



Prospects and Problems in Global Evangelization

JAMES A. SCHERER

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Chicago, Illinois

In this survey of global prospects for evangelism, “evangelization” and “world mission” will be taken to mean substantially the same thing. Despite differences of nuance there is now little to distinguish them, and it is striking that conciliar Protestants, conservative evangelicals and Roman Catholics have increasingly adopted the same word to describe their own comprehensive efforts to witness to the Gospel among all peoples. This brings us full circle, linguistically speaking, to the beginning of Jesus’ ministry in Nazareth when the evangelist described him as “proclaiming the Gospel of God,” announcing the coming of the Kingdom, and inviting people to repent and believe the Gospel (Mark 1:14-15). This linguistic circle was interrupted sometime in the sixteenth century when terms like “missions” and “missionaries” came to be applied exclusively to persons who crossed oceans or other boundaries and went to distant lands to preach and teach the Gospel to non-Christians. Since that time no one who stayed at home could qualify as a missionary! The term “evangelism” was then reserved for efforts within the confines of Christendom to revive the faith of nominal Christians or to recall erring brethren to the fold. It is fortunate that the good biblical root “evangelize” is now being restored to its original usage, because it is relatively free of the overtones of cultural and political imperialism long associated with “foreign missions.” Let us begin with a brief sketch of the current world evangelistic situation.

I. THE NEW EVANGELISTIC SITUATION

Startling differences exist between the evangelistic situation today and the one which prevailed a generation ago. If one pushes the comparison back to 1910, the year of the great Edinburgh Missionary Conference, the contrast is even more vivid.

1. “Christendom” is now a thing of the past. It is fashionable to say that we live in a post-Christendom situation. The grip of Christianity on customs, mores, laws, morality and education is a thing of the past. Few, if any, established churches in the old sense of the word remain, even in Europe. Churches must appeal for popular support, they cannot take it for granted. Morality and church

attendance cannot be legislated. There are some surviving remnants of the past—collection of church taxes by state authorities, and the requirement of religious education in many European state-supported schools—but even these are more and more called into question.

2. Colonialism, too, in the old sense of the term, is dead. With the liquidation five years ago of the world’s oldest surviving colonial empire—that of Portugal—the system of European

expansion that saw Christianity exported to the lands of Asia, Africa, the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and North America, there to be protected under the colonial umbrella of various European powers, has come to an end. Churches formed by western missions—e.g., in Papua New Guinea or Tanzania—now confront an urgent need to detach themselves from western missionary subservience, to become self-reliant and indigenous in their own environment, and to strengthen their own cultural identity. To appeal to Christianity as a western faith is to risk calling it into contempt in many parts of the world.

3. In the last sixty years more than 1.4 billion persons, or approximately one-third of the population of the world, have been transferred from the domain of agrarian feudalism or western colonialism to Marxism-Leninism, or its East Asian variant, Maoism. The atheistic ideology of “scientific socialism” has replaced the teachings of Christianity or of some traditional religion as the dominant pattern of thought in society. While the majority of persons living in communist countries may not be professing atheists, their abrupt removal from the spheres of Christendom and traditional religion constitutes a new element in the evangelistic situation. Since World War II communism in some form has spread from the Soviet Union to Eastern Europe, the Far East, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and its furthest extent may not yet have been reached.

4. The decisive new factor for world Christianity in the past three decades is the rapid emergence of third world Christianity. Above all in Black Africa, where Christianity may well become the majority religion by the year 2000, to a significant degree also in Korea, Indonesia, Oceania, Northeast India and several Latin American countries, there has been a rapid growth of Christian community. This tilt toward the south has led some observers to speculate that the real centers of Christian initiative and dynamism in the twenty-first century may shift away from the North Atlantic countries to the vibrant Christian churches of the third world. The former “mission territories” would then become the active centers of world mission and evangelism. The rapid expansion of Christian community in the above named areas has imposed heavy burdens of ministry and pastoral care on local churches, frequently beyond their means. The situation is underscored by the poverty of many of these churches, and their lack of a strong tradition of ministry.

5. In the North Atlantic region, moreover, still the institutional and financial stronghold of an older Christendom, some negative trends can be observed, along with some positive ones. In the United States, beginning about 1962, there occurred a steady loss of members in virtually all mainline Protestant denominations which has only recently been halted. Lutherans have managed to stabilize their membership, but there is no expectation of future long-term numerical gains. In many European regional churches, a phenomenon known as “minorization” has occurred, both through voluntary withdrawals and casual dropping

out. The dwindling strength of these churches is largely masked by their tax-supported wealth, extensive church bureaucracies, and continuing high levels of baptism and confirmation. The younger generation is by no means negative to some presentations of religion, but nowhere is it a disposable group at the beck and call of church leaders. Few churches can boast of “successful” youth programs. Alternative religious philosophies and cults continue to make heavy inroads among western youth and to cut into active Christian participation.

6. Considering that the North Atlantic region, and particularly the United States, has been

the heartland of missionary and evangelistic activity for the past 150 years, the present situation presents a picture of marked decline from the organizational confidence and theological certainty which marked the period of the Edinburgh Conference of 1910. That mood of optimism was created by Dwight L. Moody's great evangelistic campaigns after the Civil War in American cities, and it led to the spiritual explosion known as the "Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions." Under John R. Mott's guidance, the great missionary conference which sought to bring about the "evangelization of the world in this generation" took place in 1910. In its wake have come two world wars plus Korea and Vietnam, a global depression, threatened recessions provoked in part by an international energy crisis, and changing political alignments. Overseas missionary enlistments by mainline denominations have plummeted to a fraction of their former levels, and large scale evangelistic campaigns are being abandoned by mainline denominations as ineffective. Basic theological questions are asked about the validity of world mission and evangelism; even conversion has for some become a dirty word.

From this brief survey it may be concluded that the favorable socioeconomic, political and cultural preconditions for the nineteenth century missionary enterprise have been radically altered. At the same time, the solid motivation undergirding both world mission and evangelism, stemming from awakening movements, pietism and the revival tradition of the past, have been seriously undermined. The neat bifurcation of the task into "evangelism" at home and "missions" overseas, as noted earlier, has also broken down. In 1977 the Lutheran World Federation Sixth Assembly, meeting in Dar-es-Salaam, added a new term to an already confused glossary when it called for the "reevangelization" of nominally Christian people who are baptized members of large folk churches.

In response to the changed evangelistic situation described above, there has been an apparent convergence among a wide spectrum of Christians—those affiliated with the World Council of Churches and regional conciliar movements, conservative evangelicals identified with the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, and Roman Catholics—about what the new shape of evangelism implies. M. M. Thomas of India, then Moderator of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, could report to the Fifth Assembly of the WCC at Nairobi (1975) that the "theological convergence [between these movements] is very striking."¹ He found that convergence at three points: (1) an emphasis on the

¹M. M. Thomas in *Breaking Barriers: Nairobi 1975. The Official Report of the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Nairobi, 23 November-10 December 1975*. Ed. D. M. Paton (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), p. 231.

whole gospel for the whole person in the whole world; (2) the effort by all groups to relate evangelism to the identity of the church and to its growth, renewal and unity; and (3) the recognition that evangelism must relate itself to the realities of the contemporary world, and especially to nascent cultures and religions and the cries for justice in society. He took this broad recognition of the comprehensive nature of the gospel, of the church as sign and bearer of salvation, and of the secular context within which the witness to the eschatological hope is given, as constituting a cluster of affirmations on which there was growing agreement. Thomas found the remaining differences to lie at the following points. What is the relation between the personal, social and cosmic dimensions of salvation offered in Jesus Christ? What is the nature

of Christian action within history which expresses the eschatological hope, in the light of the expectation of the Kingdom, and what future may faith realistically expect and work for in history? What is the focus of identity of the Church as the bearer of salvation?²

Indeed, if one examines the texts of the Lausanne Covenant, adopted by the International Congress on World Evangelization (1974); the declaration of the Fourth Roman Synod of Bishops on “Evangelization in Today’s World” (1974), along with Pope Paul VI’s Apostolic Exhortation “*Evangelii Nuntiandi*” (1975); and the Report of Section I, “Confessing Christ Today,” of the WCC Fifth Assembly at Nairobi (1975), there are some striking convergences of language.³ But those convergences, on closer examination, may prove to be superficial. What seems true is that evangelization has become a priority concern of churches, missions and ecumenical organizations across the spectrum. Yet the cleavages between the groups remain deep and substantive, and recent developments indicate that divergence and disagreement rages over what evangelization really is, how it is done, what it seeks, and who is to do it. A look at the recent Melbourne and Pattaya conferences, and an overview of Roman Catholic and world Lutheran efforts related to evangelization, will help to place these divergences into perspective.

II. THE CHALLENGE OF MELBOURNE

The first of the 1980 meetings on evangelization was the World Council of Churches Conference on World Mission and Evangelism meeting at Melbourne, Australia, May 12-24. It included 250 delegates chosen by regional member councils or hand-picked by the Central Committee, plus 400 advisors, fraternal representatives, observers, staff, press and stewards. The C.W.M.E. is the lineal successor to the first world missionary conference at Edinburgh in 1910 and has as its continuing aim “to assist the Christian Community in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, by word and deed, to the whole world to the end that all may believe in him and be saved.” Melbourne provides a good opportunity for viewing missions and evangelism from the standpoint of conciliar groups.

On the positive side it must be affirmed that Melbourne was a model of diversity and inclusiveness, with balanced delegations from all six continents, delegate quotas having been set at 30% for women and 25% for youth, about

²*Ibid.*, pp. 232-233.

³Cf. texts as found in *Mission Trends No.2: Evangelization*, ed. G. H. Anderson and T. F. Stransky (Paulist Press & Eerdmans, 1975).

thirty Eastern Orthodox delegates and some ten Roman Catholic observers. The selection of the theme, “Your Kingdom Come,” was right on target, and helped to move the discussion away from bureaucratic church-centered concerns in the direction of the agenda of God’s Kingdom. Universal praise was heard for the Bible study, done in 25 cross-sectional groups meeting daily, and based on thematic materials from the petitions of the Lord’s Prayer as prepared by Professor Krister Stendahl. Plenary worship, in addition to being innovative and creative, evoked a mood of prayerful intercession and expectation for the coming of the Kingdom. The four section reports on “Good News to the Poor,” “The Kingdom of God and Human Struggles,” “The Church Witnesses to the Kingdom,” and “Christ, Crucified and Risen, Challenges Human Power,” provided numerous opportunities to demonstrate the contextual character of mission in

response to situations of oppression, systemic violence, violation of human rights, and resurgent religious consciousness (e.g., Islam). The conference message enunciated the Gospel of the Kingdom which “comes to the poor and in them generates the power to affirm their human dignity, liberation and hope.” It sketched a Christology based on a Christ who was laid in a manger, crucified outside the gate, who surrendered his power, and exercised his healing authority among marginated and oppressed people on the periphery. A section on Eucharist and mission developed the notion of the unity of Christ and his people in their sharing in the symbols of his life and death and their acceptance of his vocation.

Every conference has its enthusiastic supporters and vocal critics, and Melbourne was no exception. Criticisms vary not only from person to person but also in keeping with confessional background, race, sex and nationality. In view of the wide background of professions and church relationships represented, criticisms will also vary according to the personal expectations of the participants. Those looking for specific guidance for the practice of missions and evangelism—e.g., mission administrators—found little that they could apply to their ongoing tasks. Evangelical observers were disappointed in the relatively few and marginal references to the need to continue the proclamation of the Gospel among those who have not heard, or do not name the name, of Jesus Christ. Melbourne offered, in that sense, no summons to evangelize the three billion. Persons looking for overall balance felt that at Melbourne the context—proclaimed ad infinitum in action reports on oppression and case studies on militarism and trans-national corporations, and dramatized in East-West squabbles over a resolution on Afghanistan—at times overwhelmed and swallowed up the task. Some western participants were heard to complain about the positive ideological bias evident in references to countries with “centrally planned economies” (a euphemism for socialism!) in contrast to the rather indiscriminating polemic against capitalism and consumerism, especially by third world participants. The unspoken assumption of some delegates—that the primary test of the church’s participation in mission and evangelism is its support for societal transformation and its encouragement to liberation movements—led to a too easy equation between mission and political “works-righteousness.” Some delegates relished the politicized definition of mission, some tolerated it, and others abhorred it.

To put Melbourne in broad ecumenical context, one must commend its plea for integrity and its refusal to do mission outside a relation to the context of third

world poverty and social injustice. Melbourne added a new chapter to the meaning of the gospel’s wholeness, especially for the poor and the marginated. It said little or nothing about mission methods or evangelism strategies, but it did contribute to the reinterpretation of the missionary gospel. Its divergence from Pattaya will be seen in what follows.

III. THE VISION OF PATTAYA

The second of the 1980 meetings on evangelization was the Consultation on World Evangelization (COWE) called by the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization at Pattaya, a beach resort in Thailand, June 16-27. Of the 900 participants, some 650 were voting delegates nominated by the Lausanne Committee while others represented observers, staff and press. It is estimated that 55% of the participants were westerners, 45% from the third world. The Lausanne

Committee itself consists of 50 world evangelical leaders named at the Lausanne Congress of 1974 to safeguard and promote the purposes of the movement and to implement the Lausanne Covenant. The expressed purposes of the Pattaya consultation were:

(1) to seek fresh vision and power for the missionary task; (2) to assess the present state of world evangelization, its progress and hindrances; (3) to complete a study of theological and strategic issues related to world evangelization; (4) to develop specific evangelistic strategies related to different unreached peoples; and (5) to review the mandate of the Lausanne Committee. The basic viewpoint of this consultation is expressed in the first objective of the Thailand Statement, which reads:

We have considered before him and under his word the command of the Lord Jesus Christ to proclaim the gospel to all people on earth. We have become freshly burdened by the vast numbers who have never heard the good news of Christ and are lost without him. We have been made ashamed of our lack of vision and zeal, and of our failure to live out the gospel in its fullness....Some two-thirds of the world's four and a half billion people have had no proper opportunity to receive Christ....⁴

What were the strengths of the Pattaya Conference? The conveners held to their steadfast aim of focusing on the Christian evangelistic task in relation to an estimated 11,000 distinct people groups which lie beyond the reach of any existing Christian community, and are said to be capable of being evangelized only by cross-cultural evangelism. "How shall they hear?," the consultation wanted to know. The consultation aim was to develop realistic strategies for reaching any hitherto unreached people, i.e., "a section of society the members of which have a particular solidarity among themselves through certain fundamental convictions and characteristics of life they hold in common." At Pattaya seventeen miniconsultations met for a full week and attempted to develop concrete strategies for reaching nominal Protestants, African traditional religionists, Jews, Buddhists, mystics and cultists, Chinese, Marxists, Hindus, Muslims, secularists, big city dwellers, the urban poor, and several others. These groups benefited from pre-

⁴From "The Thailand Statement" (mimeographed, distributed at Pattaya).

paratory work done by working groups around the world, and their published reports will bear fruit in years to come. Pattaya reaffirmed the mandate of the Lausanne Committee "to challenge Christians to world evangelization by exercising a catalytic function in providing leadership in recruiting, training and financing a task force adequate to reach the hidden peoples of the world in this century." In order to do this, it called for greater unity and cooperation among evangelicals, and for a lessening of tension and suspicion between local churches and "para-church" mission groups. In a real sense Pattaya revived the missionary enthusiasm, commitment and motivation—along with some of the triumphalism—of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference.

Pattaya was not without its detractors and critics, both within and outside the conservative evangelical movement. Its message, some said, was entirely predictable and its plenary addresses

offered little that was new. Was it useful to spend millions to bring together people who already agreed with what was being said? Others scored Pattaya for its undemocratic process: LCWE functions as a tight oligarchy, and no upsetting issues are permitted to arise in plenary (delegates have the option of submitting written petitions to the steering committee). Only one microphone is positioned in the plenary hall, and communication is one-directional from the podium to the participants. For example, a “Statement of Concerns” reportedly signed by 150 participants and calling on the Lausanne Committee to reaffirm its commitment to social responsibility as well as evangelism; encouraging the formation of study groups to deal with social, political and economic issues; and asking for guidelines on “how evangelicals who support oppression and discrimination...can be reached by the gospel and challenged to repent” never came to discussion on the floor of plenary. A similar statement on women’s concerns, widely supported by delegates in the corridors, was not brought to a vote. Were these issues sidetracked in order to permit concentration on the overriding goal, or deliberately suppressed? To some observers it seemed that the fragile evangelical movement was not yet sufficiently mature to withstand the mass of tensions and unresolved differences barely concealed under the eloquence of its umbrella document, the Lausanne Covenant, but which threatened to work their way to the surface and to destroy the movement’s incipient unity. These differences had to do with the nature of the gospel and the place of social justice within evangelism. They also touched on the question of which was the bearer of mission: the local church, or free-lance mission agencies (para-churches) working in an uneasy and sometimes competitive relation to the churches.

Nevertheless, it can be argued that a conference on reaching unreached peoples was needed if for no other reason than to provoke WCC-related groups to consider this question and to be sensitized to the unfinished task of world evangelization. But then, quite properly, should not the two groups have met together and addressed each other, rather than in sequence and from afar? Another virtue of Pattaya was its raising the question of the motive for mission today. Stanley Mooneyham’s ringing challenge—“we will evangelize the world when we really believe the three billion are lost”—may contain a note of spiritual hubris and adventurism. But it raises the unavoidable question of how the sense of missionary obligation and privilege can be more forcefully restated in our day. There is surely something to be said for the notion that the Melbourne and Pattaya con-

stituencies ought, for the sake of God’s Kingdom, to confront each other at the level of theological issues, spiritual motivation, and democratic process. A substantial bridge group from each constituency, desiring to further convergence and dialogue between the two groups, would welcome such a confrontation. Yet the structural and political realities being what they are, such a rapprochement is not likely to occur in the near future.

IV. CATHOLIC GLOBAL RESPONSES

No Roman Catholic global conference on evangelization has been held this year, but it is significant that the Roman Catholic Church sent observer teams to both Melbourne and Pattaya. Since Vatican II the Roman Catholic Church, which prior to 1960 seldom used the suspect terminology of Protestant evangelism, has rapidly developed a schematic framework on “evangelization.” In 1975 this flowered into the most notable evangelistic statement of modern

times, Pope Paul VI's Apostolic Exhortation entitled *Evangelii Nuntiandi* ("The Evangelization of the Men of Our Time").⁵ In Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) and in its decree on missionary activity (*Ad Gentes*), the Roman Catholic Church has moved dramatically away from an hierarchical, institutional concept of the church toward one which sees the church as God's pilgrim people in the world and by its very nature essentially missionary. Mission is the task of the whole church, of bishops, clergy, religious and laity; each local church has its own peculiar missionary vocation within the Church's world-wide communion under the Roman pontiff. In recent years the theology and approach to evangelization has become a matter of high priority for Roman Catholics.

At the request of the 1974 Roman Bishops Synod, Paul VI prepared the document known as *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, after seeking the advice of bishops and counselors. It is said to represent his mature thought, and remains for Roman Catholics the authoritative statement on evangelization. The Pope himself described it as "a kind of 'Summa,' ample, complete and updated, of the problems and requirements that the very important task of Evangelization in the modern world raises for the church today." The document begins by raising profound questions. Is the Church since Vatican II better equipped to proclaim the gospel with conviction, spiritual freedom and effectiveness? What has happened to the hidden energy of the Good News in our day? To what extent is the force of the Gospel capable of really transforming people in this century? What methods should be used so that the power of the Gospel may have its effect? (Para. 4) "The presentation of the Gospel message is not an optional contribution for the Church. It is the duty incumbent on her by the command of the Lord Jesus, so that people can believe and be saved. This message is indeed necessary. It is unique. It cannot be replaced. It does not permit either indifference, syncretism or accommodation" (Para. 5). In a section entitled "From Christ the Evangelizer to the Evangelizing Church," the Pope sets forth the reciprocal links that bind together Christ, the Church and evangelization. The document continues with a

⁵*The Evangelization of the Men of Our Time*. Apostolic Exhortation of H. H. Pope Paul VI. Eng. tr. published by the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, Vatican City, n.d. (111 pp.). Subsequent paragraph citations are from the above text.

thoughtful analysis of the meeting, content, methods, beneficiaries and workers of evangelization. In a closing section on "the Spirit of Evangelization" it makes a moving appeal for greater reliance upon the Holy Spirit, and authentic witness of life, a common search for unity in witness, the service of the truth, animation of love, and renewed fervor of the saints. In form as well as content, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* is a beautiful meditation on the evangelistic task in its wholeness, churchliness and cultural contextuality in the modern world.

Despite the Vatican's centrist appeal for a unified missionary response from world Catholicism, several factors appear to hinder such a response. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* remains a magnificent "exhortation," but its implementation has been spotty and uneven, at best. No agency has been charged with putting it into effect. The *Propaganda Fide* (Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples) has tried to focus attention on the document, but its influence appears to be limited and its administrative preoccupations lie elsewhere. It is up to each national episcopal conference and each mission community to implement the directive according to local conditions. The Society of Jesus, for example, has conducted a world-wide inquiry into its

missionary purpose in the light of the Pope's exhortation, and many local pastoral institutes have placed it on their agendas. But overall it remains a statement of intention and inspiration, not of policy. Even so, it should be better known and studied by non-Catholics.

Unresolved theological issues, paralleling those which divide conciliar and evangelical Protestants, also prevent Catholicism from developing a clear and cogent missionary response. Catholicism has its own intramural controversies paralleling those of "social action vs. evangelism" and "dialogue vs. conversion." Post-Vatican II missionary thought has moved even farther in the direction of liberating Catholicism from its bondage to the church as institution and hierarchy, and furthering its identification with society and culture. Progressive Catholic missiological thinking takes several forms which are rejected as non-authoritative in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and other papal pronouncements:

- 1) the political expression of this tendency is found in movements which accommodate Gospel and mission to programs of political liberation. Against all attempts to reduce mission to the dimensions of a simply temporal project Paul VI and John Paul II have insisted on the "specifically religious finality of evangelization" (para. 32);
- 2) the religious expression of this tendency as found in movements which accommodate Gospel and mission to the beliefs and practices of higher religions, which are then described as "ordinary ways of salvation," "anonymous Christianity," etc. In face of such tendencies *Evangelii Nuntiandi* proclaims that "neither respect nor esteem for these religions nor the complexity of the questions raised is an invitation to the Church to withhold from these non-Christians the proclamation of Jesus Christ." The Church through its evangelization "objectively places man in relation with the plan of God," and therefore must keep her missionary spirit alive vis-à-vis people of other faiths (para. 53).

It is clear that the Roman Catholic Church has been deeply rent by polarizing tendencies, not unlike those within Protestantism, which militate against a unified response to the call to evangelize. Rome's future handling of authority problems, and the vigor of its mission communities around the world, will be factors influencing the response.

V. WORLD LUTHERAN PROSPECTS

Lutheranism as a world family has in the past not given a concerted response to the call to mission and evangelism. Both structural and theological problems have prevented this, the two occasionally reinforcing each other. Voluntary mission societies nurtured in the atmosphere of pietism have been forthcoming to the point of sacrifice, while large territorial churches have generally been cool toward the conversion of non-Christians and have confined their efforts to chaplaincy work among diaspora groups. The coalescence of world Lutheranism into centralized structures for fellowship and joint service after World Wars I and II, along with the response to urgent needs of orphaned missions, Lutheran diaspora groups, and developing young churches, has gradually changed this picture. Today Lutheranism is slowly moving toward a global response to the challenge of world evangelization. New theological insights and a growing

realization of the fact of interdependence have been catalytic factors.

A more unified Lutheran response to the missionary challenge has awaited the overcoming of structural obstacles of long standing. At the level of world Lutheranism, one may cite the example of the former Commission on World Missions which concerned itself with promoting better working relationships between western mission agencies and growing churches in Asia and Africa. Latin American churches and missions were under a separate administration, unrelated to CWM. Churches in Eastern Europe along with minority churches looked to Lutheran World Service for necessary material assistance. North America and Europe were regarded as autonomous donor areas providing a base for mission agencies working in the third world, but having no missionary needs of their own. At best they could be helped with studies in evangelism and stewardship. This structural arrangement mirrored the neo-colonial attitudes of the early postwar period, which continued to look to Western Europe and North America as the proper centers of ecclesiastical life.

This structural impediment to global evangelization was removed with the creation of the new LWF Commission on Church Cooperation in 1970. CCC's challenge was to view the nature of the church in all six continents into the sphere of active engagement and cooperation in mission. This meant that Asia and Africa should no longer be seen as objects of western mission interest but as mission sending areas. Moreover, churches in these continents were demanding direct church-to-church relationships. Latin America, long a stronghold for diaspora mission efforts among migrants and refugees, along with scattered efforts to reach the indigenous population, now became a place of mission to the entire population. In Eastern Europe churches were urged to move beyond survival and co-existence with Marxist Socialism toward more active missionary engagement and confrontation with atheism. The biggest change came in relation to the territorial churches of Europe and the North American Lutheran bodies which were challenged to shake off their donor mentality, self-sufficiency and missionary apathy in order to see themselves as mission territories and objects of evangelization. In 1977 the Lutheran World Federation meeting in Dar-es-Salaam recognized this when it called for the "re-evangelization" of the former lands of Christendom. These promising developments have been implemented by the holding of regional consultations of Lutheran church and mission leaders in Asia, Africa,

Latin America and the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and the North Atlantic region. In 1981 an interregional consultation at the global level will bring together findings from regional consultations dealing with matters of mission strategy and planning, and lifting up such extraordinary issues as the response to the challenge of Islam, and relationships with the Christian community in the People's Republic of China. It must also develop a viable methodology for the task of "re-evangelization" in the West, which so far has been the "Achilles heel" in the global picture.

World Lutheranism naturally also reflects unresolved issues of mission theology. Its own constituency is divided in part between Melbourne sympathizers and those loyal to the Pattaya vision—witness the fact that some 60 Lutherans attended the Melbourne meeting, from all six continents, while fewer than 20 were at Pattaya, and those mainly from Norway and Finland. Many of the issues identified earlier continue to polarize Lutherans: holistic mission vs.

individualized proclamation; the local church as the primary agent for mission vs. the initiative of para-church structures; the gospel as an eschatological force impacting upon culture and society vs. a narrowly religious or ecclesiastical view of mission; faith active in love, with appropriate place for thanksgiving and doxology as basic motives for sharing the gospel vs. a narrow appeal to the fate of the lost and dying. Each confessional family must settle these issues in the context of its own confessional tradition and its own ecumenical interaction with contemporary theology and the modern world. Lutherans can learn much from both Melbourne and Pattaya, as well as from Roman Catholic thinking, but they must do their own homework and come up with their own answers.

The issues to which churches in all regions and of all confessional backgrounds must address themselves in the coming decade would appear to be:

- A. What Gospel shall be preached to the ends of the earth?
- B. What kind of Church can become the bearer of the witness to the Kingdom?
- C. What motivation can impel us to cross boundaries in the work of mission?
- D. What equipping of the saints is needed for the task?
- E. What strategies for reaching the unreached can be recommended?
- F. What structures of mutuality and participation are appropriate?

Not only missiologists, but church leaders in general, must be occupied with questions such as these in years to come.