there is over.”⁴⁴ Then the missionary must pass on to another field.

Hillman found disturbing the popular misconceptions put forth by a number of contemporary writers who failed to discern the distinctiveness of mission as evangelization of non-Christian areas of the world.

Many Catholic authors today present the missionary activity of the Church more and more as something that concerns the cultural environment of Europe and American. . . . At least one member of the conciliar commission for the missions was of the opinion that ‘the missions of

the Church were not merely a matter for Africa and Asia, but for New York, Chicago, Boston, London and Paris.’ At least one cardinal wrote about the missions as if they almost exclusively concerned the apostasy and loss of faith among the masses of Europe.⁴⁵

A French theologian urged French Catholics to engage in mission to the “lost sheep” in their own community, but failed to mention any duty toward the *world* mission of the Church, i.e. the mission to the unevangelized nations. “Yet these nations constitute two-thirds of humanity outside the cultural sphere of the old Christendom.”⁴⁶ Hillman laments his neglect. Mission should be directed to peoples not yet converted. Yet “less than 5% of the Church’s activity in the world is devoted to the evangelization of ‘every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.’”⁴⁷ To concentrate on those societies where the Church is already established is a short-sighted missiology. “Should what little missionary strength we have be absorbed by fields where the good seed has already been sown?”⁴⁸ Hillman affirmed the classical conception of mission as evangelization. “The question has always been to lay a foundation for the Church among new peoples. . . . Missionary activity, therefore, must consist, first of all and specifically, in setting up this sign among more and more peoples who have not yet known Christ through a Church firmly established among them.”

Father Hillman’s views found expression in the Second Vatican Council’s *Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity*.

Trend two represents a movement *away from conversion missions*. This trend says the missionary era is over and redefines mission as something other than evangelization. Roman Catholics as well as Protestants who hold this position will say, “The era of the foreign missionary movement is definitely over,” or “missionaries and missiologists have finally worked themselves out of a job.”⁴⁹ The ‘six continent’ view of mission that came out of Mexico City in 1963 is now expressed by certain Catholic theologians. These men profess to see the missionary situation everywhere and every Christian a missionary. According to one of them, “Mission is the whole temporal existence of the church. . . . It concerns everything which, within the Church or without, is not yet completed.”⁵⁰ The problem with this line of thinking, for Catholics as well as for Protestants, as Anderson observes, is

that "If one can equally well serve as a missionary in his home diocese of Chicago, why should he feel a particular calling to missionary service in the Congo or Celebes, with all of the additional problems that this imposes?"⁵¹

The heart of trend two is the opposition to conversion. Father Roman Hoffman, for instance, insists that conversion missions are outmoded. Arguing that missionary activity should be carried out in a "spirit of Christian ecumenism." Hoffman asks, "Should we not go one step further and agree with Gandhi that while we should strive to make Christians better Christians, we ought also to make Moslems better Moslems, Hindus better Hindus, and Jews better Jews? . . . Even though Christians might wish and hope and desire that all others might also, as they are, be followers of Christ, it is not at all contrary to Catholic Teaching to want them to practice more faithfully that religion which they in good conscience believe to be the right religion for them, at least in those matters which we also consider to be true and good."⁵²

According to Hoffman, the purpose and goal of mission is not conversion but dialogue with members of other religions. Dialogue is the *raison d'être* as well as the *modus operandi* of mission. But if at the end of the dialogue, non-Christians wish to retain their religion, Catholics must not only give in gracefully but, even further, let them know that they would sincerely like them to be better followers of their chosen religion and leave all matters to Almighty God.⁵³

The readjustment of the Church's understanding of the goal of mission is demanded by present developments in theology. Therefore, says Hoffman, "we neither can nor should attempt to convert the world."⁵⁴ Not everyone will agree with this manner of response to the present dilemma of theology. No doubt it is true that for many nominal Christians (and for some missionaries, according to Father John Hardon) "salvation, in the biblical sense of deliverance from sin by the redemptive death of Christ has lost much of its meaning."⁵⁵ That, however is not necessarily license for abandoning a basic tenet of the Christian faith.

Anti-conversion is a short step from Rahner's "anonymous expressions of God's salvific will."⁵⁶ Rahner posits ascending

and descending stages of church membership, i.e. everything from baptism and full participation to a non-official and 'implicit' Christianity by which "somehow or other all must be able to be members of the Church" and hence recipients of God's grace.⁵⁷ Rahner's theology was to have a profound impact in theological circles in countries such as India.

TRENDS IN INDIA

By positing "implicit Christianity, Rahner went far beyond mere dialogue. He implied that Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists are already saved. In fairness, it should be noted that Rahner does state that implicit faith must eventually become explicit.⁵⁸ Other theologians were not always so cautious. Congar, for instance, speaks of "substitutes for explicit Faith and means of salvation."⁵⁹ Congar and a number of other theologians view the non-Christian religions as means of salvation. "It is not possible that these religions should not have a place in the salvific plan of God."⁶⁰

This new openness underlies the "Catholic ecumenism" of Swami Abhishiktananda whose *Hindu-Christian Meeting Point* hails as the next stage in the church's Catholicity an ecumenism, not between Christians, but with the world religions.

A truly Christian and Catholic view of the religious traditions of the world will regard them in the light of their fullness of Christ (Eph. 1:23). The Church . . . finds that in the hearts of those to whom the name of the Lord is still unknown his Spirit is already at work, bringing them to fulfilment and resurrection . . . precisely through the instrumentality of their various religious traditions, their rituals and Scriptures . . . The time is therefore ripe for the Church . . . to enter into official contact with these religions.⁶¹

It is Raymond Panikkar, however, who plunges Catholic doctrine into the depths of Hinduism. The Christian doctrine of the trinity, for instance, is reinterpreted as "a junction where the authentic spiritual dimensions of all religions meet."⁶² This encounter of religions takes place, which results, not in a vague fusion or mutual dilution, but in an authentic enhancement of all the religious and even cultural elements that are contained in each."⁶³

In his better known book, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, Panikkar elaborates the encounter of Christianity with Hinduism. "We all meet in God. . . . It is Christ who leads every man to God. . . . He is the Light that illumines every human being coming into this world."⁶⁴ Christ, in Panikkar's use, means the 'cosmic' Christ present everywhere and in everything. "Hence for Christianity, Christ is already there in Hinduism in so far as Hinduism is a true religion; Christ is already at work in any Hindu prayer as far as it is really prayer; Christ is behind any form of worship, in as much as it is adoration made to God."⁶⁵

Where Christ is already present there is no need to convert men. "The presence of Christ in Hinduism makes it, in the eyes of Christian theology, not another religion altogether, but a vestibule of Christianity."⁶⁶ Panikkar's theology is syncretistic and universalistic. If Christ is present in Hinduism, then men are saved in Hinduism. According to Roman Catholic dogma, however, salvation is found only in the Catholic Church and through Christ. Panikkar's solution is an enlarged definition of the Church and a universal redemption. "Therefore, any human person that is saved—and we know by reason and by faith that God provides everybody with the necessary means of salvation—is saved by Christ, the only redeemer."⁶⁷ If all men already possess the possibility of salvation, "This amounts to saying that Christ is present in one form or another in every human being in his religious way to God."⁶⁸ In some manner he is related to Christ *incognito* and the sacraments. "When a Hindu is saved . . . he is saved by the grace of Christ and is incorporated into the supernatural order and yet he may know nothing about Christianity."⁶⁹

Therefore Panikkar finds it necessary to incorporate Hinduism into his conception of the Church. He asks, "What other means of salvation has God-Christ provided to the people of India down the ages even before the appearance of historical Christianity, if not Hinduism?"⁷⁰ This, Panikkar argues, must be so for "God has a universal will to save." If all are saved, then it follows that "If it is true that 'outside the church there is no salvation', this 'Church' should not be confounded with its outer appearance, not even with an explicit adherence to Christianity."⁷¹ How, then, does this salvation take place? Panikkar is certain that "God provides to every man coming into

human existence the means for his salvation."⁷² The normal means, according to Catholic theology, are the sacraments. Panikkar expands this to a doctrine of "cosmic sacraments" which can be applied to the rites of any religion. Panikkar's universalism consists in the way in which he believes God has made salvation available to all men.

The good and *bonafide* Hindu is saved by Christ and not by Hinduism, but it is through the sacraments of Hinduism, through the message of morality and good-life, through the *Mysterion* that comes down to him through Hinduism, that Christ saves the Hindu normally. This amounts to saying that Hinduism has also a place in the universal saving providence of God.⁷³

Theologians in India built upon Panikkar, Rahner and Vatican II in fostering an indigenous theology. Ishanand assumes the Divine authorship of the non-Christian religions on the basis of the universal covenant: "every religion in the world is heir to God's covenant with Adam, Noah and Abraham."⁷⁴ It follows therefore that "all men and all religions collectively taken are heirs of God's self-communication."⁷⁵ According to Ishanand, God willed the non-Christian religions and He meets men in them much as he met and saved men under the Old Testament dispensation: "all these people had salvific faith yet the doctrinal content of their faith is so different."⁷⁶ Anyone who at any time and in any place responds to grace is saved: "if God's saving grace meets man always and everywhere . . . and this encounter takes place through the existing religious patterns . . . and if man responds to this invading grace, again, it has to be through the medium of the given religion."⁷⁷ The Christ-event, says Ishanand, has been at work since the beginning of creation. "Now, the non-Christian religions which purpose to show man the way to absolute happiness . . . must participate in this cosmic and historical dynamism."⁷⁸

Papers presented at the Nagpur Theological Conference on Evangelization in 1971 exhibited similar characteristics of the new theological trend. Others, however, maintained the importance of evangelization and conversion. One of the participants dealt with the relevant issue of what becomes of converts to Christ in the Hindu context. Noting that, contrary to common assumption and practice, it is possible for the new Christian to

remain in their caste and community. Hans Staffner cites the case of recent converts who successfully resisted ostracism, saying, "Why should we cease to be Hindus because we believe in Jesus Christ?"⁷⁹ Though baptized Christians, socially they continued as members of the Hindu community. In the context of pluralistic and syncretistic India, this example provides a viable way of achieving Indian authenticity while retaining fundamental Christianity. The ambivalence of many theologians does not furnish a convincing model in light of the real Asian situation.

The Declaration on Evangelization produced by the Nagpur conference tried to reflect both the new posture toward the religious and the classical call to evangelize. With reference to the living religions of India it is stated, "We see at work in them Christ and His Grace."⁸⁰ The various religious traditions are said to be helping man "towards the attainment of his salvation."⁸¹ Nevertheless the Church is to carry on its mission. "The mission of the Church in India . . . has to be realised through evangelization. By evangelization we mean the imparting of the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ."⁸²

Theological ambivalence is never conducive to mission. The new attitude toward the religions which regards them as legitimate and somehow effective vehicles for salvation was bound to have repercussions at several levels of the Church.

CRISIS

The ferment of Vatican II has raised questions resulting in several crises. According to Anastasio Gomes "these crises have their root in one or another doctrinal misconception or deviation or even downright error."⁸³ Several factors no doubt have combined to precipitate a Roman Catholic missionary crisis. But, says Gomes, "the official recognition of the existence of authentic religions, nay supernatural values in non-Christian religions, is probably the major occasion for the current doctrinal crisis of the missions."⁸⁴

The new theology appears responsible for a retreat. Writing on the missionary crisis, Damboriena charges that the "missionary obligation of the Church" loses its main appeal when the non-Christian religions are made the "legal" instruments of

salvation.⁸⁵ Damboriena blames theologians such as Panikkar, Rahner, Schlette and Kung—people "inexperienced in missionary matters" for meddling.⁸⁶ Though the new theology was denounced by bishops and superior generals of the Jesuits and Dominicans and other missionary orders, rejected by missiologists and attacked by other theologians and church authorities,⁸⁷ the damage has been done. The controversy continues and Damboriena is uncertain as to the outcome of the "radical changes in the aim and strategy of missions."⁸⁸

One measurable result is a drop in missionary vocations. From North America the Roman Catholic force decreased from 9,655 overseas missionaries in 1968 to 8,373 in 1970.⁸⁹ A decline of nearly 1,300 in two years indicates that the crisis is very real. This downward trend has continued.

There is clearly a great crisis in the Roman Catholic Church today at the point of its mission. Though the second Vatican Council brought a new openness in the Catholic Church, it also caused a radical departure. To some extent the new stance of the Church reflects trends and issues already dividing the Protestant world, questions that were soon to erupt at Uppsala. Uppsala, however, would not produce any definitive document comparable to the "Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church." Surprisingly, "Uppsala has little to say about missionaries and never uses the word."⁹⁰ By way of contrast, the Roman Catholic Church, following Vatican II, has continued to speak of evangelization. Thus the Roman Synod of Bishops in 1974 reaffirmed that "the mandate to evangelize all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church."⁹¹ The Synod also spoke to issues of development, a recurrent theme in recent missiology. Vatican II, whatever its weaknesses, recognized the role of proclaiming the Gospel and planting the Church. Uppsala is concerned with political, social and economic problems and is oriented to the world.⁹²

NOTES

1. Latourette, *Three Centuries of Advance*, suggests six explanations (pp. 25-26). Undoubtedly at that period the Catholics enjoyed several advantages. Yet it seems inescapable that one reason for the failure was that "several of the early leaders of Protestantism disavowed any obligation to carry the Christian message to non-Christians" (p.25).
2. Joseph Masson, "Church and Mission," p. 52.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
5. *Ibid.*
6. This excerpt from the original letter is found in Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, p. 289.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 200.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 292.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 298.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, p.268.
12. According to Papal encyclical in 1863. Neuner and Dupuis, *op. cit.*, p. 217.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 236. From a letter of Pius XII in 1949.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 272.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Charles Couturier, *The Mission of the Church*, p. xxi.
17. *Ibid.*,
18. *Ibid.*, p. xxii.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
20. Le Guillou, "Mission As an Ecclesiological Theme", p. 93.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
23. Abbott, *The Documents of Vatican II*, p. 11 ff.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 34-35.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 584-633.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 591.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*, p. 589.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 592.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 597.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 603.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 610.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 660-668.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 660.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 661.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 662.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 666-667.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 663.
42. Hillman, "The Main Task of the Mission", p. 9.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
49. Anderson, "Some Theological Issues in World Mission Today", p. 112.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
52. Hoffman, "Conversion and the Mission of the Church", p. 84.
53. *Ibid.* Hoffman appeals to Vatican II as the basis for his points.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
55. Hardon, "Salvation as the Mission Objective Today," p. 18.
56. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
57. Rahner, "Salvation of the Non-Evangelized," p. 80.
58. *Ibid.*
59. Congar, "Non-Christian Religions and Christianity", p. 174.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 175. See also Kevin McNamara, "Is There a non-Christian Revelation?"; Walter Kasper "Are the Non-Christian Religions Salvific?"; and James Dupuis, "The Salvific Value of Non-Christian Religions".
61. Abishiktananda, *Hindu-Christian Meeting Point*, pp. 3-4.
62. Raymond Panikkar, *The Trinity and World Religions*, p. 42.
63. *Ibid.*

64. Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, pp. 16-17.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
74. Ishanand, *Inspiration in the Non-Biblical Scriptures*, p. 138.
75. *Ibid.*,
76. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
79. H. Staffner, "Conversion to Christianity Seen From the Hindu Point of View", p. 498. Other papers significant to evangelizing in the Hindu context include "Theology of Conversion in the Context of Religious Hinduism" by D. Bhatt. "Evangelization in the Context of Hindu Society" by Matthew Lederle. Other papers contribute to the present theological debate.
80. Pattrapankal, *Service and Salvation*, p. 4.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
83. Gomes, "Theology of Non-Christian Religions", p. 283.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 284.
85. Prudencio Damboriena, "Aspects of the Missionary Crisis in Roman Catholicism", in Danker and Kang (eds.), *The Future of the Christian Mission*, 1971, pp. 73-87.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
87. *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
89. Conners, "The Participation of the U.S. Catholic Church in the World-Wide Missionary Effort," p. 136.
90. Malcolm J. McVeigh, "Vatican II and Uppsala: A Comparison of Two Missionary Documents," p. 344.
91. Roman Synod of Bishops, "Declaration on Evangelization," p. 259.
92. McVeigh, *op. cit.*, pp. 339, 346.

Document Thirteen:

An excerpt from Ad Gentes, the "Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church," Vatican Council II.

DECREE ON THE MISSIONARY ACTIVITY OF THE CHURCH

"Missions" is the term usually given to those particular undertakings by which the heralds of the gospel are sent out by the Church and go forth into the whole world to carry out the task of preaching the gospel and planting the Church among peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ. These undertakings are brought to completion by missionary activity and are commonly exercised in certain territories recognized by the Holy See.

The specific purpose of this missionary activity is evangelization and the planting of the Church among those peoples and groups where she has not yet taken root. Thus from the seed which is the Word of God, particular native Churches can be adequately established and flourish the world over, endowed with their own vitality and maturity. Thus too, sufficiently provided with a hierarchy of their own which is joined to a faithful people, and adequately fitted out with requisites for living a full Christian life, they can make their contribution to the good of the Church universal.

The chief means of this implantation is the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord sent forth His disciples into the whole world to preach this gospel. Thus reborn by the Word of God (1 Pet. 1:23), men may through baptism be joined to that Church which, as the body of the Word Incarnate, is nourished and lives by the Word of God and by the Eucharistic Bread (Acts 2:43).

In this missionary activity of the church various stages are sometimes found side by side: first, that of the beginning or planting, then that of newness or youth. When these stages have passed, the Church's missionary activity does not cease. Rather, there lies upon the particular Churches which are already set up the duty of continuing this activity and of preaching the gospel to those still outside.

Moreover, the groups among which the Church dwell often undergo radical changes for one reason or other, and an entirely new set of circumstances can arise. Then the Church must deliberate whether these conditions call for a renewal of her missionary activity. Besides, circumstances are sometimes such that, for the time being, there is no possibility of expounding the gospel directly and immediately. Then, missionaries can and must at least bear witness to Christ by charity and by works of mercy,

with all patience, prudence, and great confidence. Thus they will prepare the way for the Lord and make Him present in some manner.

It is plain, then, that missionary activity wells up from the Church's innermost nature and spreads abroad her saving faith. It perfects her Catholic unity by expanding it. It is sustained by her apostolicity. It gives expression to the collegial awareness of her hierarchy. It bears witness to her sanctity while spreading and promoting it.

Thus, missionary activity among the nations differs from pastoral activity exercised among the faithful, as well as from undertakings aimed at restoring unity among Christians. And yet these two other activities are most closely connected with the missionary zeal of the Church, because the division among Christians damages the most holy cause of preaching the gospel to every creature and blocks the way to the faith for many. Hence, by the same mandate which makes missions necessary, all the baptized are called to be gathered into one flock, and thus to be able to bear unanimous witness before the nations to Christ their Lord. And if they are not yet capable of bearing full witness to the same faith, they should at least be animated by mutual esteem and love.

This missionary activity finds its reason in the will of God, "who wishes all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2:4-5), "neither is there salvation in any other" (Acts 4:12).

Therefore, all must be converted to Him as He is made known by the Church's preaching. All must be incorporated into Him by baptism, and into the Church which is His body. For Christ Himself "in explicit terms . . . affirmed the necessity of the Church, for through baptism as through a door men enter the Church. Whosoever, therefore, knowing that the Catholic Church was made necessary by God through Jesus Christ, would refuse to enter her or to remain in her could not be saved. (*Lumen gentium*).

Therefore, though God in ways known to Himself can lead those inculpably ignorant of the gospel to that faith without which it is impossible to please Him (Heb. 11:6) yet a necessity lies upon the Church (1 Cor. 9:16), and at the same time a sacred duty, to preach the gospel. Hence missionary activity today as always retains its power and necessity.

Missionary activity is nothing else and nothing less than a manifestation or epiphany of God's will, and the fulfillment of that will in the world and in world history. In the course of this history God plainly works out the history of salvation by means of mission. By the preaching of the Word and by the celebration of the sacraments, whose centre and summit is the most holy Eucharist, missionary activity brings about the presence of Christ, the Author of salvation.

But whatever truth and grace are to be found among the nations, as a sort of secret presence of God, this activity frees from all taint of evil and restores to Christ its maker, who overthrows the devil's domain and wards

off the manifold malice of vice. And so, whatever good is found to be sown in the hearts and minds of men, or in the rites and cultures peculiar to various peoples, is not lost. More than that, it is healed, ennobled, and perfected for the glory of God, the shame of the demon, and the bliss of men.

Thus, missionary activity tends toward the fulfillment which will come at the end of time. For by it the people of God advances toward that degree of growth and that time of completion which the Father has fixed in His power (Acts 1:7). To this people it was said in prophecy: "Enlarge the space for your tent, spread out your tent cloths unsparingly" (Isa. 54:2). By missionary activity, the mystical body grows to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ (Eph.4:13). The spiritual temple, where God is adored in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:23), grows and is built up upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus Himself remaining the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20).

Sent by Christ to reveal and to communicate the love of God to all men and nations, the Church is aware that there still remains a gigantic missionary task for her to accomplish. For the gospel message has not yet been heard, or scarcely so, by two billion human beings. And their number is increasing daily. These are formed into large and distinct groups by permanent social necessity. . . . In order to be able to offer all of them the mystery of salvation and the life brought by God, the Church must become part of all these groups for the same motive which led Christ to bind Himself, in virtue of His Incarnation, to the definite social and cultural conditions of those human beings among whom He dwelt.

Document Fourteen:

Nostra Aetate, from the Documents of Vatican II.

DECLARATION ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE CHURCH TO NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS

1. In our times, when every day men are being drawn closer together and the ties between various peoples are being multiplied, the Church is giving deeper study to her relationship with non-Christian religions. In her task of fostering unity and love among men, and even among nations, she gives primary consideration in this document to what human beings have in common and to what promotes fellowship among them.

For all peoples comprise a single community, and have a single origin, since God made the whole race of men dwell over the entire face of the earth (cf. Acts 17:26). One also is their final goal: God, His providence, His manifestations of goodness and His saving designs extend to all men (cf. Wis. 8:1 Acts 14:17; Rom 2:6, 7:1; 1 Tim. 2:4) against the day when the elect will be united in that Holy City ablaze with the splendor of God, where the nations will walk in His light (cf. Apoc. 21:23 f.).

Men look to the various religions for answers to those profound mysteries of the human condition which, today even as in olden times, deeply stir the human heart: What is a man? What is the meaning and the purpose of our life? What is goodness and what is sin? What gives rise to our sorrows and to what intent? Where lies the path to true happiness? What is the truth about death, judgment, and retribution beyond the grave? What, finally, is that ultimate and unutterable mystery which engulfs our being, and whence we take our rise, and whither our journey leads us?

2. From ancient times down to the present, there has existed among diverse peoples a certain perception of that hidden power which hovers over the course of things and over the events of human life, at times, indeed, recognition can be found of a Supreme Divinity and of a Supreme Father too. Such a perception and such a recognition instill the lives of these peoples with a profound religious sense. Religions bound up with cultural advancement have struggled to reply to these same questions with more refined concepts and in more highly developed language.

Thus in Hinduism men contemplate the divine mystery and express it through an unspent fruitfulness of myths and through searching philosophical inquiry. They seek release from the anguish of our condition through ascetical practices or deep meditation or a loving, trusting flight toward God.

Buddhism in its multiple forms acknowledges the radical insufficiency of this shifting world. It teaches a path by which men, in a devout and

confident spirit, can either reach a state of absolute freedom or attain supreme enlightenment by their own efforts or by higher assistance.

Likewise, other religions to be found everywhere strive variously to answer the restless searchings of the human heart by proposing "ways", which consist of teachings, rules of life, and sacred ceremonies.

The Catholic Church rejects nothing which is true and holy in these religions. She looks with sincere respect upon those ways of conduct and of life, those rules and teachings which, though differing in many particulars from what she holds and sets forth, nevertheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men. Indeed, she proclaims and must ever proclaim Christ, "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), in whom men find the fullness of religious life, and in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself (cf. 2 Cor. 5:18, 19).

The Church therefore has this exhortation for her sons: prudently and lovingly, through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, and in witness of Christian faith and life, acknowledge, preserve, and promote the spiritual and moral goods found among these men, as well as the values in their society and culture.

3. Upon the Moslems, too, the Church look with esteem. They adore one God, living and enduring, merciful and all-powerful, Maker of heaven and earth and Speaker to men. They strive to submit wholeheartedly even to His inscrutable decrees, just as did Abraham, with whom the Islamic faith is pleased to associate itself. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honor Mary, His virgin mother; at times they call on her, too, with devotion. In addition they await the day of judgment when God will give each man his due after raising him up. Consequently, they prize the moral life, and give worship to God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

Although in the course of the centuries many quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this most sacred Synod urges all to forget the past and to strive sincerely for mutual understanding. On behalf of all mankind, let them make common cause of safeguarding and fostering social justice, moral values, peace, and freedom.

4. As this sacred Synod searches into the mystery of the church, it recalls the spiritual bond linking the people of the New Covenant with Abraham's stock.

For the Church of Christ acknowledges that, according to the mystery of God's saving design, the beginnings of her faith and her election are already found among the patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets. She professes that all who believe in Christ, Abraham's sons according to faith (cf. Gal. 3:7), are included in the same patriarch's call, and likewise that the salvation of the Church was mystically foreshadowed by the chosen people's exodus from the land of bondage.

The Church, therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with whom God in his inexpressible

mercy deigned to establish the Ancient Covenant. Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that good olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild olive branches of the Gentiles (cf. Rom. 11:17-24). Indeed, the Church believes that by His cross Christ, our Peace, reconciled Jew and Gentile, making them both one in Himself (cf. Eph. 2:14-16).

Also, the Church ever keeps in mind the words of the Apostle about his kinsmen, "who have the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenant and the legislation and the worship and the promises; who have the fathers, and from whom is Christ according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:4,5), the son of the Virgin Mary. The Church recalls too that from the Jewish people sprang the apostles, her foundation stones and pillars, as well as most of the early disciples who proclaimed Christ to the world.

As holy Scripture testifies, Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation (cf. Lk. 19:44), nor did the Jews in large number accept the gospel; indeed, not a few opposed the spreading of it (cf. Rom. 11:28). Nevertheless, according to the Apostle, the Jews still remain most dear to God because of their fathers, for He does not repent of the gifts He makes nor of the calls He issues (cf. Rom. 11:28-29). In company with the prophets and the same apostle, the Church awaits that day, known to God alone, on which all peoples on earth in a single voice and "serve him with one accord" (Zeph. 3:9; cf. Isa. 66:23; 65:4; Rom. 11:11-32).

Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred Synod wishes to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit above all of biblical and theological studies, and of brotherly dialogues.

True, authorities of the Jews and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ (cf. Jn. 19:6), still, what happened in His passion cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living, without distinction, nor upon the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as repudiated or cursed by God, as if such views followed from the holy Scriptures. All should take pains, then, lest in catechetical instruction and in the preaching of God's Word they teach anything out of harmony with the truth of the gospel and the spirit of Christ.

The Church repudiates all persecutions against any man. Moreover, mindful of her common patrimony with the Jews, and motivated by the gospel's spiritual love and by no political considerations, she deplors the hatred, persecutions, and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and from any source.

Besides, as the Church has always held and continues to hold, Christ in His boundless love freely underwent His passion and death because of the sins of all men, so that all might attain salvation. It is, therefore, the duty of the Church's preaching to proclaim the cross of Christ as the sign of God's all-embracing love and as the fountain from which every grace flows.

5. We cannot in truthfulness call upon that God who is the Father of all if we refuse to act in a brotherly way toward certain men, created though

they be to God's image. A Man's relationship with God the Father and his relationship with his brother men are so linked together that scripture says: "He who does not love does not know God" (1 Jn. 4:8).

The ground is therefore removed from every theory or practice which leads to a distinction between men or peoples in the matter of *human dignity* and the rights which flow from it.

As a consequence, the Church rejects, as foreign to the mind of Christ, and *discrimination* against men or harassment of them because of their race, color, condition of life, or religion.

Accordingly, following in the footsteps of the holy apostles Peter and Paul, this sacred Synod ardently implores the Christian faithful to "maintain good fellowship among the nations" (1 Peter. 2:12), and, if possible, as far as in them lies, to keep peace with all men (cf. Rom. 12:18), so that they may truly be sons of the Father who is in heaven (cf. Mt. 5:45).

Each and every one of the things set forth in this Declaration has won the consent of the Fathers of this most sacred Council. We too, by the apostolic authority conferred on us by Christ, join with the Venerable Fathers in approving, decreeing, and establishing these things in the Holy Spirit, and we direct that what has thus been enacted in Synod be published to God's glory.

Document Fifteen:

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SALVATION OF THE NON-EVANGELIZED

by Karl Rahner

There is an apparent contradiction between the 'classical' motives of the mission and modern nations of an 'implicit' Christianity and an 'anonymous' grace. But in fact the real motivation of the mission has become still clearer. The Christian knows that man must believe in God in order to be saved not only in God, but in Christ. Faith is not merely a positive commandment, from which one could be dispersed for sufficient reasons. This faith is intrinsically necessary to salvation and hence absolutely required, as the one possible means of attaining the end. For the salvation of man is simply the fulfilment and final stage of this beginning, which cannot therefore be replaced by anything else.

Hence there is no salvation outside the Church, in this sense, as the ancient theological formula put it. But can the Christian believe that the immense multitude of his brothers, reaching far back before Christ into the distant past, whose horizons are being constantly pushed back by palaeontology, and embracing his contemporaries and the future, are excluded in principle from the fulfilment of their lives and condemned to eternal frustration? Scripture tells him explicitly that *God will that all men should attain blessedness* (cf. 1 Tim. 2:4). The covenant of peace which God gave Noah after the flood has never been abrogated. On the contrary, Christ himself has sealed it with the unimpugnable authority of his self-sacrificing love which embraces all.

We must therefore take both truths together: The necessity of Christian faith and the salvific will of God's omnipotent love. This we can only do by affirming that some how or other all must be able to become members of the Church, not just in the sense of an abstract possibility, but historically and in the concrete. But this means that there must be degrees of Church membership. There must be ascending stages, rising from baptism to confession of the full Christian faith, to recognition of the visible government of the Church, full fellowship of eucharistic life and finally to the attainment of blessedness. And there must also be descending stages, going from the explicitness of baptism down to a non-official and implicit Christianity, which nonetheless can and should be called Christianity in a valid sense, even though it cannot call itself such or refuses to do so.

This can only mean (as is explained in detail in the discussion of the "supernatural existential") (see 'Existence' III B) that when man experiences

the offer of grace, not necessarily as such, i.e., as a distinctly supernatural call, but in its meaningful reality. But then the explicit word of revelation does not come to us as an utterly foreign body from outside us, but is simply the articulate expression of what we already are by grace and of what we experience at least obscurely in the limitlessness of our transcendence. The explicit Christian revelation is the articulate utterance of the grace given revelation which man always experiences, however obscurely, in the depths of his being (see 'Salvation' III C).

If man accepts this revelation, he makes an act of supernatural faith. But he accepts this revelation by the very fact of accepting himself fully, since it is uttered in him.

In accepting himself, man accepts Christ as the absolute fulfilment and guarantor of his *anonymous movement towards God*, which is the grace of Christ. This in turn is the grace of his Church, which is none other than the prolongation of the mystery of Christ, his permanent visible presence in our history.

Those who allow themselves to be seized by this grace may be rightly described as "implicitly Christian." The doctrine there affirmed is also taught by Vatican II's Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*, art. 16). Here we read that those who have not yet received the gospel, through no fault of their own—which is supposed to be a real possibility—can attain eternal salvation (*aeterna salus*, which can only mean supernatural salvation). On the part of God, his grace is presupposed (*gratiae influxus, divina gratia*), on the part of man, his honest effort to seek God, "(striving) to do his will as it is known . . . through the dictates of conscience." This fulfilment of the duties of conscience is explicitly supposed to be possible in those "who without blame on their part have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God." The constitution does not affirm that such blameless non-adherence to Christianity can persist as such individually or collectively over a long period, but does not deny the possibility either.

But the affirmation of an implicit Christianity is also an affirmation that the basic dynamism, like every other potentiality of man, *cannot be content to remain implicit, but strives* after its own explicitness—its "name." Unfavourable historical situations go beyond the conscious manifestation of loving humaneness. But the dynamism will not be repudiated when man reaches a new degree of articulate recognition, till it is fulfilled in the explicit confession of faith within the Church. It is only in the Church that this faith has broader support and greater assurance, as indeed its own proper reality, and the peace which Augustine describes as the tranquillity of order. It is a peace and a repose which are not stagnation or escape, but the possibility of abandoning oneself all the more decisively to the sovereign will of God's mystery. According to the saying of Paul, one knows whom one has believed, and commits oneself fearlessly in absolute trust.

Hence the present thesis is not a last despairing effort to claim all that is ultimately good and human for the Church, contrary to the freedom of the spirit, as faith dwindles in the world. But the believer living in the diaspora or in a situation which grows more and more like that of the mission, feeling

himself attacked in his faith and his hope, can derive some solace from the thought, and the power to be objective. Knowing that there is such a thing as implicit Christianity does not dispense him from concern and effort with regard to those who do not yet know the one necessary truth in all the explicitness of the gospel. The effort is all the more imperative because it is for the 'glory' of the redeeming love of God, which has a right to be 'known' and 'done' as such.

Hence it would be foolish to think that the recognition of "implicit Christianity" must diminish the significance of the mission, baptism, etc. On the contrary, it releases energies for the service of the mission, since it banishes panic and enables Christians to have the active and passive patience, which according to the saying of Christ, will save their souls—their own and those of their brothers. The grace here in question does not merely lead to the observation of the natural moral law. This is excluded by a remark in Vatican II's Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (art.7), which affirms that God, "in ways known to himself," can bestow the grace of *faith*—without which it is impossible to please God—even on those who have not yet heard the preaching of the gospel.

PERSPECTIVE TEN

RENEWAL IN MISSION, UPPSALA 1968

The Uppsala Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches was to be its first full meeting following integration at New Delhi in 1961. Through the merger, it was hoped, "The worldwide mission of the Church would be transformed from a peripheral activity to its central task."¹ Would Uppsala reveal the fulfillment of this expectation? Uppsala was preceeded by the meeting of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism at Mexico City in 1963. The meaning of mission was not clear at Mexico City. "The Mexico City uncertainties came through loud and strong at Uppsala."² Uppsala revealed "widespread defeatism" and "a crisis of faith" in the Churches. "Apparently, the IMC transfusion has not been successful."³ The anticipated renewal in mission had not come.

Why not? What was the stance at Uppsala? To understand what happened at Uppsala it will be helpful to turn to the principal documents in the debate about mission.

THE DOCUMENTS

The first, *The Church For Others*, consists of two reports on the missionary structure of the congregations prepared by the Department on Studies in Evangelism.⁴ This document clearly affirmed the world as the arena of God's activity. The study speaks of Christ at work "outside the walls of the Church."⁵ The goal of God's mission is "the establishment of *shalom*."⁶ The Church's duty is to be not separate, but present in the world in order there to discern signs of God's presence and activity: "The Church can only be the true Church when it knows that it is a part of the world which God loves and to which he reveals his love."⁷

If previous conferences (Madras, Willingen) had been excessively *church*-centric. Uppsala was to be *world*-centric. "The Church as to be seen as a segment of the world."⁸ It was

proposed that the traditional sequence “God-Church-World” be revised to read “God-world-Church.” “It is the world and not the Church that is the focus of God’s plan.”⁹ The Church’s mission was to be derived from the world. “The world provides the agenda.” In the contemporary world “the obedience of the churches require that they obtain a clear picture of the actual situation” – of the poor, the hungry and thirsty, of the naked and the imprisoned – “Hence it is the world that must be allowed to provide the agenda for the churches.”¹⁰

How does the Church discern God’s mission in the world? The North American Working Group decided to move out into the actual “missionary scene in the world”. The choice of locations and issues is enlightening:

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| Vermont | – | public education; |
| New York | – | Metropolitan Urban Service Training; |
| Boston | – | theological education (Christian Ethics course); |
| Philadelphia | – | urban renewal; |
| Chicago | – | unemployment, housing, and welfare; |
| South | – | civil rights; |
| Los Angeles | – | urban planning; |
| San Francisco | – | secular voluntary social structures ¹¹ |

In these situations the world was permitted to set the agenda as the group sought to discover God at work. Each context is North American, and each issue (with the exception of Harvey Cox’s Christian ethics course) is ‘secular’. According to the report, the arena for mission is in the struggle for civil rights, justice, employment, education: “it was there that the Church was called to fulfill its missionary obedience.”¹² Nothing was said regarding proclamation of the Gospel, nor was there reference to the world of people without the knowledge of Christ.

Traditional evangelism was rejected as ‘proselytism’. Conversion was re-defined as “a turning *towards* the world.”¹³

Humanization was made the goal of mission: “We have lifted up humanization as the goal of mission because we believe that more than others it communicates in our period of history the meaning of the messianic goal.”¹⁴ The laity, through their secular competence, are the bearers of mission in the world.¹⁵

Four types of structures were identified for carrying out a variety of concerns in the context of the present movements of social revolution, urban revolution, the scientific technological revolution, and the unitary revolution.¹⁶ *The Church For Others* is oriented to the world. “The Church is not called to be the institute of salvation but to participate in God’s action for the salvation of the world.”¹⁷ But what is the Church? The document blurred the distinction between the world and the Church.

The second document consists of the preparatory “Drafts For Sections” sent to all participants in advance of the Assembly meetings.¹⁸ Though unofficial and intended to be re-drafted these papers were to be the base for statements adopted by the Fourth Assembly. Carefully prepared, the Drafts revealed the new direction of the WCC staff. As Glasser observed, “Here was a call for a new theology and a new methodology to support a radically new objective for the Christian Church.”¹⁹

Our concern is with Section II. “Renewal in Mission”. It was this Draft which sparked the controversy which has become the Great Debate in Mission. An appended Commentary quotes at length from *The Church For Others* and other preparatory materials which also propounded the ideas set forth in the Draft. The objective seems to have been a redeployment of resources for use in “Joint Action for Mission” projects and in the struggle for humanization.

The achievement of a just human society was identified as the heart of the Christian message. “Christian participation in mission, therefore, involves participation in the struggle for a just society.”²⁰ The Churches were said to have “lost their authority to proclaim the Gospel” because of failure to come to terms with social revolutions.²¹ Therefore the Draft urged the Church “to make our business the problems on the world’s agenda.”²² The promise, “Behold, I make all things new,” means that “everything is now our business.”²³

“Mission takes place at the points of tension.”²⁴ Among the tension points are “the revolutionary movements of today” which Christians are called to enter in witness of “the vision of a just society.”²⁵ The whole Church was to be mobilized for the new kind of mission. New instruments of mission were to develop in the local congregation and in society.²⁶

These varied instruments of mission and provisional forms of Christian life exist to transmit the news of the new humanity. This also is the purpose of the traditional institutions of the Church. To tell this news means to participate in the hopes and despairs of men. No more than Jesus, can we who follow him escape the ambiguities of history. When he set out on God’s mission, he brought hope by dying on an ambiguous cross. We who participate in the new mankind, who share in his life and mission, must share also in the conflicts and agonies of men. We must bear on our shoulders, too, the weight of man’s weakness and perversity. By this participation alone can the new humanity be made visible. Only so, can mankind today receive the promise that all things will be made new, and begin to share already in the renewal which God’s victory will bring.

But the reference to “an ambiguous cross” was certain to raise controversy. What was ambiguous about the death of Christ? Of course we are called to share in the sufferings of humanity. But how do we participate in the sufferings of Christ? Are we too to die “on an ambiguous Cross? in today’s society? The document unleashed a storm of protest.

THE DEBATE

Donald McGavran in a special Uppsala issue of the *Church Growth Bulletin* raised the question. “Will Uppsala betray the Two Billion?” He charged that “a small band of men determined to change the course of mission” had deliberately forged a new theology “which apparently intends to have no place for mission from the Church in one land to Non-Christians in other lands.”²⁷ Evidence of the betrayal was the Draft for Section II.

- 1) “Section II says nothing about the necessity of faith, nothing about the two billion and nothing about sending messengers.”²⁸

- 2) “While the word *mission* is repeatedly used, its meaning is *nowhere* that of communicating the Good News of Jesus Christ to unbelieving men in order that they might believe and live.”²⁹
- 3) “A deliberate purpose to divert attention *away from* men’s need to hear about Christ, to confess Him as Saviour, to obey Him as Lord, and to proclaim Him as Redeemer and King marks the document in all the critical passages.”³⁰
- 4) “The chief thrust . . . is concerned not with mission but with renewing churches.”³¹
- 5) Section II is the only section that can deal with the two billion—and Section II has apparently resolved to say nothing about them or about their need to know Jesus Christ.”³²

McGavran pin-pointed the theological error of the Draft: “It proposes that the two billion do not need redemption at all and that . . . proclaiming the Gospel should be dropped.”³³

Ralph Winter pointed out that the Draft did not represent the thinking of most Christians. “As far as missions are concerned the largest two blocks are still outside the council (in sheer number of missionaries): the Roman Catholics and the Evangelicals outside of member churches—and there is hardly a trace of the thinking of these two groups in the documents.”³⁴ Instead the Draft was “preoccupied with the single passion of a single Christian sub-group”³⁵ which was not interested in issues of evangelization. This omission was picked up by A.R. Tippett who calls attention to the place for proclamation, especially with reference to the animist world: “one hopes the communal societies will receive more consideration than the drafts seems to suggest.”³⁶ Tippett also suggests the question, “why not seek to know *God’s* agenda for the present world situation?”³⁷

The debate was continued when the World Council met, July 1968, at Uppsala. John V. Taylor mentioned the ambiguity in the world ‘humanity’ and stressed the finality of Christ. Mission must be Christocentric. “There is real danger lest the blanket phrase *missio dei* . . . is used so vaguely that it includes

the whole action of God throughout time and space, as though . . . God might have accomplished the renewal of man without Jesus Christ."³⁸ Canon Taylor stressed the necessity of "putting on" the new man through the new birth. In the discussion which followed John Stott expressed the conviction that "The prior concern of the church should be in relation to the millions of people who, being without Christ, are perishing."³⁹ The report did not reveal a spiritual concern comparable to that shown for physical hunger and poverty. Stott states, "The Lord sends his Church to preach the Good News and make disciples. I do not see the Assembly very eager to obey its Lord's command. The Lord Jesus Christ wept over the city which had rejected him. I do not see this Assembly weeping similar tears."⁴⁰ Other spokesmen, including delegates from the Third World, responded in similar vein. They missed in the document the biblical base of mission and the affirmation of the proclamation of Christ as the only name whereby men must be saved. As the delegate from the Evangelical Church of the Congo put it. "We should wear the Scriptures as spectacles and then we should see the Scripture's Lord."⁴¹ The document was referred back to the committee for further revision. The end product, while far from satisfactory to many, was supported as "a serious attempt to re-formulate the mandate for mission."⁴²

The revised report as adopted by the Assembly was somewhat less objectionable to evangelicals who had managed to get inserted several important changes. The most significant addition was in Part II, paragraph one, "The Church in mission is for all people everywhere; for those who have not heard the Gospel and for those who have,"⁴³ and paragraph "g", "The Church is rightly concerned for the world's hundreds of millions who do not know the Gospel of Christ. It is constantly sent out to them in witness and service."⁴⁴ These words constitute the sole reference to mission as historically understood!

Acceptance of the Report did not mean the end of the debate. As Arue Sovik discerned, there were many tensions as "the restrictive and limited definition of mission as the proclamation of the saving word of Christ's redemption met the modern and still not well-defined concept of mission as 'discovering God's action in the world'."⁴⁵ But were these not two radically differing and opposing interpretations of the Gospel?

The debate continued in the *Church Growth Bulletin*. Eugene Smith, Executive Secretary of the World Council, noted that the document "reflects a deep hesitation about drawing a clear line between the two billion who do not know Christ, and the many million who bear his Name but whose lives deny his Saviorhood and his Lordship."⁴⁶ Smith defended the failure to focus on the non-Christian world by pointing out the problem of nominal Christianity. He spoke of concern for the spiritual growth of the Church and a distrust of "statistical Christianity." Evangelization anywhere in the world would be carried out by "the Christians that are there."⁴⁷ The Director of the Division of World Mission and Evangelism, Philip Potter, presented a similar defence: "The fundamental assumption underlying the report is that every congregation of the people of God is the basis of mission to its neighbourhood and to the ends of the earth."⁴⁸ Implicit in these statements is a rejection of the classical (and biblical) understanding of missions proclamation of the Gospel to those who have never known Christ. The Churches themselves are the arena for mission. People today are said to hear the Gospel only in terms of the struggle for social justice and human dignity.⁴⁹ Potter claimed that "Renewal in Mission" represented "the whole Christian community."⁵⁰ If that were true it would make the ambiguities seem even worse. But Potter apparently forgot that the majority of the world's Christians are *not* represented in the World Council.

John Stott flatly stated that changes in the final document were "isolated concessions to evangelical pressure," and that the document as a whole was "a hotchpotch, a compromise document, a variegated patchwork" and continued self-contradictions.⁵¹ Its emphasis on world evangelism was *not* sufficient. Stott was profoundly disappointed that at Uppsala there was "no real meeting of minds, no genuine dialogue, no apparent willingness to listen and understand as well as speak and instruct."⁵²

At Uppsala two basic theologies—two ideologies—were in conflict. It was not a mere question as to the balance between social action and the proclamation of the Gospel. On the one side were the advocates of mission as humanization, on the other side those for whom the primary concern of mission was with the glory of God and the evangelization of the lost. Uppsala

did not give priority to discipling the nations. As David Hubbard observed, "It is a simple fact that some of delegates adamantly resisted attempts to give priority to evangelical emphases like zeal for the glory of God, church growth, personal decision, the spiritual needs of the unreached, the lostness of men apart from Christ, and the centrality of Gospel proclamation."⁵³ Uppsala clearly revealed two mutually exclusive conceptions of mission. Polarization was inevitable.

REACTION AND FURTHER DEBATE

Among members of the WCC who were disturbed over the humanism of the humanization emphasis were representatives of the Scandinavian and German Churches. One response was the "Frankfurt Declaration on the Fundamental Crisis in Christian Missions" issued in March, 1970, by a group of fifteen German theologians concerned for the theological integrity of mission.⁵⁴ The Declaration identified "Seven Indispensable Basic Elements of Mission": authority, goal, Christology, salvation, Church, religions, eschatology. The Declaration was based upon the classic conception of mission "grounded in the nature of the Gospel" and derived from *Scripture*: "The surrender of the Bible as our primary frame of reference leads to the shapelessness of mission and a confusion of the task of mission with a general idea of responsibility for the world." The Declaration upheld the classical Protestant goal of the glorification of the name of the one God throughout the entire world and the proclamation of the lordship of Jesus Christ, his Son, as the first and supreme goal of mission. "Humanization is not the primary goal of mission."

Professor Peter Beyerhaus, one of the architects of the Frankfurt Declaration, found four reasons for the crisis in mission: 1) mission had been carried on by western missions and churches; 2) a renaissance of ancestral religions brought a reaction against "proselytism"; 3) dialogue displaced confrontation as western theology became more tolerant; 4) basic religious issues were supplanted by political-social concerns.⁵⁵ The result revealed at Uppsala, was the "attempt to substitute man for God."⁵⁶ Beyerhaus charged that the "radical displacement of the center from God to man and the replacement of theology by anthropology" had become the declared programme of key ecumenical leaders such as Dr. M.M. Thomas.⁵⁷

Not all who disagreed with the "Renewal in Mission" report were in full agreement with Prof. Beyerhaus. Orlando Costas felt that the Beyerhaus polemic and the Frankfurt Declaration was dogmatic and negative—Symptomatic of North Atlantic missiology. Costas feels that the Declaration failed to consider "the present dimensions of the kingdom."⁵⁸ Nevertheless as an evangelical he finds himself in agreement with the opposition to neo-universalism and other distortions.

In a subsequent lecture series Beyerhaus elaborated upon the crucial issue. "Mission without proclamation" meant that participation in any humanizing process "is already mission."⁵⁹ This kind of theology, said Beyerhaus, is "nearer to the monistic philosophy of history of Hegel and Karl Marx than to the prophecies of the Bible."⁶⁰

What, then, shall we conclude? The Church was not renewed in Mission at Uppsala. Polarization became evident. What of the evangelical contribution? Arthur Glasser's conclusion is that at Uppsala evangelicals failed to make their witness clear.⁶¹

The crux of the problem at Uppsala was the definition of the Church's mission. Uppsala did not call the Church "away from peripheral tasks to Christ's Commission to disciple the nations."⁶² Uppsala merely reinforced the impression that the WCC was out to dismantle the missionary structures and divert its resources to programmes of inter-church aid and other projects favored by the WCC. But where on the WCC agenda was world evangelization? As Glasser points out, the conciliar movement needs to recognize that local churches alone are not adequate. The world-wide task requires the role of the specialist agency, the missionary order of Roman Catholicism, or the missionary society.

Evangelicals must ask "Why did Protestants fail to do anything about missionary outreach for over 350 years? They had the Church. But the Church was not "Mission." Why? The traditional explanations are unconvincing. What they overlook is the rejection by the Reformers of the missionary structure. Luther tossed out the Roman Catholic concept of the missionary order when he rejected Latin celibacy and closed down the monastic orders.

Only when this concept was regained by Protestants years later did the Protestant form of Christianity break its Western ties and become a worldwide movement. It seems that the WCC is losing sight of this concept.⁶³

A movement which has changed its meanings, however, has altered its goals and objectives. In that event the CWME might well be disinterested in the survival of structures and agencies based on an "outmoded" theology of conversion evangelism and eternal salvation, a possibility suggested by the next major ecumenical conference at Bangkok.

NOTES

1. Glasser, "What Has Been the Evangelical Stance, New Delhi to Uppsala?" p. 130.
2. Shepherd, "A Look at Bangkok in Historical Perspective," p. 141.
3. Glasser, *op. cit.*, p. 131.
4. World Council of Churches, *The Church For Others and The Church For the World*.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 15. *Shalom* is not defined, but is said to be "a social happening, an event in interpersonal relations", it is to be discovered in actual situations. The concept, and term, is derived from the Old Testament and is used "to indicated all aspects of human life in its full and God-given maturity," This single word summarizes all the gifts of the messianic age" (p. 14).
7. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.
10. *Ibid.* p. 20.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 95-126.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 75. The report caricatured "traditional evangelism" by saying it "emphasized conversion mainly as a movement of turning away from the world."
14. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 85. The four structural types were: Family-type structures (house church), Permanent availability structure (community service), Permanent community structure (a group under common discipline), Task force structure (*ad hoc.* for a special purpose such as civil rights).
17. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
18. World Council of Churches, *Drafts For Sections*.
19. Glasser, *op. cit.*, p. 139.
20. *Drafts For Sections*, p. 43.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.
27. McGavran, "Will Uppsala Betray the Two Billion?," p. 295.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 293.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 294.
30. *Ibid.*
- 31, *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*, p. 295.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 296.
34. Winter, "Further Comment on the *Uppsala Drafts For Sections*", p. 299.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Tippet, "For Uppsala to Consider", p. 302.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Goodell, *The Uppsala Report 1968*, p. 23.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 32. In the final report of Section II as published in *The Church Growth Bulletin* these were combined in one statement, "unchanging responsibility to make known the Gospel of the forgiveness of God in Christ to the hundreds of millions who have not heard it." This seems considerably stronger than the version of the official Report.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
46. Smith, "Renewal In Mission", p. 325.
47. *Ibid.*
48. Potter, "Renewal in Mission", p. 327.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 328.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 327.
51. Stott, "Does Section Two Provide Sufficient Emphasis on World Evangelism?", p. 329.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 330.
53. Hubbard, "The Theology of Section Two", p. 331.
54. The Frankfurt Declaration appeared in Germany in 1970. The English translation was first published in *Christianity Today* (June 19, 1970). It has since been re-printed in several publications including P. Beyerhaus, *Mission Which Way?* (1971), D. McGavran *Eye of the Storm* (1972), and D. McGavran, *The Conciliar Evangelical Debate* (1977). The story of the Frankfurt Declaration, its origin and reception, is told in Beyerhaus' *Shaken Foundations*. pp.63-75.
55. Beyerhaus, *Missions: Which Way?*, pp. 19-20.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 86. Evidence is cited from addresses and papers.
58. Costas, *The Church and Its Mission: A Shattering Critique From the Third World*, p. 208.
59. Beyerhaus, *Shaken Foundations*, p. 57.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
61. Glasser, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
62. Glasser, "Non-Conciliar Protestants and the World Council of Churches."
63. *Ibid.*

Document Sixteen:

This article appeared in the Church Growth Bulletin, Special Uppsala Issue, May 1968, Volume IV, No. 5.

WILL UPPSALA BETRAY THE TWO BILLION?

By Donald A. McGavran

By Uppsala I mean, of course, the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches which is to be held at Uppsala, Sweden, in July, 1968. By "the two billion" I mean "that great number of men, at least two billion, who either have never heard of Jesus Christ or have no real chance to believe on Him as Lord and Saviour." These inconceivable multitudes live and die in a famine of the word of God, more terrible by far than the sporadic physical famines which occur in unfortunate lands.

The Church to be relevant, to discharge her human duty to the masses of mankind, to act with justice, and to manifest compassion, must plan her activity, marshal her forces, carry on her campaign of mercy and liberation, and be faithful to her Lord *with the two billion in mind*. If the sufferings of a few million in Viet Nam, South Africa, Jordan, Buchenewald, or the slums of Rio de Jenerio or Detroit rightly excite the indignation and compassion of the Church, how much more should the spiritual sufferings of two thousand million move her to bring multitudes of them out of darkness into God's wonderful light. The Church to be relevant must augment her program to carry the bread of life to starving multitudes and to dig wide, deep channels through which the water of life may flow to "the two billion" perishing of thirst.

By "betray" I mean any course of action which substitutes ashes for bread, fixes the attention of Christians on temporal palliatives instead of eternal remedies, and deceives God's children with the flesh when they long for the spirit. By "betray" I mean planning courses of action whose sure outcome will be that the two billion will remain in their sins and in their darkness, chained by false and inadequate ideas of God and man. Uppsala will betray the two billion if she, to whom God has given the leadership of such a proportion of the church, plans a program which leads her affiliated Churches away from the precise issues on which Christians need to speak today, away from spreading the knowledge of their Saviour to as many of the two billion as it is possible to do.

Will Uppsala betray the two billion? Why is it necessary to ask the question? Why suppose that Uppsala will do anything else but plan a strategy for the seventies which will meet the world's deepest needs, which will assuage the thirst of the two billion? The answer is clear. Because as

the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of churches meets, *Its agenda says nothing about the two billion*. Its agenda in the form of a 136-page book called *Drafts for Sections Uppsala 68* has been published and is being studied by thousands of congregations, boards of mission, study groups, and others. This book is available from the World Council of Churches through the Geneva, New York or London Offices.

It should be clearly understood that these "drafts for sections" are not pronouncements made by the committees. In his Foreward the General Secretary, Eugene Carson Blake, says that the committees have been directed to set forth "the precise issues of which we need to speak today . . . the relatively few subjects which we find most relevant to the contemporary situation and tasks of the Ecumenical Movement." The papers thus prepared were subsequently "twice subjected to discussion by widely representative groups of persons involved in World Council work." These six preparatory drafts then are sent out to be earnestly and prayerfully studied by participants and churches. This article in the Church Growth Bulletin is part of that study process.

Church Growth bulletin is concerned with Section II (the second Draft) only—that on mission, prepared for the Division of World Mission and Evangelism. The Church, enormously concerned with her mission to the two billion, should study *Section II Renewal in Mission*. Christians everywhere should be asking themselves: did those who prepared this draft rightly discern "the precise issues" concerning the unsaved world on which the Church needs to speak today? When the Division of World Mission and Evangelism meets in Uppsala it may depart entirely from this study document and draw up a new statement to guide the Churches as they consider their mission during the seventies. Indeed this article is written in the hope that Uppsala will write another draft germane to the real issues of the day.

On what grounds can we judge this preparatory document betrayal of the two billion? First, according to the clear teaching of the New Testament, it is necessary for men to believe on Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour in order to be saved. How can they believe if they have not heard? And how can they hear without messengers carrying the word of life to them? Section II says *nothing about the necessity of faith, nothing about the two billion and nothing about sending messengers*.

In the place of this, we are treated to about 600 words of involved theological dicta like the following: "We long for our personal life to be renewed. Nations and families, fishes and birds, trees and flowers also yearn eagerly for the day when the new man will be revealed." The strange passage, Romans 8:19-22, concerning whose meaning there is no common agreement among Christians, is used as the biblical justification for this nonsense that fishes and flowers and trees (and why not rocks and volcanoes, white dwarfs and neutrons?) yearn eagerly for the day when the new man will be revealed?

Section II neglects the plain meaning of the cross and of the resurrection amply testified to by dozens of clear passages. He that believes

shall be saved and he that does not believe shall be damned. He who has the Son has the Father and he who does not have the Son does not have the Father. . . . That whosoever believeth on Him should not perish. . . . No man cometh to the Father but by Him. . . . Therefore we are justified by faith. All these passages and many more are strangely absent in the theological system set forth as the basis for renewal in mission. The entire draft says nothing about the two billion unbelievers, the need to believe on Jesus Christ, or the mandate to disciple the nations. Not a sentence, not a line, not a word. Nothing!

Second, from beginning to end the document is studded with the word *mission*. It is titled *Renewal in Mission*. Its first sentence reads, "God has set out on His Mission to men in Jesus, the man from Nazareth." Its second main subsection is entitled "Work of the Spirit." But, while the word *mission* is repeatedly used, its meaning is nowhere that of communicating the Good News of Jesus Christ to unbelieving men in order that they might believe and live. Classical mission has been the carrying out of the Great Commission. Most missionary societies today have constitutions in which this classical purpose is specified. The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America has a statement which begins as follows: "The Supreme and compelling purpose of the Christian Mission to the world is to proclaim Jesus Christ as divine and only Saviour and to encourage men to become His disciples and responsible members of His Church." Section II sets forth a sophisticated theory and theology of mission which the vast majority of Christians and biblical scholars will not accept as the clear will of God toward the world of unbelievers.

Third, a deliberate purpose to divert attention *away from* men's need to hear about Christ, to confess Him as Saviour, to obey Him as Lord, and to proclaim Him as Redeemer and King marks the document in all the critical passages. For example, sub-section 5 is headed "Communicating the good news implies dialogue." Its emphasis is that the Christian must "listen to artists and scientists, to men of other faiths, and to agnostics to learn what news Christian has for him through them." Let us agree for the moment that the Christian is a courteous listener and can learn much from his fellow men. But *is communicating the good news exhausted in listening?* Suppose dialogue is one mode of communicating the good news to some kinds of men. Suppose it comprises one-tenth of all gospel proclamation. This preparatory document was supposed to devote itself to "the precise issues on which we need to speak today." What about the responsive millions who cannot wait for the tedious processes of dialogue, who want to be told about the Gospel at once that they and their children may enter into life now while they yet live. The real issue of today is not dialogue with the resistant, but encouragement of the responsive to accept the Lord as their personal Saviour and enter at once into abundant and eternal life.

Fourth, the chief thrust of Section II of the Uppsala Drafts is concerned not with mission but with renewing existing churches and getting them involved with all of life in points of tension, revolutionary movements, critical points of society and "the agenda of the world" (to use a bit of current ecumenical jargon).

To be sure, about 150 words are devoted to "Dialogue with Non-Christians." But if one hopes that here the spiritual thirst of the two billion will be assuaged, he will be sharply disappointed. "Dialogue with Non-Christians" asserts that "Christians can (through dialogue) affirm their common understanding of man which will lead to a fuller apprehension of truth. Such dialogue also involves a deeper understanding of our relation to our own culture, or to the different cultures to which we belong." That seems to say, that, in *dialogue* with Non-Christians, the Christian may be benefitted. He will realize that, he too is a man and may receive some cultural development in himself. To the authors of Section II dialogue seems to be not feeding those dying in the great famine of the word of God but cultural improvements of Christians.

Fifth, in the Draft for Section II, Uppsala will have its sole opportunity to consider the impartation of the Gospel to the lost. Other Drafts, prepared for other sections (such as those for the World Economic and Social Development, Justice and Peace in International Affairs, and the Worship of God in a Secular Age) present other aspects of the human scene with which the Church should deal. We rejoice in the wide scope of the Church's business. We are proud to belong to a Church which meets humanity's need at so many places. But, without forgetting leprosy, disease, illiteracy, race pride, poverty, war and other temporal scourges, an obedient Christian walking according to his great Head, must remember the salvation of his two billion brothers. It makes an eternal difference whether a man believes on Jesus Christ or not, and two billion do not know enough about Him to believe on Him. Section II is the only section which can deal with the two billion—and Section II has apparently resolved to say nothing about them or about their need to know Jesus Christ and be found in Him.

Instead, Section II systematically uses the old words, which for a hundred and fifty years have meant one thing to the Church, with a radically new meaning. The procedure cannot be attributed to chance. The preparation of this draft, dealing with the enormously important subject of mission, it seems to me, has fallen into the hands of a small band of men determined to change the course of mission. They employ the simple expedient of using the classical words, heavily freighted with emotion, with an entirely new purpose. These men do not point out the changes they are making. They do not inform the Church that they are launching a radically new system and are directing mission away from the two billion into new channels. Whether this amounts to perpetrating a pious fraud or not the reader will have to judge.

For example, on page 32, the *Commentary* on the Draft has as its first heading "The Missionary God." In three substantial paragraphs about the "missionary" God, *not a word* is said about the two billion who have no knowledge of Jesus Christ God and Saviour according to the Scriptures. Instead, the reinterpretation proposes that the missionary God "in the person of Jesus is present with power. His words and deeds bring unrest into the world (Matt. 13:33, Mark 2:22). They bring a new movement; they introduce a new beginning in a dynamic way. This change has two aspects: it has already taken place—the old order has gone and a new order has

already begun (2 Cor. 5:17) and it is still taking place—history is experienced as change. . . . Participation in God's mission is therefore entering into partnership with God in history. . . . The central question then becomes to what extent is what we have inherited still serving the mission of God?"

Quite on the contrary, for DWME and all Christian Churches, the *central question* is : How many of the lost are we bringing back to the fold? How obedient are we to our Lord's command to disciple the nations? How faithful are we to the mission of God, the mission to which our Lord gave His life?

Section II has not been thrown together hurriedly or by accident. During the last twenty years, a new theology has been forged which apparently intends to have no place for mission from the Church in one land to Non-Christians in other lands. It intends to divert the whole missionary movement into the movement toward Christian unity on the one hand and Christian behaviour toward one's close neighbors on the other. In the latter, Christianizing the social order is also included. Christian unity and Christian neighborliness are good ends, to be sure, but they are not mission and should not masquerade as such. Granting that new light does break out of God's Word from time to time, still is it not remarkable that none of the great leaders of the Church, none of the devout students of the Bible, none of the great theologians glimpsed this theology till these wise men discerned it after 1948?

The attempt on theological grounds to direct the missionary enterprise of the Church into channels not even remotely connected with bringing the nations to faith and obedience (Romans 1:5 and 16:25) or reconciling men to God in the Church of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:18 ff) must excite the suspicion and will earn the rejection of Christians everywhere. It affirms that, "The central question is to what extent is what we have inherited (existing missionary societies and their goals of world evangelization) still serving the mission of God." It asserts that they "are transitory forms of obedience to the *missio Dei*." It proposes that Christians must be "ready to abandon them and replace them with new ones."

Christians should, of course, be ready to abandon any instrument which ceases to serve the mission of God in the salvation of the two billion. But this is not what this Draft proposes. It proposes that the two billion do not need redemption at all and that mission must be concerned about *other things* which God is at work doing, "in history," of course!

Again and again this Draft insists that the Church must be concerned with the World's Agenda. Indeed one heading is "The World's Agenda—Our Business." In plain English this means that the mission of the Church is to meet needs of *which the world is conscious*. Since it is not keenly conscious of the need to believe on Jesus Christ, proclaiming the Gospel should be dropped from the tasks of the Church. This is not said, mind you; but it is a legitimate deduction for everything else is stressed and proclamation of the Gospel is not even mentioned.

Does this mean that those who prepared the Draft for Section II intended to capture the institutions and machinery of present day mission,

together with the treasury which has an annual income of well over two hundred million dollars a year? Do they intend to direct the whole complex enterprise away from discipling the nations, away from the preaching of the Gospel, away from the multiplication of churches of baptized believers and into various forms of reviving the Church? By this last phrase do they mean getting the Church to act more like the Church in every aspect of its being—*except the persuasion of men to become disciples of the Lord of Life?*

If I am wrong in this assumption, all Uppsala needs to do is to introduce into the official World Council of Churches statement, which will be drawn up, a strong section which calls on all Churches to augment proclaiming the Gospel, to increase discipling receptive peoples, to answer the calls from all Macedonias, and to multiply churches of Christ everywhere, in order that God may be glorified, His will may be done and thanksgiving to the glory of God may increase (2 Cor. 4:28). Church Growth Bulletin will rejoice in such revision and give it special coverage.

What shall we say if some one were to object as follows? Dr. Blake's Foreword specifically says that these Drafts for Sections are not to go on repeating 'what past Assemblies have said,' but should instead concentrate 'on the relatively few subjects which are most relevant to the contemporary situation.' Past Assemblies spoke of the need for winning the multitudes of mankind to Christian Faith. The Church will, of course, proceed with that kind of mission. At Uppsala we are simply adding a new factor, which needs to be stressed during the seventies.

The answer is two-fold. First, the committee which drew up this statement was straightly charged to formulate a draft concerning "the precise issues on which we need to speak today." The salvation of two billion children of God is *the precise issue* on which the Division of World Mission and Evangelism need to speak. Nothing is more precise or more contemporary. Second, the whole tenor of Section II is *not* a cordial acknowledgement that the discipling of the nations is a chief and irreplaceable purpose of Christian mission. The clear intent of Section II is to substitute a totally new concept of mission for the old concept which Section II considers out-worn.

The committee which drew up this draft is apparently unaware of the fact that today in many lands of Asia, and Latin America, an unprecedented receptivity to the Gospel exists. Much greater receptivity exists than would have deemed possible twenty years ago. According to the World Christian Handbooks, the Christian population of Africa south of the Sahara increased from twenty million in 1950 to fifty million in 1968. It is likely to increase to a hundred million by 1990. The precise issue in 1968 when the World Council will meet at Uppsala is this: how can the Christian Church carry the Gospel faster and better to the multitudes who want to become Christians? The chief issue is not dialogue with hostile non-Christians. In the days of His flesh, our Lord instructed His disciples to by-pass indifferent and hostile villages and hurry on to the receptive. Such days have again come. This is a time to emphasize discipline, not to turn from it. This is not a time to betray the two billion but to reconcile as many as possible of them to God in the Church of Jesus Christ. For the peace of the world, for justice

between men and nations, for the spiritual health of countless individuals and the corporate, welfare of mankind *this is a time to disciple the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and teaching them whatsoever our Lord has commanded us.*

Throughout history, the mission of the Church to Non-Christians in other lands has been carried forward by companies of the concerned, not by the whole Church. It was not Jerusalem that dispatched Barnabas and Saul on the first missionary journey, but a group of specially concerned men in the church at Antioch. The evangelization of north Europe, depended on monastic orders. Bands of the devout, the specially concerned, i.e. the orders, furnished Rome's missionaries. Among Protestants too, the missionary movement was launched not by the whole Church but by bands of specially concerned Christians—who often carried on their mission against the active opposition of the Church.

Of recent years, missionary societies have been so prospered by God and have so well fitted the era of European dominance, that some Protestant Churches *as Churches* have espoused missions. During the last fifty years many missionary societies have appeared to be *church societies*. If the donomination had only one missionary society, it was difficult for it to appear like any thing else but "the missionary division of the whole denomination." It is significant that scarcely has this process gotten under way, scarcely has mission appeared to be the business of the whole Church, than the Church has begun to subvert the mission to her own service.

Mission to carry the Gospel to the two billion is becoming any good activity at home or abroad which anyone declares to be the will of God. Phoning lonely old ladies of the Church was recently given as a meaningful contemporary form of mission! And now the great quadrennial gathering of the World Council of Churches sends out a preparatory draft on mission (Section II of Uppsala '68) which concentrates its entire attention on renewing existing churches so that they will proclaim the Gospel both here at home and abroad.

Church Growth Bulletin cannot believe that Section II represents advanced missionary thinking of the great Churches affiliated with the World Council of Churches. We cannot believe that the renowned and honored missionary societies which together make up DWME will allow any such draft to be set forth as expressing their 1968 purpose in mission. We cannot believe that this great missionary planning session can neglect so completely both Vatican II on Mission and the Wheaton Congress of 1966.

We prayerfully hope that more Christian counsels will prevail and the two billion will not be betrayed. We shall look forward with hope and support Uppsala with prayer, confident that Section II is not the will of God and will be rejected, or revised, modified, and brought more into harmony with the experience and understanding of the universal Church, the clear intent of the Bible, and the express statements of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Document Seventeen:

Section II of the Uppsala Report as adopted by the Assembly, World Council of Churches Fourth Assembly, Uppsala 1968.

RENEWAL IN MISSION

I. A MANDATE FOR MISSION

1. We belong to a humanity that cries passionately and articulately for a fully human life. Yet the very humanity of man and of his societies is threatened by a greater variety of destructive forces than ever. And the acutest moral problems all hinge upon the question: What is man? We Christians know that we are in this worldwide struggle for meaning, dignity, freedom and love, and we cannot stand aloof. We have been charged with a message and a ministry that have to do with more than material needs, but we can never be content to treat our concern for physical and social needs as merely secondary to our responsibility for the needs of the spirit. There is a burning relevance today in describing the mission of God, in which we participate, as the gift of a new creation which is a radical renewal of the old and the invitation to men to grow up into their full humanity in the new man, Jesus Christ.

2. Men can know their true nature only if they see themselves as sons of God, answerable to their Father for one another and for the world. But because man refuses both the obedience and the responsibility of sonship his God-given dominion is turned into exploitation, and harmony into alienation in all his relationships. In this condition man, with all his amazing power, suffers an inescapable dread of his own helplessness and his deepest cry, albeit often unrecognized, is for the Triune God.

3. Jesus Christ, incarnate, crucified and risen, is the new man. In him was revealed the image of God as he glorified his Father in a perfect obedience. In his total availability for others, his absolute involvement and absolute freedom, his penetrating truth and his triumphant acceptance of suffering and death, we see what man is meant to be. Through that death on the Cross, man's alienation is overcome by the forgiveness of God and the way is opened for the restoration of all men to their sonship. In the resurrection of Jesus a new creation was born, and the final goal of history was assured, when Christ as head of that new humanity will sum up all things.

4. But the new manhood is not only a goal. It is also a gift and like all God's gifts it has to be appropriated by a response of faith. The Holy Spirit offers this gift to men in a variety of moments of decision. It is the Holy Spirit who takes the Word of God and makes it a living, converting word to men.

Our part in evangelism might be described as bringing about the occasions for men's response to Jesus Christ. Often the turning point does not appear as a religious choice at all. Yet it is a new birth. It sets a pattern of dying and rising which will continually be repeated. For we have to be torn out of the restricted and perverted life of the 'old man'. We have to 'put on the new man' and this change is always embodied in some actual change of attitude and relationship. For there is no turning to God which does not at the same time bring a man face to face with his fellow men in a new way. The new life frees men for community enabling them to break through racial, national, religious and other barriers that divide the unity of mankind.

5. Mission bears fruit as people find their true life in the Body of Christ, in the Church's life of Word and Sacrament, fellowship in the Spirit and existence for others. There the signs of the new humanity are experienced and the People of God reach out in solidarity with the whole of mankind in service and witness. The growth of the church, therefore both inward and outward, is of urgent importance. Yet our ultimate hope is not set upon this progress, but on the mystery of the final event which remains in the hand of God.

6. The meeting with men of other faiths or of no faith must lead to dialogue. A Christian's dialogue with another implies neither a denial of the uniqueness of Christ, nor any loss of his own commitment to Christ, but rather that a genuinely Christian approach to others must be human, personal, relevant and humble. In dialogue we share our common humanity, its dignity and fallenness, and express our common concern for that humanity. It opens the possibility of sharing in new forms of community and common service. Each meets and challenges the other; witnessing from the depths of his existence to the ultimate concerns that come to expression in word and action. As Christians we believe that Christ speaks in this dialogue, revealing himself to those who do not know him and correcting the limited and distorted knowledge of those who do. Dialogue and proclamation are not the same. The one complements the other in a total witness. But sometimes Christians are not able to engage either in open dialogue or proclamation. Witness is then a silent one of living the Christian life and suffering for Christ.

7. Man is one indivisible whole. Science today furnishes us with constantly increasing knowledge about man's inner being and his interdependence with society. We must see achievements of greater justice, freedom and dignity as a part of the restoration of true manhood in Christ. This calls for a more open and humble partnership with all who work for these goals even when they do not share the same assumptions as ourselves. But it also calls for a clearer acceptance of the diversity of gifts of the spirit within the Church. He gave "some to be apostles"—the bearers and strategists of the Gospel in modern age, "some to be prophets"—to equip the saints for their ministry in the world and to be the protesting conscience of society, "some to be pastors"—to heal spiritual and psychological ills, "some to be evangelists"—the interpreters of the Gospel for the secular man or the man of another faith, "some to be teachers"—equipped

with biblical light on contemporary perplexities. Each, knowing his need of the gifts of the others, contributes his own in a single, saving outreach to bring men to the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ.

II. OPPORTUNITIES FOR MISSION

1. The Church in mission is the Church for others

The Church in mission is for all people everywhere; for those who have not heard the Gospel and for those who have; for those who, unknowing, serve "the man for others", and for those who name his Name and yet turn away from his mission; and even for those who reject the church, and yet continue to wait for the new humanity.

Since the Church is for others, its mission must both challenge and include men and women where they are:

- a Reformed banker in Zurich and his Roman Catholic colleague in Buenos Aires—
- a Baptist policeman in the Congo, and Orthodox teacher in India—
- a Methodist professor at Columbia, a Lutheran art student at the Sorbonne—
- a pastor evangelist in New Guinea, a minister in industrial Tokyo—
- a Spanish migrant worker in Holland, a West Indian bus conductor in London—
- a nurse in Johannesburg, a housewife in Moscow—
- a hungry child in Rio, an unemployed farm worker in Mississippi—

Localities for mission are such in variety and setting—where there is human need, an expanding population, tension, forces in movement, institutional rigidities, decision-making about the priorities and uses of power, and even open human conflict.

2. Here we describe a few priority situations for mission today

a) Centres of power

Centres of power control human life for good or evil. Increasingly men struggle over this control. For example, the mass media can be employed for either powerful communication or deceitful manipulation. All existing centres of power such as government, business, industry, military establishments, labour, and the churches, must be called to account for their uses of power, especially by those affected. Frustration grows in proportion to human powerlessness and lack of dignity. For the sake of the new humanity the powerless must exercise power.

B) REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS

The longing for a just society is causing revolutions all over the world. Since many Christians are deeply rooted in the *status quo* they tend to be primarily concerned for the maintenance of law and order. Where the

maintenance of order is an obstacle to a *just* order, some will decide for revolutionary action against that injustice, struggling for a just society without which the new humanity cannot fully come. The Christian community must decide whether it can recognize the validity of their decision and support them.

C) THE UNIVERSITY EVERYWHERE IS IN CHANGE

The quest for a just society and a meaningful life ahead is erupting in all places of higher learning and research. Student rebellions reflect the insistence that maturing students share in decision about the form and content of university life. In the intellectual centres of an emerging world culture, such movements require Christian presence and witness.

D) RAPID URBANIZATION AND INDUSTRIALIZATION

All over the world men are on the move from tribal village to township, from rural area to urban sprawl. The migrant worker, the sufferer from racial prejudice in housing, the child in a crowded school, the lonely student in his crowded dormitory, the watchers of the TV screens, the inmates, nurses and medical specialists of the hospital wards—all these make the emerging urban centres a locality for mission.

The material handler shifting ingots of steel; the woman assembling a transistor; the manager racing against time and spending his Sunday planning production targets—all these are in need of seeing the inter-relatedness of their role with that of others in building a just industrial society.

E) SUBURBIA—RURAL AREAS

The pupil in rural areas, starving for education; the village pastor, looking for his young people who have moved to the town; the farmer struggling to develop intermediate agricultural technology; the prematurely aged labourer in an area of famine—*and* the prematurely retire and bored pensioner; suburban wives trapped in the small world of their children and chores—these too constitute localities for mission where there are pressures for conformity, social prejudice and the threat of a clouded future.

F) RELATIONS BETWEEN DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Centres of decision and forces of public opinion influencing the relations between the developing countries and the developed countries are a locality for mission, which demands new motivation and a new international missionary strategy.

G) THE CHURCHES AS AN ARENA FOR MISSION

The words of proclamation are doubted when the church's own life fails to embody marks of the new humanity. The church is rightly concerned for the world's hundreds of millions who do not know the Gospel of Christ. It is constantly sent out to them in witness and service. But that concern becomes suspect when the church is preoccupied with its own numerical and institutional strength. It is called to be the servant body of Christ given to and for the world.

Too many of our discussions are about the internal concerns of our fellowship; too many statistical forms ask only about the budget and fluctuations in attendance and not about outreach and service. Too often we send only doctors and teachers where today's need calls also for town planners. Traditional mission board structures tend to commit the churches to institutional continuity. Too many traditional churches neglect relationships with independent, rapidly growing indigenous Christian movements. The Christian community desperately needs renewal, lest it become a spiritual ghetto, unaware of its true responsibilities.

3. How to find criteria for missionary priorities

Because the world is always changing, it is always necessary to evaluate missionary priorities. That evaluation will often require willingness to face loss in prestige and finance and detachment from monuments of faithfulness in mission localities of the past. We suggest the following criteria for such evaluation:

- do they place the church alongside the poor, the defenceless, the abused, the forgotten, the bored?
- do they allow Christians to enter the concerns of others to accept their issues and their structures as vehicles of involvement?
- are they the best situations for discerning with other men the signs of the times, and for moving with history towards the coming of the new humanity?

III. FREEDOM FOR MISSION

A new Stance needed in Church Life

Mobilizing the people of God for mission today means releasing them from structures that inhibit them in the Church and enabling them to open out in much more flexible ways to the world in which they live. In this world we need to meet others, across all the frontiers, in new relationships that mean both listening and responding, both giving and receiving. This necessitates:

1. A continuing re-examination of the structures of church life at all levels, i.e. the local parish, the denominational synods and conferences and their agencies, the councils of churches at national, regional and world levels. All these must ask, not "Have we the right structures for mission?" but "Are we totally structured for mission?"

2. A re-examination of the variety of tasks to which the people are called in their ministry in the world. Laymen and women express their full commitment to mission, not primarily through the service they give within the church structures, but pre-eminently through the ways in which they use their professional skills and competence in their daily work and public service. We need to employ all the gifts God has given to his people—whether it be gifts of proclamation, or healing, or political activity, or administration, or running a home, etc. We need to explore how, in the diverse roles in which we find ourselves, we can creatively and with integrity

express our full humanity — whether it be as young people, or women, or members of minority groups, or people in positions of authority, and so on. In all these, we need to recognize what is our Christian obedience in the total ministry of the Church.

3. A re-examination of the whole scope and purpose of theological education. This is to be seen as preparation of the whole people of God for their ministry in the world. The training of the clergy cannot be considered apart from the training of the laity and both should be understood as one enterprise. This means:

- a) Clergy need to be trained in an understanding of the world in which the people will minister and of their own responsibility for pointing the people to that ministry and equipping them for it.
- b) Lay training needs to be understood in terms of preparing the people for the increasing complexity of their ministry in the world.
- c) Provision must be made for training both clergy and laity for specialized tasks.

The Church in the Local Situation

Though some believe that the basic structures of church life are given and therefore unchangeable, others are convinced that all institutional forms of church life are provisional and open to change. In a given locality the ministry of the church may be exercised in many forms, including congregations, chaplaincies, health and welfare services, youth projects, political and economic pressure groups, functional and professional groups and others. These have often inherited a pattern of life which was the response of a past generation to a situation which is now fast changing. In all the contemporary localities of mission, we must find new and effective ways in which the Gospel can be proclaimed today and understood in all these areas of life. This will mean:

1. that the congregation must recognize its own missionary role in proclaiming the Gospel in word and deed and as a caring community for all whom they meet across the different frontiers. Related to this community there need to be groups which will help individuals to feel accepted and to accept others. There people will find through dialogue a common basis for their task and be encouraged to develop new forms of service within the social structures for the sake of their fellow men;

2. that there will be a programme of education which at all levels directs people towards their ministry in the world. This needs to be rooted in a biblical understanding of mission, so that people share the encouragement and insights which Bible study can give;

3. that we get to know the social structures in order to cooperate with all the forces working for good and to discover new tasks needing to be done;

4. that we discover the creative possibilities in the points of tension, conflict and decision in society, and try to make real our profession of love through the active pursuit of justice.

5. that teams come together to undertake specific tasks in society;
6. that we encourage a global understanding of the ministry of the Church.

No local situation or ministry is sufficient unto itself. No local group can isolate itself from the larger structures of planning and decision-making in society. It is in response to these that the Church needs to express its ministry in new ways, for example:

- a) The need for specialization is recognized in areas of special concern such as education, rural development, industry, leisure, automation, the mass media.
- b) Specialization without coordination is useless. There need to be joint planning and action between the diverse agencies involved in the localities as part of a total coordinated strategy of mission.

The World-wide Situation

The missionary societies originated in a response of a past generation to the call to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Changing political, economic and ecclesiastical circumstances demand new responses and new relationships. Our understanding of the mission in six continents means that the resources of the whole Church in terms of men, money and expertise are available for the use of the whole Church. Their deployment must be determined by need and not by historic relationships or traditional procedures. This means in terms of structures and relationships:

1. Experiments in new forms of witness and service must be encouraged. Initiatives for such experiments may come from any quarter, but should, where possible, be carried through by joint consultation and strategy.
2. The old division between sending and receiving churches is now breaking down. More creative relationships between churches and between churches and mission boards have developed. Now we must move to multilateral relations and decision making. These relations will be of many kinds, some national, some regional and some worldwide.
3. Where people and resources come from outside a community they must be related to the needs of that community and incorporated into its life. Mutual understanding and relationships have to be built up between the Church in the local situation and those who bring the resources of skill and technical knowledge from outside. In this sharing the unity of all Christians in each place can be deepened, tested and realized.

Never go it alone

There is but one mission on all six continents. This makes it now imperative that Christians engage effectively in joint planning and action in both local and international situations. Only ecumenical cooperation can be adequate for the immensity of our task.

Some joint action for mission has already taken place, but the churches are still too reluctant to implement the call to joint action sounded so strongly in 1963 at the Mexico City Meeting of the Commission of World Mission and Evangelism. Present structures obviously do not provide adequate vehicles for developing joint strategy. We must determine to find ways in which joint action can become operative. We urge consultation with regional and national councils, mission boards and societies and churches, resolved to find ways and means for such joint planning and action. We recommend that more specific areas be marked out as soon as possible for experiments in ecumenical action.

In fact, we find it impossible to envisage a situation where it would not be more effective to act together across all frontiers rather than going it alone.

In a world where the whole of mankind is struggling to realize its common humanity, facing common despairs and sharing common hopes, the Christian Church must identify itself with the whole community in expressing its ministry of witness and service and in a responsible stewardship of our total resources.

The Certain Hope

Called as we are to take up our responsibility for mission in the future which God opens up before us, we do so in the firm and certain hope that the new humanity revealed in our risen Lord and Saviour will surely come to its glorious fulfilment in him. So we humbly serve, in patience and in joy, confidently expecting his final victory.

Document Eighteen:

Drafted by Dr. Peter Beyerhaus, The Frankfurt Declaration was signed and issued on 4 March, 1970, by an association of confession-minded German theologians. It has since been widely circulated in Germany as well as in North America in the English translation.

THE FRANKFURT DECLARATION

The Church of Jesus Christ has the sacred privilege and irrevocable obligation to participate in the mission of the triune God, a mission which must extend into all the world. Through the Church's outreach, his name shall be glorified among all people, mankind shall be saved from his future wrath and led to a new life, and the Lordship of his Son Jesus Christ shall be established in the expectation of his second coming.

This is the way that Christianity has always understood the Great Commission of Christ, though, we must confess, not always with the same degree of fidelity and clarity. The recognition of the task and the total missionary obligation of the Church led to the endeavour to integrate missions into the German Protestant churches and the World Council of Churches, whose Commission and Division of World Mission and Evangelism was established in 1961. It is the goal of this division, by the terms of its constitution to insure "the proclamation to the whole world of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to the end that all men may believe in him and be saved." It is our conviction that this definition reflects the basic apostolic concern of the New Testament and restores the understanding of mission held by the fathers of the Protestant missionary movement.

Today, however, organized Christian world missions is shaken by a fundamental crisis. Outer opposition and the weakening spiritual power of our churches and missionary societies are not solely to blame. More dangerous is the displacement of their primary tasks by means of an insidious falsification of their motives and goals.

Deeply concerned because of their inner decay, we feel called upon to make the following declaration.

We address ourselves to all Christians who know themselves through the belief in salvation through Jesus Christ to be responsible for the continuation of his saving work among non-Christian people. We address ourselves further to the leaders of churches and congregations, to whom the worldwide perspective of their spiritual commission has been revealed. We address ourselves finally to all missionary societies and their coordination agencies, which are especially called, according to their spiritual tradition, to oversee the true goals of missionary activity.

We urgently and sincerely request you to test the following theses on the basis of their biblical foundations, and to determine the accuracy of this description of the current situation with respect to the errors and modes of operation which are increasingly evident in churches, missions, and the ecumenical movement. In the event of your concurrence, we request that you declare this by your signature and join with us in your own sphere of influence both repentant and resolved to insist upon these guiding principles.

Seven Indispensable Basic Elements of Mission

1. *Full authority in heaven and on earth has been committed to me. Go forth therefore and make all nations my disciples, baptize men everywhere in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you. And be assured, I am with you always, to the end of time (Matt. 28:18-20; this Scripture quotation and those that follow are from the New English Bible).*

We recognize and declare:

Christian mission discovers its foundation, goals, tasks, and the content of its proclamation solely in the *commission* of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ and his saving acts as they are reported by the witness of the apostles and early Christianity in the New Testament. Mission is grounded in the nature of the Gospel.

We therefore oppose the current tendency to determine the nature and task of mission by socio-political analyses of our time and from the demands of the non-Christian world. We deny that what the Gospel has to say to people today at the deepest level is not evident before its encounter with them. Rather according to the apostolic witness, the Gospel is normative and given once for all. The situation of encounter contributes only new aspects in the application of the Gospel. The surrender of the Bible as our primary frame of reference leads to the shapelessness of mission and a confusion of the task of mission with a general idea of responsibility for the world.

2. *Thus will I prove myself great and holy and make myself known to many nations; they shall know that I am the Lord (Ezek. 38:23). Therefore, Lord, I will praise thee among the nations and sing psalms to thy name (Ps. 18:49 and Rom. 15:9)*

We recognize and declare:

That first and supreme goal of mission is the **glorification** of the name of the one God throughout the entire world and proclamation of the lordship of Jesus Christ, his Son.

We therefore oppose the assertion that mission today is no longer so concerned with the disclosure of God as with the manifestation of a new man and the extension of a new humanity into all social realms. *Humanization* is not the primary goal of mission. It is rather a product of our new birth

through God's saving activity in Christ within us, or an indirect result of the Christian proclamation in its power to perform a leavening activity in the course of world history.

A one-sided outreach of missionary interest toward man and his society leads to atheism.

3. *There is no salvation in anyone else at all, for there is no other name under heaven granted to men, by which we may receive salvation (Acts 4:12).*

We recognize and declare:

Jesus Christ our Saviour, true God and true man, as the Bible proclaims him in his personal mystery and his saving work, is the basis, content, and authority of our mission. It is the goal of this mission to make known to all people in all walks of life the gift of his salvation.

We therefore oppose the false teaching (which is spreading in the ecumenical movement since the Third General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi) that Christ himself is anonymously so evident in world religions, historical changes, and revolutions that man can encounter him and find salvation in him without the direct news of the Gospel.

We likewise reject the unbiblical limitation of the person and work of Jesus to his humanity and ethical example. In such an idea the unbiblical limitation of the person and work of Jesus to his humanity and ethical example. In such an idea the uniqueness of Christ and the Gospel is abandoned in favour of a humanitarian principle which others might also find in other religions and ideologies.

4. *God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, that everyone who has faith in him may not die but have eternal life (John 3:16). In Christ's name, we implore you, be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:20).*

We recognize and declare:

Mission is the witness and presentation of eternal salvation performed in the name of Jesus Christ by his church and fully authorized messengers by means of preaching, the sacraments, and service. This salvation is due to the sacrificial crucifixion of Jesus Christ, which occurred once for all and for all mankind.

The appropriation of this salvation to individuals takes place first however, through proclamation, which calls for decision, and through baptism, which places the believer in the service of love. Just as belief leads through repentance and baptism to eternal life, so unbelief leads through its rejection of the offer of salvation to damnation.

We therefore oppose the universalistic idea that in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ all men of all times are already born again and already have peace with him, irrespective of their knowledge of the

historical saving activity of God or belief in it. Through such a misconception the evangelizing commission loses both its full, authoritative power and its urgency. Unconverted men are thereby lulled into a fatal sense of security about their eternal destiny.

5. *But you are chosen race, a royal priesthood, a dedicated nation, and a people claimed by God for his own, to proclaim the triumphs of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light (1Peter 2:9).*

Adapt yourselves no longer to the pattern of this present world (Rom. 12:2).

We recognize and declare:

The primary visible task of mission is to *call out the messianic, saved community* from among all people.

Missionary proclamation should lead everywhere to the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ, which exhibits a new, defined reality as salt and light in its social environment.

Through the Gospel and the sacraments, the Holy Spirit gives the members of the congregation a new life and an eternal spiritual fellowship with each other and with God, who is real and present with them. It is the task of the congregation through its witness to move the lost—especially those who live outside its community—to a saving membership in the body of Christ. Only by being this new kind of fellowship does the Church present the Gospel convincingly.

We therefore oppose the view that the Church, as the fellowship of Jesus, is simply a part of the world. The contrast between the Church and the world is not merely a distinction in function and in knowledge of salvation; rather, it is an essential difference in nature. We deny that the Church has no advantage over the world except the knowledge of the alleged future salvation of all men.

We further oppose the one-sided emphasis on salvation which stresses only this world, according to which the Church and the world together share in a future, purely social, reconciliation of all mankind. That would lead to the self-dissolution of the Church.

6. *Remember then your former condition . . . you were at the time separate from Christ, strangers to the community of Israel, outside God's covenants and the promise that goes with them. Your world was a world without hope and without God (Eph. 2:11,12).*

We recognize and declare:

The offer of salvation in Christ is directed without exception to all men who are not yet bound to him in conscious faith. The adherents to the non-Christian religions and world views can receive this salvation only through participation in faith. They must let themselves be freed from their former ties and false hopes in order to be admitted by belief and baptism

into the body of Christ. Israel, too, will find salvation in turning to Jesus Christ.

We therefore reject the false teaching that the non-Christian religions and world views are also ways of salvation similar to belief in Christ.

We refute the idea that “Christian presence” among the adherents to the world religions and a give-and-take dialogue with them are substitutes for a proclamation of the Gospel which aims at conversion. Such dialogues simply establish good points of contact for missionary communication.

We also refute the claim that the borrowing of Christian ideas, hopes, and social procedures—even if they are separated from their exclusive relationship to the person of Jesus—can make the world religion and ideologies substitutes for the Church of Jesus Christ. In reality they give them a syncretistic and therefore antichristian direction.

7. *And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the earth as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come (Matt.24:14).*

We recognize and declare:

The Christian world mission is the decisive, continuous saving activity of God among men between the time of the resurrection and second coming of Jesus Christ. Through the proclamation of the Gospel, new nations and people will progressively be called to decision for or against Christ.

When all people have heard the witness about him and have given their answer to it, the conflict between the Church of Jesus and the world, led by the Antichrist, will reach its climax. Then Christ himself will return and break into time, disarming the demonic power of Satan and establishing his own visible, boundless messianic kingdom.

We refute the unfounded idea that the eschatological expectation of the New Testament has been falsified by Christ’s delay in returning and is therefore to be given up.

We refute at the same time the enthusiastic and utopian ideology that either under the influence of the Gospel or by the anonymous working of Christ in history, all of mankind is already moving toward a position of general peace and justice and will finally—before the return of Christ—be united under him in a great world community.

We refute the identification of messianic salvation with progress, development, and social change. The fatal consequence of this is that efforts to aid development and revolutionary involvement in the places of tension in society are seen as the contemporary forms of Christian mission. But such an identification would be a self-deliverance to the utopian movements of our time in the direction of their ultimate destination.

We do, however, affirm the determined advocacy of justice and peace by all churches, and we affirm that developmental aid is a timely realization

of the divine demand for mercy and justice as well as of the command of Jesus “Love thy neighbor.”

We see therein an important accompaniment and authentication of mission. We also affirm the humanizing results of conversion as signs of the coming messianic peace.

We stress, however, that unlike the eternally valid reconciliation with God through faith in the Gospel, all of our social achievements and partial successes in politics are restricted by the eschatological “not yet” of the coming kingdom and the not yet annihilated power of sin, death, and the devil, who still is the “prince of this world.”

This established the priorities of our missionary service and causes us to extend ourselves in the expectation of Him who promises, “Behold! I make all things new” (Rev. 21:5, RSV).

PERSPECTIVE ELEVEN

SALVATION TODAY, BANGKOK 1973

Announcement of the "Salvation Today" theme for the next conference of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism was welcomed by evangelicals as a sign of "growing awareness within conciliar leadership of the disenchantment of many with the barrenness of a secularized gospel."¹ Evangelicals were attracted by the apparent re-emphasis of a biblical theme. Salvation was understood as "personal relationship to Christ by the new birth, embracing nothing less than the blessing and obligation of bearing the yoke of His kingdom."² Biblical salvation is spiritual but its impact is also social, "concerned with the evils, personal and societal, which bring suffering to man."³ Those who enter the kingdom of God and receive salvation "are a missionary people whose chief task is to summon men to the lordship of Jesus Christ."⁴ Well and good then, if this was to be the emphasis at Bangkok.

The choice of theme, however, grew out of the 1963 debate at Mexico City.⁵ That conference had raised the question, "What is the form and content of the salvation which Christ offers to men and women in the secular world?"⁶ The question implies the possibility that salvation does not mean the same today as it did in the past.

RE-DEFINING SALVATION?

Beginning from the salvation which Jesus brought, Sovik⁷ traces the Church's conception of salvation during different periods of history: 1) "a changed life charged with power"—the lame could walk, the sinner repent, the bigot find release, the hopeless find a future and boldness (Jesus); 2) "escape from the evils of this world and from punishment for sin" (Middle Ages); 3) a "righteous, orderly, and prosperous society" (Calvin); 4) saving of souls (Francis Xavier); 5) "a new chance on earth to escape from an inhuman social system" (South India); 6) "the preservation of European Christian life and culture" (North

America). Sovik's conclusion: "Thus with the changing centuries the Christian understanding of salvation has been shaped and reshaped."⁸ But the question may be raised as to whether these were legitimate understandings or deviations from revealed truth.

Preparation for the "Salvation Today" conference was evident at least as early as October 1968 when seven articles featuring the "Salvation Today" theme appeared in the *International Review of Mission*.⁹ A 1971 article by Thomas Wieser on "The Experience of Salvation Today", designed to indicate a possible direction for pursuing the theme, discussed the use of the Bible and other religious traditions and saw the role of the Church as one of the groups manifesting salvation today.¹⁰ The January 1972 issue of the IRM was devoted to the theme of the coming conference. One of the writers felt that salvation and atonement are mythological and hence meaningless to modern man. He asked, "Should the Church still talk about salvation?"

In this essay I want to raise the question whether "Salvation," is not indeed a biblical word wholly at home inside the Church, but foreign to the society in which we live

Moreover, talk about salvation is tied to an outmoded religious psychology. A preacher not long ago began his sermon by quoting a Cardinal Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church, to this effect: The Cardinal was asked what was his chief concern in life, and he replied, "To save my soul." The man in the street can only be puzzled by such language . . .

It is with no intention to be discourteous or to "knock" the faith by which another man lives that I have now to say that saving my soul does not interest me as a man in 1972. It is too difficult to talk any longer in terms of the dualism of body-spirit or flesh-spirit. Man is a psychosomatic unity in process of maturing. . . . Deliverance from sin brings up the problematic of God; eternal bliss conveys almost no meaning. Atonement by Jesus on our behalf is just as implausible since he is so distant in history and so unlike most of us.¹¹

With this kind of material to set the pace, it is not surprising that Bangkok presented a secular, humanistic

salvation. Writing on "Salvation in the Chinese Revolution" in the October 1972 IRM, R.L. Whitehead affirmed Mao Tse-tung as the central figure in "China's salvation history"; "Chairman Mao saved us from that sea of fire, the Communist Party led us to win liberation."¹² Was salvation at Bangkok to be contextual rather than Christ-centered?

Objection was inevitable. A Norwegian study group criticized the concepts of the preliminary materials sent to the member churches by the Geneva staff: "The question of salvation is unfolded with an inadequate conceptual analysis. . . . The concepts used confirm that the existential human need is a purely this-worldly affair on the anthropocentric level. But these are not biblical concepts."¹³ The study pointed out that "salvation and humanization are not identical," but that "humanization is a result of salvation."¹⁴ The salvation controversy is but an extension of the Uppsala humanization emphasis.

UPPSALA DEBATE CONTINUED

The Norwegian study group warned of the danger of scism over the question of the meaning of mission. "The dramatic question in Uppsala centered around the two billion who had never heard the gospel."¹⁵ Uppsala was unable to give a clear response because it was "overwhelmed by the 'today' syndrome."¹⁶ Now it was imperative for the WCC to re-affirm conversion and faith as the aim of mission as expressed in the CWME's statement of purpose. "Where there is no common understanding regarding the church's mission, the discussion of strategy is meaningless."¹⁷

Reacting to Peter Beyerhaus's criticism of the Uppsala approach, M.M. Thomas in 1970 charged that Beyerhaus wrongly "confines the work of Christian Mission to the preaching of the gospel and perhaps also to the growth of the Church in response to it."¹⁸ Salvation, says Dr. Thomas, must include "the task of humanization of the world in secular history."¹⁹ The Beyerhaus approach, according to M.M. Thomas, does not deal adequately with the dehumanising forces of corporate structures. Therefore to Dr. Thomas the crucial issue today is that of "the relation between the gospel of salvation and the struggles of men everywhere for their humanity."²⁰

This question is stated in a different way by Peter Beyerhaus: "The task of the church in mission in each historic moment is to ask *What opportunities God gives us to testify to the non-Christian world about His whole purpose of love.*"²¹ The difficulty is that there are two conflicting answers to this question. First is the answer of *Christianization* offered by evangelicals.²² Second is the answer of *humanization* in which social-ethical interests replace evangelism.²³ Beyerhaus feels there should be no conflict between evangelism and social action. The problem is caused by a deviant theology—really a secular humanistic ideology—which advocates any kind of humanization but without calling men to accept Christ and be baptized in His name as the Saviour from the guilt and power of sin.²⁴

Thus the lines were drawn and the debate continued. "The issue at Bangkok is clear: does the word salvation, according to the Bible, mean eternal salvation or does it mean this-worldly improvements?"²⁵ On the eve of the Bangkok meeting a theme "raises questions that cannot be answered within the context of the pluralism of the ecumenical movement."²⁶ The editorial quotes a Norwegian churchman's evaluation of the preparatory volume: "Compared with the biblical message of salvation, the term loses its historic and ecumenical meaning, and salvation becomes exclusively situational. It becomes rather a quest for the solution of tomorrow than an offer of salvation today."²⁷

WHAT HAPPENED AT BANGKOK?

The Minutes and Report of the Meeting indicate that the Bangkok Assembly of the CWME was quite different from preceding assemblies in that it took place in conjunction with the "Salvation Today" conference. "While technically separate from the Assembly, the Conference was an integral part of the atmosphere, mood and content of the Assembly."²⁸ The official meeting of the Assembly was on December 31, 1972, and January 9-12, 1973. The Conference met during the intervening days from December 29 through January 8. The Conference, which has been described as a "happening", centered around celebration and discussion in small groups.²⁹ Significant reports and addresses were given. Three items are here selected as an indication of the scope (and controversy) of the Bangkok event: the address by M.M. Thomas, the Director's Report by Philip Potter, and the moratorium proposal.

In his address, "The Meaning of Salvation Today, A personal Statement," M.M. Thomas based his remarks upon Psalm 144 which he feels describes a parallel situation to that of a developing nation like India. In this Psalm he finds four elements in the pursuit of happiness: health and beauty, material abundance, security from aggression, and social justice.³⁰ The Psalm is said to describe the process of building a new society of health and plenty, peace and justice—"this secular pursuit of happiness is the context within which I must speak of spiritual salvation."³¹ Salvation, then, is essentially materialistic and social. Dr. Thomas, however, seeks to give a "spiritual quality" to such human needs as hunger and sex. It is not clear what is meant by "human spirituality", but it has to do with "man's right choices . . . not in any pietistic or individualistic isolation, but in relation to and expressed within the material, social and cultural revolutions of our time."³² In similar vein the work of the Holy Spirit in history is related to political power struggles between oppressed and oppressors. M.M. Thomas' Marxism seems explicit when he speaks of the politics of liberation as the "inevitable class-war or inevitable international war" in which the role of the Christian is to "make the struggle more human."³³ He states: "In the biblical picture, the Anti-Christ is most active just before the coming of Christ. This should be true within the historical process as much as at the end of history."³⁴

The definition of mission is to be understood within the above framework:

The mission of the Church in this context is to be present within the creative liberation movements of our time which the gospel of Christ itself has helped to take shape, and so participate in them as to be able to communicate the genuine gospel of liberation—from the vicious circle of sin and alienation, law and self-righteousness, and frustration and death—into the new realm of Christ's New Humanity where there is forgiveness and reconciliation, grace and justification, and renewal movements and eternal life.³⁵

Mission, like salvation, is to take place in concrete, human terms. But is it correct to derive this meaning from Psalm 144? To relate the Psalm to the developing situation of India is entirely legitimate as *application*, but not as *interpretation*. The contextual hermeneutic consistently ignores the phrase "whose

God is Yahweh" which is a prominent and penetrating theme of the Psalm.

Salvation in materialistic and social terms can obviously take place outside the Church. M.M. Thomas tried to avoid this difficulty by raising the question of the identity of "Church." He questions "whether the fellowship should be a separate religious community among other religious communities."³⁶ The address by Dr. Thomas created controversy. Problems were evident in the areas of biblical hermeneutics, the meaning of salvation, definition of mission, use of the term "spiritual" (in a Marxist orientation), and the identity of the Church.

The Director's Report by Philip Potter did not end the controversy. First, the Director dismissed as "totally futile" the debate "as to whether the emphasis should be on proclaiming or whether the priority should include "the so-called Christian lands of Europe, North America and Australasia."³⁷ Second, Potter appeared to sanction violence when he spoke of unjust systems of government "which leave people with no other course than that which has been used throughout the ages—violence."³⁸ Third, he endorsed Uppsala's view that the Church is the arena for mission: "The Church which would be the bearer of salvation today needs itself to be saved."³⁹ Fourth, he apparently felt it necessary to defend the integration of the IMC into the WCC by denegating the mission societies: integration has "challenged the churches to re-think their missionary character not leave missionary activity to para-ecclesiastical groups."⁴⁰ Potter also commented that the old IMC may have been content to leave doctrinal questions aside but that we could no longer do so (presumably the WCC was the right organ for engaging in theological and ecclesiological controversy). Finally, the Report seemed to advocate dialogue as a substitute for proclamation: "Religious liberty now demands not confrontation but dialogue between men of different faith and ideologies."⁴¹

One of the most dramatic proposals highlighted at Bangkok was the call for a moratorium "on the sending of funds and personnel to particular churches for a period of time."⁴² On the one hand this was drastic involving both funds and personnel. On the other hand it was limited 1) to particular churches, 2) for a period of time. The proposal, at Bangkok but suggested much earlier,⁴³ created a furor. The Bangkok proposal suggested re-

channeling missionary resources into development projects, "education for mission in the new context, including education for development and justice," neglected areas of mission at home, and "support to those struggling for freedom from unjust and dehumanizing systems."⁴⁴ Moratorium seemingly was proposed less for the advancement of the Churches and more for the support of liberation movements.

Bangkok was almost exclusively concerned with issues of social justice. Section I asserted that "Personal conversion always leads to social action."⁴⁵ Section II defined salvation in four social dimensions: the struggle for economic justice, the struggle for human dignity, the struggle for solidarity against alienation, the struggle for hope.⁴⁶ Section III however, affirmed the necessity of evangelization of each generation: "To work for *church growth and renewal* is the chief abiding and irreplaceable task of Christian mission."⁴⁷ This "abiding task" appears to have been obscured by the over-whelming preoccupation with other contemporary issues. As the chairman reminded the Assembly, "The great vision of mission on six continents given at the Mexico meeting still remained unfulfilled."⁴⁸

OUTCOME

Mission at Bangkok came to mean the betterment of human life. Salvation is no longer concerned with a vague future, it must deal with the here-and now. As Sovik states in his study book, "salvation must ease today's burden. The church's saving action is in the crowded streets . . ."⁴⁹

Not everyone at Bangkok was prepared to surrender all traditional categories. Bangkok was not without its evangelical witness. From the floor during plenary session Arthur Glasser presented his reflections on a series of biblical texts pertaining to salvation *tomorrow* in which he pointed out the "utter inability of human forces and churchly institutions to ameliorate even the rawest nerves of the human condition."⁵⁰ Salvation *yesterday* did not come through political action but through Christ's crucifixion. His example was to be the pattern for His followers, "they were not to reduce His salvation to mere participation with the Sadducees and Herodians in playing the power game."⁵¹ Salvation *today* is the work of the Holy Spirit—Glasser reminded his hearers of the response to the proclamation of the Gospel taking place in Thailand.⁵²

For many Bangkok was a disappointing experience. Manuel Gaxiola, a "Third World" delegate from Mexico, expressed his disappointment on several counts: no prayer was offered at the opening ceremony and the opening speech by a Buddhist proclaimed the validity of all religions.⁵³ Gaxiola found the delegates cool toward evangelism but warm toward dialogue. He felt that the approach at Bangkok became syncretistic and raised question with serious implications for the future of WCC, namely, 1) "whether there is salvation for man outside Jesus Christ"⁵⁴, and, 2) "is the Bible our only rule of faith?"⁵⁵ Gaxiola observes that a theology of pluralism has no place for proselytizing, a sensitive issue for a Latin American Protestant. "Latin American Protestants justly fear any move that hinders them from doing what they have been doing so successfully for several generations even if many bad things are said against proselytism."⁵⁶ Above all Gaxiola was disappointed with Bangkok's obsession with political and social structures to the exclusion of excitement over the great ingatherings and evangelistic opportunities:

A man like the writer, born in a Church that grew from nothing to more than fifty thousand members and one thousand churches in half a century of active preaching, very naively would expect that a meeting of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism would concern itself with the practical matters of establishing churches, sending missionaries, winning converts, etc., but, alas, mission is not understood in the same terms and evangelism, criticized for its "triumphalism," is seen as another form of "imperialism." This is very hard to understand to a poor Mexican from a Church that has even gone to other countries and has little or nothing to offer the people there except the promises of the Bible, which in every case includes "justice, peace and joy inspired by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). We see, then, that our idea of mission is quite different from that of the CWME, although in Bangkok we found among the delegates many who hold an evangelical position and believe as Beyerhaus does, that non-Christians are to be *converted*, new churches to be *established*, and the name and plan of salvation of God to be *glorified*.⁵⁷

Some participants saw Bangkok as evidence, that the WCC has gone beyond all hope of redemption. Professor

Beyerhaus is convinced that the WCC is determined to bring to a close the "missionary age" in order to implement its own programme.⁵⁸ "We, therefore, must look elsewhere for guidelines for our missionary strategy and the still urgently needed clarification of the theological basis of missions."⁵⁹

It was agreed at Bangkok to describe the CWME as "a sub-Unit of the Programme Unit on Faith and Witness."⁶⁰ The Division of World Mission and Evangelism which was the result of the 1961 merger of the IMC into the WCC had been reduced to a *Commission*, and now the latter was further reduced as a mere *sub-Unit*. The hoped-for missionary permeation of the world Church had not taken place, and it now appeared as if mission was on its way out. The broadened definition of mission had this effect.

The new director of the CWME, Emelio Castro, expounding the new era of world mission which was said to have succeeded the old international mission era, asserted that "mission has to do with all human life."⁶¹ Everything has to do with God's mission, world mission means striving for the new humanity in priority.⁶² But have we that liberty? Has not God, in Scripture, set the priorities? Castro assumes that the Church is already planted everywhere,⁶³ and that the task of mission as traditionally conceived is therefore obsolete. That assumption was soon to be challenged by evangelicals planning an international congress on world evangelization. For, as Andrew Kirk has so clearly enunciated, "The Church's attitude to evangelism is the acid test, in practice, of its view of man and its understanding of the nature and extension of salvation, yesterday, today and tomorrow."⁶⁴

NOTES

1. Glasser, "Salvation Today and the Kingdom," p. 36.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

5. Shepherd, "A Look at Bangkok in Historical Perspective", p. 141.
6. Sovik, *Salvation Today*, p. 8.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-24.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
9. *International Review of Missions*, Vol. LVII, No. 228 (October 1968). The articles were as follows: "Salvation, the Meanings of a Biblical Word" by T. Paul Verghese (379-416); "The Gospel of Freedom" by Geoffrey J. Ainger (417-423); "The Quest for Salvation and the Dialogue Between Religions" by S.J. Samartha (424-440); "Confessing Our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour," an interview with W.A. Visser't Hooft (441-447); "Good News of Salvation to the Buddhists" by Lynn A. de Silva (448-458); "The Meaning and the Place of Missiology Today" by Josef Glazik (459-467).
10. Thomas Wieser, "The Experience of Salvation Today," pp. 383 ff.
11. George Johnston, "Should the Church Still Talk About Salvation?", pp. 241 ff.
12. R. L. Whitehead, "Salvation in the Chinese Revolution."
13. Hassing, "Salvation Today", p. 252.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 256.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 259.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, p. 260.
18. M. M. Thomas, *Salvation and Humanization*, p. 7.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
21. Peter Beyerhaus, "Mission, Humanization, and the Kingdom", p. 61.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 63. Beyerhaus identifies this view with the Institute of Church Growth, the Wheaton Congress, the first apostles, and movements in contemporary Africa and Indonesia as well as Europe in the past.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
25. D. A. McGavran, "Salvation Today?", p. 264.
26. *Christianity Today*, "Salvation Today, and Yesterday, and Forever".
27. *Ibid.*
28. World Council of Churches, *Bangkok Assembly 1973*, p. 3.
29. *Ibid.*
30. M. M. Thomas, "The Meaning of Salvation Today, A Personal Statement", p. 158 ff.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 168. This notion of a "fellowship of faith" which transcends the Church is further elaborated and debated in a series of letters between Dr. Thomas and Bishop Newbiggin published in *Religion and Society*, March 1972, and found in abridged form in *Mission Trends* No. 1 edited by Anderson and Stransky, and is reprinted in Dr. Thomas' book, *Some Theological Dialogues* (1977).
37. Potter, "Christ's Mission and Ours in Today's 'World'", pp. 51-52.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
42. *Bangkok Assembly 1973*, p. 24.
43. The background and implications of moratorium are discussed in the author's paper "Moratorium or More Mission?" which appeared in July 1976 in *Aim*, the official organ of the Evangelical Fellowship of India.
44. *Bangkok Assembly 1973*, pp. 24-25.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
49. Sovik, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-81.
50. Glasser, "Salvation—Yesterday, Tomorrow, and Today", p. 147.
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*, p. 148.

53. Gaxiola, "Salvation Today: A Critical Report," pp. 63-64.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
58. Beyerhaus, *Bangkok 1973*, p. 107.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
60. *Bangkok Assembly, 1973*, p. 40.
61. Emilio Castro, "Mission Today", p. 360.
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.*, p. 359.
64. J. Andrew Kirk, "The Use of the Bible in Interpreting Salvation Today", p. 14.

Document Nineteen:

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THE MEANING OF SALVATION TODAY — A PERSONAL STATEMENT

by M.M. Thomas

I find my task this morning most difficult. Already, before coming here, we have waded through a mass of personal and group statements which express the search for salvation and its experience by people in a variety of situations, as well as evaluations of these from various perspectives. We have had studies on the biblical meaning of salvation; we have had several summaries of findings from Christian study-groups in different parts of the world.

Earlier today, Thomas Wieser has made yet another summary. And tomorrow Philip Potter probably will spell out in his Report the questions raised by these explorations for the mission of the Church in all six continents.

All this is so comprehensive that I have wondered what contribution I could make to the on-going discussion which was not merely a repetition of some of the ideas already canvassed. Therefore, I have decided to do, after discussion with those in charge or the programme-planning, is to speak from within my own situation, the Indian situation, and more particularly the situation of the Director of a Christian Institute engaged in explication the gospel of Christ within and in relation to the Indian situation, and to articulate my own personal understanding of the meaning of human salvation offered in Jesus Christ. If I don't make sense, or make only partial sense, it will be because of the particularist situational and personal approach I am taking.

In 1956, when the National Christian Council of India and the Christian Institute for the study of Society together launched the Study of Rapid Social Change in India, Dr. John Mathai, who was for some time Minister for Finance in Nehru's Government and was at that time head of the State Bank of India, gave the inaugural address. He spoke on the new pattern for the developed and just society which India was seeking to build. He concluded his talk by giving, as a Christian, his own vision of India's future, relating it to the picture we have in the final part of Psalm 144. He said, ". . . in broad idealistic terms, allowing for the fact that the Psalmist lived in a pastoral and primitive agricultural society, there is a great deal

in common between the picture he paints in the 144th Psalm and the society we are trying to evolve:

That our sons may grow up as the young plants and that our daughter may be as the polished corners of the Temple; That our garner may be full and plenteous with all manner of store; That our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets; that our oxen may be strong to labour; That there be no leading into captivity, And no complaining in our streets, Happy are the people that are in such a state, Blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God.

That was the first time that Psalm 144 came alive for me, as expressing the situation of a developing nation like India and voicing the aspirations and expectations of its people for a richer and fuller human life. The dynamism and the struggle, the hope and the despair in the situation are created by these aspirations and the pursuit of what the Psalmist calls happiness. Let us look at the elements included in this prayer:

First, health of body and beauty of form of for the youth. May our sons in their youth "be like plants full grown" (RV) or "stand like tall towers" (NEB). And as for the young women, the religious poet has provided the desirable curves, though they are modelled on temple architecture; they are to be "like sculptured pillars at the corner of a palace" (NEB). Of course this distinction between young men and young women was made before the time of the women's liberation movement! In the modern setting, health and beauty of form and the affirmation of sex in both its romantic and its erotic aspects are essential elements in the expectations of youth. And the youth of a nation cannot have these unless the whole community is concerned about them.

Secondly, the development of material abundance. The prayer is for full barns furnished with "plentiful provision", and for flocks of fat multiplying sheep, and for cattle "fat and sleek" (NEB).

Of course the conception of the Psalmist is confined to agricultural and pastoral productivity. Even the apocalyptic hope of the Church Fathers was confined to this. Papias has given thus: "The day will come, when vines shall grow, each having ten thousand branches, and on each branch ten thousand twigs and on each twig ten thousand shoots and on each shoot ten thousand clusters and in every cluster ten thousand grapes and in like manner a grain of wheat will produce ten thousand stalks . . . But modern India, as John Mathai has said, has extended its goal beyond the green revolution and cattle-wealth to the production also of industrial wealth.

Thirdly, security from aggression and peace on the frontier between the peoples. May there be "no complaining in our streets" (AV), "no cry of distress in our streets" (RV), "no cries of distress in our public places" (NEB). If abundance and peace are not to be accompanied by cries of distress among the people there must be a high quality of community life,

with justice for the poor built into the laws: and the submerged and suppressed groups of the traditional society. (e.g.: the outcastes, the tribals and the women in India), assured of due participation in the structures of power and the processes of decision-making. The elimination of pockets of poverty, distress, and indignity among the people is the goal of community.

People seeking a richer and fuller realisation of the potentialities of their humanity through building a new society which will provide health and plenty, peace and justice—this secular pursuit of happiness is the context within which I must speak of spiritual salvation. This is precisely what the Psalmist does. For, after picturing the society of his dreams, he says:

Happy the people to whom such blessing fall!

Happy the people whose God is the Lord!

The question is whether there is a vital relation between the two—between the happiness which the people realise through building a new and more human society and happiness which they realise through acknowledging the Lord as God.

Here we enter a discussion of the meaning of the word spiritual as it pertains to man as a spiritual being. Man belongs to the animal species and is involved in the processes and needs of organic nature, but what distinguishes man from animal is the knowledge he has that he is so involved, and his awareness of a self which, while involved in nature, also transcends it. It is this self-transcendence which constitutes the spiritual freedom and personal being of man. It does not at any time deny his involvement in the processes of animal nature and its needs, e.g. hunger or sex, but gives this a *spiritual quality*, for the involvement now takes place not within the realm of necessity but within a structure of meaning and sacredness which the self in the freedom of its self-transcendence chooses. Therefore, the involvement becomes for man a responsible act of spiritual self-realisation. Human spirituality, one might say, is the way in which man, in the freedom of his self-transcendence, seeks a structure of ultimate meaning and sacredness within which he can fulfil or realise himself in and through his involvement in the bodily, the material, and the social realities and relations of his life on earth. This means of course that if the structure of meaning and sacredness which men choose is false, a false spirituality results, and instead of self-fulfilment, there is self-disintegration. As Dr. Mathew P. John wrote: "Freudians have said that most, if not all, human actions are coloured by sex broadly defined. We may reverse the statement and say that in man the whole of sexuality is conditioned by humanity, that is, involved with questions of spirit, freedom and sacredness. Nothing that man does can be dissociated from his spirit. Man is not such a combination of spirit and body that can be considered as exclusively belonging to the body and having no reference to the spirit. In all action man acts in his wholeness, and each action may be an exercise of his freedom." (*Changing Pattern of Family in India*, CISRS, pp. 66, 183). The sex-act is a spiritual act involving the spiritual union of two persons, whether within wedlock or outside it. And, as St. Paul says, in either case the two become a unity which leads in the one instance to personal fulfilment and in the other to personal

disintegration. Eric Voeglin has said that "human" society is not merely a fact or an event in the external world but "a cosmion illuminated with meaning from within by the human beings who continually created and bear it as the mode and condition of their self-realisation" (quoted by Gibson Winter in *Social Ethics*, p. 133). I have often quoted Nicholas Berdyaev's statement which says that while the problem of my own bread is a material question, the problem of my neighbour's bread is a spiritual one and that therefore economics is shot through with human spirituality. Human spirituality undergirds all human strivings for health and sex, and development and justice. The only question is whether it is a true or false spirituality, that is whether the structure of ultimate meaning and sacredness which it is committed to is the meaning and sacredness which is truly ultimate, i.e. of God, or simply created by men in their self-centeredness and rejection of God, and therefore idolatrous.

I apologize for this long abstract detour on human spirituality. It was necessary to affirm the vital relation of human spirituality on the one hand to men's bodily and social life and aspirations, and on the other to the choice between the true purpose and false purpose and sacredness of idols which means self-disintegration. Let us go back now to the Psalmist and continue from where we left off. The Psalmist envisages for his people bodily health and material wealth, security from aggression and social justice. He is, however, concerned with these good things as an expression of a certain spiritual relation between the people and God. That is to say, when they are recognised and received as blessings promised by God to His people in His covenant with them, which provides the structure of meaning for their lives, and as means to acknowledge God as the ultimate source of sacredness, then they become witnesses to God and to His salvation of His people.

Similarly, the primary concern of the Christian mission is also with the salvation of human spirituality, with man's right choices in the realm of self-transcendence, and with structures of ultimate meaning and sacredness—not in any pietistic or individualistic isolation, but in relation to and expressed within the dualistic isolation, but in relation to and express within the material, social and cultural revolutions of our time. The secular strivings for fuller human life should be placed and interpreted in their real relation to the ultimate meaning and fulfilment of human life revealed in the Divine Humanity of the Crucified and Risen Jesus Christ, and should be seen as the means to acknowledge and witness to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ as the only God worthy of man's ultimate worship and obedience. When this is done men and their strivings are truly saved and made human, and become sacraments and a foretaste of the ultimate Salvation freely offered by God in Christ to all mankind. "Herein lies the mission of the Church: to participate in the movements of human liberation in our time in such a way as to witness to Jesus Christ as the Source, the Judge and the Redeemer of the human spirituality and its orientation which are at work in these movements, and therefore as the Saviour of Man Today" (p. 163).

Let me acknowledge that the redemption of human spirituality from idolatrous realms of meaning and sacredness has been the primary

concern of Christian mission in the past; only, it was seen in relation to the spirituality and the structure of meaning or sacredness behind the traditional societies. To continue to speak from within the Indian context, Christian missions have preached to the tribal people and villagers the deliverance of the human spirit from the domination of "the elemental spirits of the universe" peopling the sun, moon and stars, mountains, trees and rocks, and from fatalism of poverty; it has sought to shift sacredness from the cow and other animals to the human person; it has grappled with the spiritual demon and behind the caste-system, and challenged communities with the reality of the eucharistic fellowship which transcends castes; it has broken the spiritual halo around the idolatrous asceticism which tended to consider abstinence in matters of food and sex as an instrument of salvation. The prophetic tradition helped to bring about the shift from ceremonial purity to righteousness in historical existence. In fact, the gospel that preached deliverance from those aspects of traditional spirituality which sanctioned the oppressive features of traditional religious and social structures contributed, in no small measure, to the reform of the spirit of Hinduism and the social awakening in India, as well as to the emergence of secular social values and ideologies. And, if today the people of India are committed to strive for the new society as defined by Dr. John Mathai, it is due; in part at least, to the transformation of traditional spirituality made possible by the impact of the gospel of Christ, not only as presented by Christian missions but also as mediated, first through western culture and later through the Indian cultural renaissance.

Of course, even in the Christian mission, not to speak of the movements and attitudes it promoted, the gospel was often present in distorted forms and in association with many western idols. But no historian will deny that the gospel did play a decisive role. That is to say, the spiritual creativity behind today's revolutionary search for a society which harnesses nature through science and technology for human welfare, eliminates poverty and oppression, opens the door of participation in power structures to hitherto submerged groups, and moves towards a fraternity of free and equal persons has its source in part at least, in Christ's salvation of the human spirit. One could speak of it as a new stage in God's process of Creation.

But every new stage in Creation has its Fall; and every creativity in turning to false realms of meaning and sacredness, becomes self-destructive and betrays the human liberation which it seeks and which is promised by Christ within it. The oppressive traditional order then gives place not to a new discipline of personal and social responsibility, but to chaos and to self-seeking individuals and power-hungry groups who have no sense of responsibility for the common good. Affluence is sought as the be-all and end-all of life, and the finer social values are sacrificed. The conquest of nature, carried to its extreme, destroys the sense of stewardship of nature and man's harmony with it. The green revolution and industrial development, which science and technology make possible, instead of increasing the welfare of all, serve to strengthen the forces of exploitation and to increase the gulf between the rich and the poor. Revolutions for justice get

lost in the fury of self-righteousness; they devour their own off-spring and become sources of new oppression. Secularisation, which delivers men from superstitions and oppressive religious institutions and dogmatism, succumbs to the institutionalism and dogmatism of self-sufficient secularism and self-redemptive historicism. Alienated from God in the structure of our spirit and in the resultant fear of ultimate disintegration, we make frantic efforts to achieve self-redemption by creating new religious and salvationist ideologies, only to see our idealism crumbling to the ground, leaving in its wake frustration and disintegration. This is the same old vicious circle of law, sin and death and we are today more conscious of its reality and its power than in any previous period.

It is precisely at this point that the victory of the Cross is relevant. The mission of the Church in this context is to present within the creative liberation movements of our time which the gospel of Christ itself has helped to take shape, and so participate in them as to be able to communicate the genuine gospel, of liberation from the vicious circle of sin and alienation, law and self-righteousness and frustration and death – into the new realm of Christ's New Humanity where there is forgiveness and reconciliation, grace and justification, and renewal movements and eternal life. It is the message that will liberate the liberation movements, from the false spiritual structures of meaning based on idolatrous worship of schemes of self-redemption, and thus redeem their creative impulses from self-destructive tendencies enabling them to achieve their inner rationale of human emancipation. Our message of Christ's Salvation is ever the same; it is the call to men and nations to turn "from idols to serve a living God" who has "translated us from the domain of darkness into the Kingdom of his dear Son" Jesus Christ, in whom we are delivered from the ultimate spiritual insecurities of the self and "made free to love." Today "idols" and "darkness" have new character; and "love" too must have new implications.

My main thesis is finished. Since my context and perspective have been very personal and partial, I have left many aspects of the question of the meaning of Christian Salvation unanswered. But I wish to mention a few points before closing.

Firstly, I have been indifferent, to my mind, to the fruitless debate between the advocates of individual salvation and social salvation. That debate always leaves me cold. My emphasis has been on the salvation of man; and everything of man, his individuality and his collectivity included, has roots in different levels of self-awareness, sense of spiritual freedom and responsibility, and the search for what I have called meaning and sacredness. Individuality is no doubt a very high water-mark of spiritual awareness and creativity but it is a late comer in social history. Patterns of spirituality and search of meaning and sacredness have however informed tribes, ethnic groups and other organised communities, what the Bible calls the "nations", even before the modern age of the liberal individualism has emerged. The Gospel is for the "nations", where it has reached a higher level of self-consciousness has been in the past, approached somewhat differently by Churches and Missions, and rightly so. There is no place for

conflict at this point. Even where the full self-determined individualism seems to have merged strongly, the idolatrous spirituality behind it has made the individual fear freedom, and the realities of class, race, state, nation etc. have acquired new strength and even sacredness, with their own liturgies, ethics of life, accumulated historical pride or ideology of action, which indicates a specific pattern of spirituality to which the gospel of salvation must be addressed. I apologise for speaking of Dean Kelly's *Why Conservative Churches are Growing*, because I haven't had an opportunity to read it myself. All the review I have read speak of the importance of the book and the validity of its emphasis on the necessity of the Churches to provide a structure of meaning for life for the individual. The last "Beazely Bazz" I received has a very laudatory review of the book, but I thought Dr. Beazely's comment at one point was very apt, if it is true to the contents of the book. He says: "Dean Kelly has clearly seen the function of religion for the individual. His view needs to be also applied to the culture which is something more than a collection of individual responses." Beazely sees Dean coming to "the question of cultural dynamics of religion and its sustaining strength and then wears off. Of course no book can expect to deal with everything, but in this kind of book it seems a natural need." The simple fact is that there is no individual entirely isolated from culture; and the relation of spirituality and its search for meaning and sacredness to culture and the gospel of Christ as the centre of meaning around which a culture could be renewed, is too vital to be left out.

Secondly, will the creative processes and the liberation movements in history ever be redeemed from idolatrous structures of meaning and saved by Christ to the extent that we can hope for a historical time of relatively high degree of human emancipation, this side of the eschatological hope of the final salvation? The answer to this depends upon the depth of the response of faith. In fact with deeper faith which opens the creative processes to the redemptive role of Christ and the Holy Spirit at work in history, salvation must become more immanent. This, to my mind, is the significance of the emergence in Christian theology of "utopia" and "historical future" as contrasted with the eschatological consummation "beyond history" and "after life". One version of the "beyond history" and "after life" which is very current among Christians involved in political movement of liberation, is to say that Divine Forgiveness in Christ and the Fellowship of forgiven sinners, can be experienced only "beyond politics" and "after the power-struggles" of politics between the oppressed and the oppressors; Politics of liberation is conceived to be entirely inevitable class-war or inevitable international war. I have no doubt necessities of sinful nature play with their part on all power-struggles and must be reckoned with by these concerned with politics of liberation. I am not so Utopian as to deny the inevitability of accumulated sin in social history. But I do not think the message of Divine Forgiveness and the *Koinonia* in Christ created by it can be relegated to a realm "beyond" or "after" politics. Just as in the case of individuals, in the case of classes, nations and races also. Divine Forgiveness and the community of forgiveness can and must break sinful necessities and transform it and make the struggle more human. There are infinite

possibilities here of the eschatological becoming historical even political. I cannot conceive of any moment when the two will be continuous. But as I said, it depends upon our faith whether we make the discontinuity more tragic or less. In the biblical picture, the Anti-Christ is most active just before the coming of Christ. This should be true within the historical process as much as at the end of history.

I have spoken of choice between God as revealed in Jesus Christ and man made idols in the realm of structures of ultimate meaning and sacredness. This does not, and should not be understood to mean a choice between Christianity and other religions. In fact God and idols cut across them. The criterion is openness and response to the meaning of life and sense of the transcendent as revealed in the choice between Religion and Atheism. Religion may be idolatrous, and atheism may be more than a denial of idols and the affirmation of an undefined transcendence like the unknown God of the Athenians which is open to the reality of the transcendent humanity of the Cross. Like the atheism of Jawaharlal Nehru or some Marxian humanists of Europe at present, this is the Christian rationale for a dialogue on salvation with men of other religious faith and secular ideologies.

Indeed, we are living at a time when we are deeply conscious of pluralism in the world-pluralism of human situations and needs, of varied religions and secular cultures, with different traditions of metaphysics, ideologies and world-views, in terms of which Christians themselves seek to express their commitment to and confession of Christ. So much so any kind of a unity in the doctrine of Christ or of Salvation in Christ, which has been the goal of traditional Christian Churches, is to my mind impossible even of conception except in religious imperialistic terms. As a historian of religion, Wilfred Cantwell Smith has recently said that on the grounds also of the loss of authority of the established Churches today, "the old idea of a unified or systematic Christian truth has gone. For this the ecumenical movement is too late," leaving a situation of "open variety, of optional alternatives" everyone choosing what suits him best. (*Questions of Religious Truth*, pp. 34, 35). Then, of course, the question what kind of criterion of Christian faith can we lay down in a pluralistic age, is sharply raised. Dr. Hans Kung when he visited India recently, said, that the criterion of faith could be that the believer should in some form acknowledge the Person of Jesus as "decisive for life", that is to say, to translate in my terms, decisive for the knowledge of Ultimate Reality and the realisation of the ultimate meaning of life and its fulfilment here and hereafter.

If the above is true, and salvation in Christ is conceded outside the Church, what is the significance of the Church? I have assumed the role of the Church as the essential agent of mission. But what is the Church? How should it be structured to participate in the various religious and secular communities and in the creative processes and liberation movements so that it may promote its mission of salvation. This needs to be more fully explored. But let me just list a few fragmentary and rather unconnected ideas. (1) I am personally convinced that the gathering for the study of the

Word and the celebration of the eucharist is the centre of the Church's fellowship, but whether the fellowship should be a separate religious community among other religious communities, with most of the primary levels of social living of the believers confined to the Christian circle, and even with a Christian law governing their conduct recognised by the State as it is today in many countries of Asia, and surely in India, is a moot question. (2) On a situation like India where Christian conversion has come to mean a transfer of allegiance from one culture, and juridical community to another, rather than from idols to God, through Christ, and where baptism has become almost like the old circumcision, how can baptism regain its true meaning of spiritual conversion? Is it by considering baptism a condition of membership of the Church or a privilege of membership? (3) Recently Wilfred Cantwell Smith has raised the question whether the word "Christian" should be considered an adjective or a noun. Were the believers at Antioch first called "Christian" to denote a new quality of faith or "Christians" to denote separate communal identity? The answer to it has great implications for the nature of our mission and the methods and goals of our mission. (4) My friend the late E.V. Mathew, often raised the question (Secular Witness of E.V. Mathew: Introduced by J. Russel Chandran, CISRS) whether it is not better, for the sake of the Christian mission, that the Church form a new sect with a prophetic vocation within the movements of cultural creativity and social liberation, rather than try to bring about one organised Church of India, which may only mean several small ghettos joining forces to form one large ghetto. Here the question is whether we have really grasped the nature of unity of a missionary Church. These are rather suggestive lines of theological exploration regarding the nature and structure of the Church in the light of its mission of salvation.

Here let me stop. I leave all unanswered questions for this conference of experts to tackle.

Document Twenty:

An excerpt from Section II of the Bangkok Report as adopted by the Assembly.

SALVATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN A DIVIDED HUMANITY

1. THE MISSION OF GOD

In the power of the Spirit Christ is sent from God, the Father, into this divided world "to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of God's favour." (Luke 4:18). Through Christ men and women are liberated and empowered with all their energies and possibilities to participate in his Messianic work. Through his death on the Cross and his resurrection from the dead hope of salvation becomes realistic and reality hopeful. He liberates from the prison of guilt. He takes the inevitability out of history. In him the Kingdom of God and of free people is at hand. Faith in Christ releases in man creative freedom for the salvation of the world, He who separates himself from the mission of God separates himself from salvation.

The salvation which Christ brought, and in which we participate, offers a comprehensive wholeness in this divided life. We understand salvation as newness of life—the unfolding true humanity in the fulness of God (Col. 2:9). It is salvation of the soul and the body, of the individual and society, mankind and "the groaning creation" (Rom. 8:19). As evil works both in personal life and in exploitative social structures which humiliate humankind, so God's justice manifests itself both in the justification of the sinner and in social and political justice. As guilt is both individual and corporate so God's liberation power changes both persons and structures. We have to overcome dichotomies in our thinking between soul and body, person and society, human kind and creation. Therefore we see the struggles for economic justice, political freedom and cultural renewal as elements in the total liberation of world through the mission of God. This liberation is finally fulfilled when "death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:55). This comprehensive notion of salvation demands of the whole of the people of God a matching comprehensive approach to their participation in salvation.

2. SALVATION AND LIBERATION OF CHURCHES AND CHRISTIANS

Many Christians who for Christ's sake are involved in economic and political struggles against injustice and oppression ask themselves and the churches what it means today to be a Christian and a true church. Without the salvation of the churches from their captivity in the interests of dominating classes, races and nations, there can be no saving church. Without liberation of the churches and Christians from their complicity

with structural injustice and violence, there can be no liberating church for mankind. Every church, all Christians face the question whether they serve Christ and His saving work alone, or at the same time also the powers of inhumanity. "No man can serve two masters, God and Mammon" (Matt. 6:24). We must confess our misuse of the name of Christ by the accommodation of the churches to oppressive powers, by our self-interested apathy, lovelessness, and fear. We are seeking the true community of Christ which works and suffers for his Kingdom. We seek the charismatic church which activates energies for salvation (1 Cor. 12). We seek the church which initiates actions for liberation and supports the work of other liberating groups without calculating self-interest. We seek a church which is the catalyst of God's saving work in the world, a church which is not merely the refuge of the saved but a community serving the world in the love of Christ.

3. SALVATION IN FOUR DIMENSIONS

With the comprehensive notion of salvation, we see the saving work in four social dimensions:

- a) Salvation works in the struggle for economic justice against the exploitation of people by people.
- b) Salvation works in the struggle for human dignity against political oppression of human beings by their fellow men.
- c) Salvation works in the struggle for solidarity against the alienation of person from person.
- d) Salvation works in the struggle of hope against despair in personal life.

In the process of salvation, we must relate these four dimensions to each other. There is no economic justice without political freedom, no political freedom without economic justice. There is no social justice without solidarity, no solidarity without social justice. There is no justice, no human dignity, no solidarity without hope, no hope without justice, dignity and solidarity. But there are historical priorities according to which salvation is anticipated in one dimension first, be it the personal, the political or the economic dimension. These points of entry differ from situation to situation in which we work and suffer. We should know that such anticipations are not the whole of salvation, and must keep in mind the other dimensions while we work. Forgetting this denies the wholeness of salvation. Nobody can do in any particular situation everything at the same time. There are various gifts and tasks, but there is one spirit and one goal. In this sense, it can be said, for example, that salvation is the peace of the people in Vietnam, independence in Angola, justice and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and release from the captivity of power in the North Atlantic community, or personal conversion in the release of a submerged society into hope, or of new life styles amidst corporate self-interest and lovelessness.

4. MEANS AND CRITERIA OF SAVING WORK

Speaking of salvation realistically, we cannot avoid the question of proper means. The means are different in the four dimensions referred to.

We will produce no economic justice without participation in, and use of, economic power. We will win no political freedom without participation, and discriminating use of, political power. We cannot overcome cultural alienation without the use of cultural influence. In this framework we discussed the physical use of liberating violence against oppressive violence. The Christian tradition is ambiguous on this question because it provides no justification of violence and no rejection of political power. Jesus' commandment to love one's enemy presupposes enmity. One should not become the enemy of one's enemy, but should liberate him from his enmity (Matt. 5:43-48). This commandment warns against the brutality of violence and reckless disregard of life. But in the cases of institutionalized violence, structural injustice and legalized immorality, love also involves the right of resistance and the duty "to repress tyranny" (Scottish Confession) with responsible choice among the possibilities we have. One then may become guilty for love's sake, but can trust in the forgiveness of guilt. Realistic work for salvation proceeds through confrontation, but depends, everywhere and always, on reconciliation with God.

Document Twenty-One:

An excerpt from Section III, Churches Renewed in Mission, Bangkok Assembly 1973.

CHURCHES IN RELATIONSHIP

1. The issues we are dealing with are not new. We are working on an old agenda about which much has been said but too little has been done. We could produce a fine report by simply lifting paragraphs from the reports of previous world and regional meetings. Our basic problem is how to break free from the frustrating cycle of repeated statements which are received, filed and not acted upon.

2. 'Partnership in mission' remains an empty slogan. Even where autonomy and equal partnership have been achieved in a formal sense, the actual dynamics are such as to perpetuate relationships of domination and dependence.

3. The power relationships between mission agencies in Europe, North America and Australia and the churches in other areas to which they relate, reflect the economic inequalities between the nations concerned. This is one reason—though not the primary one—why mission agencies must see the struggle for international economic justice as one of their urgent tasks today.

4. The very idea of power—conceived as the authority to administer funds and deploy personnel—is alien to a true understanding of the Church. The simple transfer of power from one church to another is not the answer. The emergence of 'power elites' either in sending or receiving churches distorts the life of the church and hinders the fulfilment of its mission.

5. What we must seek is rather a mature relationship between churches. Basic to such a relationship is mutual commitment to participate in Christ's mission in the world. A precondition for this is that each church involved in the relationship should have a clear realization of its own identity. This cannot be found in isolation, however, for it is only in relationship with others that we discover ourselves.

6. First of all, each church should use every means to express its unity with other churches in its own area, thus discovering their common identity as the People of God. Only then can it realize a mature relationship with churches in other countries.

7. No particular church can claim full autonomy, for we must all acknowledge our interdependence within the world Christian fellowship. But each church must be free to be itself within its own national or cultural

millieu and to respond fully to the movement of the Holy Spirit within that milieu. Any structure or pattern of relationship which hinders this must be seen as impeding rather than helping the mission of Christ.

8. A church which is the bearer of a gospel of liberation to others must first be liberated from all that hinders its true self-expression or robs it of a true sense of its own responsibility. Salvation Today in this context means the liberation of churches to be their authentic selves in mission in their own milieu.

9. It is not only the traditionally receiving churches that need this liberation. Sending churches are equally in need of it. Each church has a responsibility to help the other towards a full realization of liberty in Christ.

10. We have considered some of the ways in which existing structures and patterns of relationship militate against the self realization of the people of God in mission. Sometimes a pattern which alleviates one problem aggravates another. In some countries a number of churches and their mission agencies have set up an inter-church structure through which they relate in common to a church or churches in another country. This makes possible an ecumenical approach to mission on one side. However, the power of several churches thus concentrated brings undue pressure to bear on the partner church. Often such bodies take unilateral actions without adequate consultation with other bodies affected by them. Sometimes they draw one church in a given country into relationship with themselves without consulting other churches in the area, whether through the Christian Council or through other means, as to the implications of such a relationship for the cooperation of all the churches in the area in mission.

11. We have also examined certain recent developments which point in a hopeful direction. Some mission agencies are making provision for representation on their governing bodies from the churches to which they relate. The representation should be more than token if it is to be really meaningful. There should be full participation even in the setting of the agenda for mission. And if genuine reciprocity is to be realized the representation should be extended to those bodies which govern the life and work of the church to which the mission agency itself belongs.

12. The Evangelical Community for apostolic Action merits consideration as a possible model for action. The Paris Evangelical Missionary Society has been dissolved and replaced by a larger community representing churches in Africa, the Pacific, France, Italy and Switzerland. Its purpose is to carry forward and transform the former missionary work of the Paris Society and to undertake new enterprises together, e.g. in Dahomey and France. The Council formed by the presidents of the participating churches decides on the action to be undertaken and the use and deployment of funds and personnel placed at the disposal of the Community by the various churches. The Council also engages in theological reflection, which, for example, has resulted in directing questions to the churches of Europe regarding their own work and priorities.

13. We have also examined more radical solutions, such as the recent proposal for a moratorium in the sending of funds and personnel for a set period of time. The whole debate on the moratorium springs from our failure to relate to one another in a way which does not dehumanize. The moratorium would enable the receiving church to find its identity, set its own priorities and discover within its own fellowship the resources to carry out its authentic mission. It would also enable the sending church to rediscover its identity in the context of the contemporary situation.

14. It is not proposed that the moratorium be applied in every country. Missionary policy should be adapted to the particular circumstances in each area. In some parts of the world other alternatives to bilateralism should be considered. In devising new strategies for mission it is essential that all partners look together at the total challenge to mission. Churches which have been preoccupied with their bilateral relationships may find new areas for common action.

15. In some situations, however, the moratorium proposal, painful though it may be for both sides, may be the best means of resolving a present dilemma and advancing the mission of Christ.

Document Twenty-Two:

From the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism Bangkok Assembly, 1973.

A LITANY OF PRAISE AND PRAYER

O God,

You have called us out of death, we Praise You!

Send us back with the bread of life, We pray You!

You have turned us around, We praise You!

Keep us faithful, We pray You!

You have begun a good work, We praise You!

Complete your salvation in us, We pray You!

You have made us a chosen people, We praise You!

Make us one with all people, We pray You!

You have taught us your law, We praise You!

Change us by the Spirit's Power, We pray You!

You have sent your Son in one place and time, We praise You!

Be present in every time and place, We pray You!

Your Kingdom has come in His salvation, We praise You!

Let it come always among us, We pray You! Amen.

It was the drug scene, you were lost and wretched, and you put your hand in the hand of the man who calmed the sea.

I rejoice with you, my sister.

You are turned on by the exciting and ever-deepening insights of Scripture.

I rejoice with you, my brother.

You were converted from shallowness to mystic depths through discipline and meditation.

I rejoice with you, my sister.

You were a poor Mexican baptized by the Holy Spirit and the Blood of the Lamb.

I rejoice with you, my brother.

You were an intellectual Chinese who broke through the barrier between yourself and the dung-smelling peasant.

I rejoice with you, my sister.

You found all the traditional language meaningless and became " an atheist by the grace of God."

I rejoice with you, my brother.

Out of the depths of your despair and bondage you cried and in your cry was poignant hope.

I rejoice with you, my sister.

You were oppressed and fled to the liberated area and dedicated your life to revolutionary struggle.

I rejoice with you, my brother.

You were oppressed and put down by male authority and in spite of sneers and snarl persevered in your quest for dignity.

I rejoice with you, my sister.

For all my brothers and sisters who have entered and struggle for social and spiritual liberation—I rejoice.

Victory and grace to unto you.

Document Twenty-Three:

An excerpt from an article (chapter) in The Evangelical Response to Bangkok, edited by Dr. Ralph D. Winter, Pasadena: William Carey Library Publisher. Used by permission.

SALVATION TODAY: A CRITICAL REPORT

By Manuel Gaxiola

A man like the writer, born in a Church that grew from nothing to more than fifty thousand members and one thousand churches in half a century of active preaching, very naively would expect that a meeting of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism would concern itself with the practical matters of establishing churches, sending missionaries, winning converts, etc., but, alas, mission is not understood in the same terms and evangelism, criticized for its "triumphalism," is seen as another form of "imperialism." This is very hard to understand to a poor Mexican from a Church that has even gone to other countries and has little or nothing to offer the people there except the promises of the Bible, which in every case include "justice, peace and joy inspired by the Holy Spirit? (Romans 14:17). We see, then, that our idea of mission is quite different from that of the CWME, although in Bangkok we found among the delegates many who hold an evangelical position and believe as Beyerhaus (1971:17) does, that non-Christians are to be *converted*, new churches to be *established*, and the name and plan of salvation of God to be *glorified*.

Granting that this difference of both opinion and goals exists and which is to learn what changes the future will bring, whether it be a deeper and wider divergence or a closer convergence between the two ideas of mission, we would like to offer some comments on three specific points which reveal a certain weakness of the CWME in particular and of the WCC in general.

There is, in the first place, an obsession with political and social structures and action which are identified as Christian mission. The idea is to change everything that oppresses man and the implication is that once those agents of oppression disappear or are transformed, man will be really free. As a result, one finds himself among people who speak the same language and offer the same criticisms and solutions of any leftist-oriented politician who praises Revolution (in whatever terms it may be described), guerrillas and violence. "All evils come from Imperialism and all good will come with the Revolution. The people who hold this view are not a majority but they are more vocal than the others who do not take an extreme position. Although our words are not intended as a condemnation of leftist

ideas just because they are leftist nor as a tacit approval of Imperialism (Mexico has had its share of suffering in this regard), we do want to go to the heart of the matter and declare that the approach of the CWME is wrong because it forgets two things: 1) It will do man no good if after he is liberated from those oppressing structures he remains internally and spiritually the same unregenerate man. 2) This was not the approach used by either Christ or the apostles.

In regard to doing good, Christ had at his disposal far greater means than any of us today: He could feed the poor and heal the sick without the need to control the means of production and without having to build hospitals. The apostles, and especially Paul who dealt more with Gentiles and slaves, could have clamored for a political liberation and for the destruction of structures like slavery and despotism which were perhaps more oppressive than they are now. They saw, however, that the kingdom of God would not be fully realized in this world and looked forward to an apocalyptic consummation which apparently the WCC does not expect or perhaps does not consider relevant in view of man's poverty and disease. What we say must not be taken as a sign that a Christian must abstain from political participation, but must be realistic in what he expects in this world and therefore must act according to sound priorities.

One would also think that some people from the CWME are trying to impose these ideas on the Churches of the world, but we can discern that up to now the Churches have obtained only meager results. In fact, we have reason to believe that even those people who deliberately and almost exclusively adhere to this plan of action are obtaining meager results. In the discussion of the Vietnam issue, an American delegate very candidly admitted that there is a cleavage between the left-oriented clergymen and the majority of the members of their churches as indicated by the overwhelming re-election of President Nixon. If in countries that enjoy absolute freedom and Churches have millions of members we see little results when the church or its clergymen engage in this type of activity, what can we expect in countries where freedom is restricted and the church is a tiny minority? Especially in these latter cases the church must not dissipate its energy in political or social action, but must give priority to its main task which is gaining men and enrolling them in the kingdom of God.

Our Second point has to be with a certain attitude, prevalent in WCC circles and very noticeable in Bangkok: It wants to ignore or discredit the great gatherings that are taking place in many parts of the world, including the work of thousands of missionaries *from the Third World*. The millions who have become Protestants, especially Pentecostals, in Latin America, the great number of converts among the Muslims in Indonesia, the phenomenal growth of the Kimbanguist Church, which is itself a member of the WCC etc., are dismissed as mere growth in numbers of members that has little relevance to the task of the church. Although China was very much in the delegates' mind and a special plenary session was devoted to it, nobody would think of the 800 million Chinese as likely candidates to accept the gospel nor would they think that God can open a

way so that many Christian churches can be established there. In fact when this possibility was mentioned by the writer to a high official of the CWME, he quickly snapped: "Leave the Chinese alone. They don't need us." This is in line with thinking in terms of a salvation in material and political terms and the idea, literally expressed in the same session by an American delegate who said: "Chairman Mao is God's Messiah to the Chinese." If they have been liberated by Mao, apparently that is liberation enough and they do not need the gospel.

This, in turn, takes us to our third point. As judged by Bangkok, the WCC ignores the great opportunities that we now have in regard to the gospel, the widespread hunger in many souls for salvation in specific spiritual terms, in relation to sinning men and a saving God. In actual fact the meeting was permeated by pessimism, the feeling that we are at the end of the missionary task as formerly conceived, the idea that the church itself needs to be saved, which sounds so strange to those who believe that Christians are the salt of the earth.

THE FUNCTIONAL STRUCTURE

Our final observation has to do with the functioning of the Conference as observed personally.

As is well known, the original core of member Churches of the WCC was made up of Protestant Churches, and at the beginning it was thought of as a Protestant organization. This is not so anymore because there are now Orthodox Churches that belong. The Roman Catholic Church is not officially a member of it and people wonder if it will ever join, but actually this is not necessary, for at Bangkok there were Catholic priests in practically every group, one of them directed the meeting I have just mentioned on meditation, a nun was in charge of the art workshop and at least one chaired a plenary meeting. It was very interesting to notice that the representative from the Secretariat for promoting Christian Unity was more biblical in his speech to the meeting than were many Protestants in their addresses.

We also wonder what the future holds for this organization if, as has happened with Protestant organizations before, it falls into the hands of radicals or people who are actually divorced from the life of the Churches, but who at the same time enjoy their financial support. When one sees on the floor an activist from Central America who is interested in nothing but "Revolution" or hears an avowed atheist from Italy who practically makes a mockery of all religious beliefs but at the same time, and according to the grapevine, is provided with ecumenical funds for several projects, one cannot help but wonder what is coming next.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion and in all charity we can only say in our personal response to the Salvation Today Conference that we fully agree with Paul's estimate of the proclamation of Christ:

Some, indeed, proclaim Christ in a jealous and quarrelsome spirit; others proclaim him in true goodwill, and these are moved by love for me; they know that it is to defend the Gospel that I am where I am. But the others, moved by personal rivalry, present Christ from mixed motives, meaning to stir up fresh trouble for me as I lie in prison. What does it matter? One way or another, in pretence or sincerity, Christ is set forth, and for that I rejoice (Philippians 1:15-18. New English Bible).

However, we cannot help the feeling of dismay at the theological direction the CWME seems inevitably following. Knowing some of the participants personally, fully aware of their earnestness and sincerity as well as their kindness, it would be regrettable to find that their course is not guided by the Word of God, for we cannot help but remember also that anything that is not built on the solid rock of God's Word will collapse.