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ISSUES

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Fall 1993

Vol. 27, No. 3

**EDUCATING
FOR WORLD MISSIONS:
A TOP PRIORITY**

ISSUES

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

A PUBLICATION OF CONCORDIA COLLEGE—SEWARD, NEBRASKA

Educating for World Missions: A Top Priority

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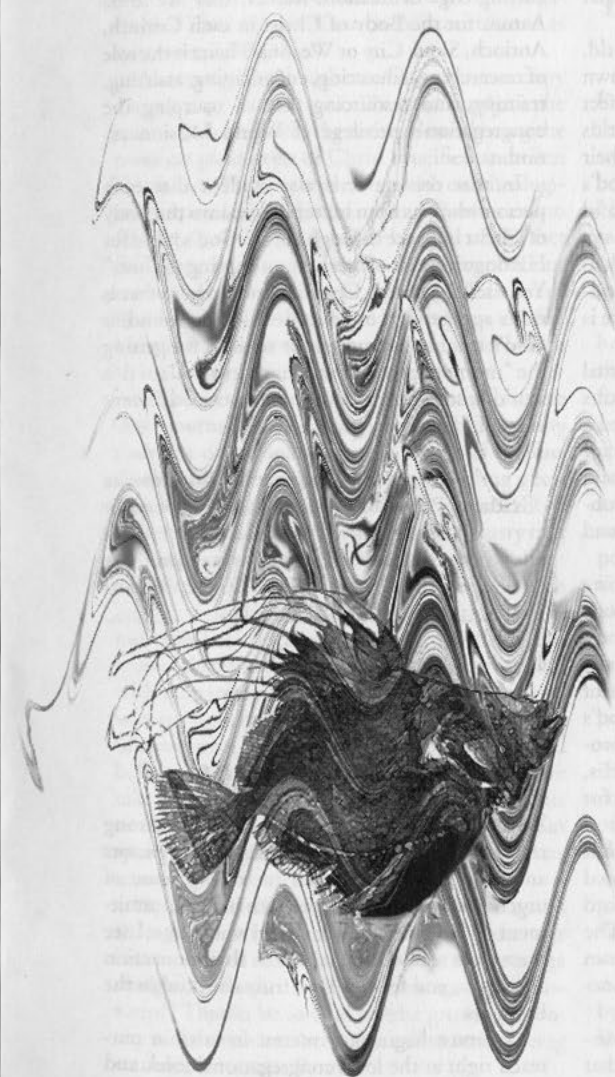
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CIRCULATION POLICY—*ISSUES . . . in Christian Education* (ISSN0278-0216) is published three times a year by the faculty of Concordia Teachers College, Seward, Nebraska 68434. *ISSUES* is sent free to each church, school, district and synodical office in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Copies are also sent to high schools, colleges and universities affiliated with the Synod.

Individuals wishing personal copies may obtain them as follows: Single copy @\$2.00 each; Subscription @\$6.00; 10 or more copies mailed to the same address @\$1.20 per copy.

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reflections

reflections

AT THE MAY, 1993, COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES here at Concordia College, the Reverend Dr. Harold Wendt gave the major address titled "When a Butterfly Flaps Its Wings in China . . ." He explained that when a butterfly flaps its wings in China, it affects the weather patterns around the world. We humans never act in isolation from others. Indeed, everything one does has a ripple effect, and "invariably touches the lives of other people," said Wendt.

How fitting an analogy for this edition of *ISSUES in Christian Education*. Whatever a congregation does (or fails to do) in educating its members for world missions, it has an effect on Gospel proclamation, not only in one congregation, but in the district, the Synod, and throughout the world. The purpose of this edition of *ISSUES* is to raise the consciousness of congregational leaders on the role education in world missions must play as we share the Good News that Jesus Christ is the Savior of all. The need is apparent: Allen Buckman points out that each day 234,200 previously unevangelized people in the world are evangelized, but on the same day the number of unevangelized people in the world increases by 257,800, resulting in "losing the battle" to reach the unreached by 23,600 people each and every day.

In developing strategies and resources to meet the Great Commission challenge before us, the three authors of the major articles in this edition have exciting ideas to share. The primary means to evangelize the world is not the creation of mission societies, increased mission offerings, or new initiatives in preparing for cross-cultural ministry. Instead, the renaissance of mission work is to be found in a rediscovery of the local congregation as the primary agent of mission. Henry Rowold writes, "Our first emphasis is that the fundamental matter, mission, begins at home, in our local church, and not overseas." He refers to the circle of life in which we live and work, which is the key to who we are. This circle of life is also the key to our mission, because "that's where our mission gets carried out with commitment, integrity, and effect."

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editorials

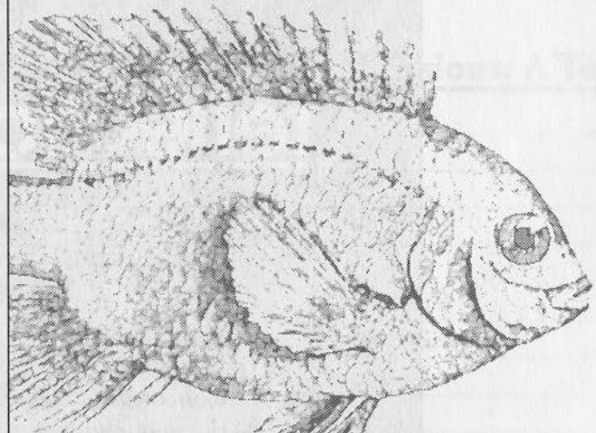
Whose World? Whose Mission?

WHAT IS YOUR WORLD? Is it a German world, an Italian world, a Hispanic world, an Afro-American world? Is it the world of the student or the professor? Is it the world of the disenfranchised, an urban world or a rural world? Is it a world of reading or a world of TV watching? How would you best describe your world?

Ralph Winter says there are 24,000 different worlds. He calls them "people groups" with 24,000 different ways of life. David Barrett speaks of 12,000 different ethnic groups with their unique patterns of life.

Did you notice my bias right from the start? Your world! My world! Yes, that is how we are taught to think. In fact, it has come to the point that each teenager is expected to create his or her own unique world as part of the growing up process. Each one of us is to "do our own thing," to "have it our way."

When it comes to thinking about World Missions, this "I—me—we-centered" perspective gives us a terrible prejudice. It quite naturally puts us in



charge. It gives us the duty of coming up with what the mission is and how it should be done.

The fact of the matter is that it is not our world. It is God's World. He has made it for His own purposes. He simultaneously set up His perfect operation procedures for His world. The worlds and ways (cultures) of today's world with their ever expanding populations are also under God's control. God still "sets the standards." When and where these human-oriented worlds and ways follow the sin distorted patterns of any individual culture as if they were the faithful and true God-given "standards" for coping with reality, there is bound to be trouble.

Disaster, dysfunctional life, and finally eternal death are the sad, normal, and automatic results for every human being. This situation created a problem. A problem for humankind, but also for God. It was the problem of sin, separation, and death for all of God's human children. This problem put God on His Mission of "seeking and saving the lost."

There it is. To think properly about *Educating for World Missions: A Top Priority*, it is not enough to recognize that it is not our world but God's World. It is also necessary to recognize that the mission of "seeking and saving" the lost people of this world is not primarily our mission but God's Mission, that the message which God wants proclaimed to people in their many ways of life is His, and that the strategies and methodologies for proclaiming that message are also His.

Educating for World Missions means that Christian people are God's own specially ordained means for delivering the "means of grace (Word and Sacraments)" to a lost and dying world. The power for carrying out that mission comes from God Himself through His calling, gathering, sanctifying and enlightening Spirit.

Now to the idea of educating for World Missions. One key mission strategy in Scripture is that the front line of World Missions is the local congregation (Acts 11 and 13). No longer should we think of the circuit, district and Synod as the

cutting edge of mission. Rather, they are to be Aarons for the Body of Christ in each Corinth, Antioch, Sioux City or Wecota. Theirs is the role of researching, educating, encouraging, assisting, training, and resourcing, not of usurping the congregation's privilege of World Mission action.

In that context it is also evident that each person who has been incorporated into the Body of Christ by grace through faith is God's hand for His ongoing task of "seeking and saving the lost." Yes, each and every Christian, no matter what is one's age, gender, or educational background, is God's means (instrument or vehicle) for getting the "means of grace" to the many lost souls of this world in some 24,000, or was it 12,000, different ways of life (people groups).

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A Call to Action

WHEREVER I GO IN THE SYNOD, I sense a strong rekindling of interest in missions. Among pastors and laity alike, there is an increasing sense of urgency when it comes to growth in our commitment to Gospel outreach. Everywhere I go I see the waters really being stirred in this connection among us, and for this I am truly thankful to the Lord.

We must begin our interest in mission outreach right at the local congregational level, and then building on this commitment, we move toward a renewed world-wide emphasis in outreach with the Gospel. I would like to suggest that

we view each of the 6,000+ member congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as mission stations.

As a confessional Lutheran Church, we occupy a unique role in this area. We hold firmly to the truth of God's Word, the most essential being the precious good news of Christ crucified and risen for sinners. We have come to cherish our theological heritage and the Scriptures and Confessions to which we joyfully subscribe. In spite of the fact that some would try to make us believe that our commitment to this type of theology is a deterrent in mission outreach, we hold high these confessional commitments as our banner under which we as church move forward in mission.

In connection with this I read recently an article in the journal *First Things* which explained why mainline denominations are in a state of decline. The article stated that the most compelling question to ask today is, "What is so special about Christianity?" I think we would want to carry that one step further and ask, "What is so special about Confessional Lutheranism?" When we as a church body, a Synod, a district, a congregation and as individual co-workers in the harvest fields can answer that question winsomely, persuasively and with conviction, I have a suspicion that we will witness, under the blessing of God, revitalization of mission activity such as we have never witnessed before. This revitalization will come about as we take complete hold of the Word and Sacraments so that we, with the Apostles, say, "We cannot but speak of that which we have heard and seen" (Acts 4:20).

Again, I hold high before the eyes of the Synod that statement I first made in Pittsburgh after our last Synodical convention: "Keep the message straight, Missouri! Get the message out, Missouri!" Thanks be to God for the growing intensity with which one hears this call to action being sounded across the Synod.

A. L. Barry, President
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Falling Apart, Holding the Center

PERHAPS THE MOST APPRECIATED BOOK used in my history courses at Concordia and the University of Nebraska over the past decade and a half has been *Things Fall Apart* by the wonderfully gifted Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe. Several thousand students, I estimate, have read and reflected on its description of contacts among peoples of strikingly dissimilar religions and cultures.

Set in the late nineteenth century during the heyday of western imperialism and written from the perspective of an African culture being transformed by British missionaries and advanced technology, it dramatically shows a society falling apart as its traditional center is removed.

Although not written to support Christian missionary activity, *Things Fall Apart* indirectly suggests that arrogance and a failure to understand peoples and their cultures impede mission. By implication, compassion, mutual respect, and an understanding and an appreciation of different cultures and practices may contribute to successful mission. The novel has wonderful applicability to experiences in America as well as to every other part of the world. Indeed, it is valuable for anyone with an interest in people.

Although the world is shrinking and multiculturalism is entering our curricula, Americans often manifest an indifference and arrogance to diverse peoples and cultures. Their knowledge and appreciation of traditional cultures and religious heritages of China, Japan, India, Latin America (and North America!), and the Arab and sub-Saharan African worlds are abysmal. Even though those societies were dramatically impacted by imperialism, political ideologies, and technological revolution, their indigenous cultures survived. And rich cultures they are. We can learn much from them; if we would make a serious effort to appreciate and understand those societies, we can both enrich ourselves and improve

opportunities for mission both at home and abroad.

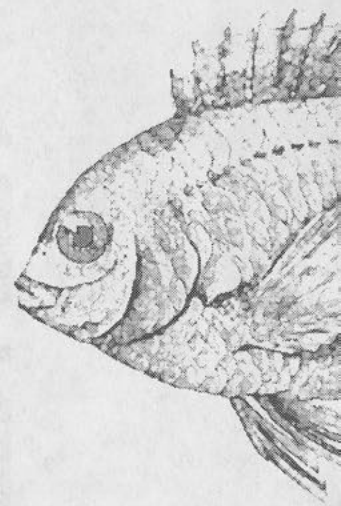
An improved strategy of world mission requires a broad vision, not narrow vision. It requires a serious study of world cultures and world religions, and a true appreciation of the rich heritage of other peoples. I have often reflected on Achebe's insightful novel as I visited colorful and extravagant temples in China, Vietnam, Korea, and Thailand; as I visited elegant but more restrained mosques and palaces in the Middle East; and as I walked through magnificent Christian edifices from Seward to St. Petersburg. Each reflects an important segment of the human experience.

Today, old political orders that condemned religion as an "opiate of the people" now are "falling apart" in very dramatic ways. Their imposed centers no longer hold people together. Traditional ethnic rivalries have recurred; there is tragedy and despair.

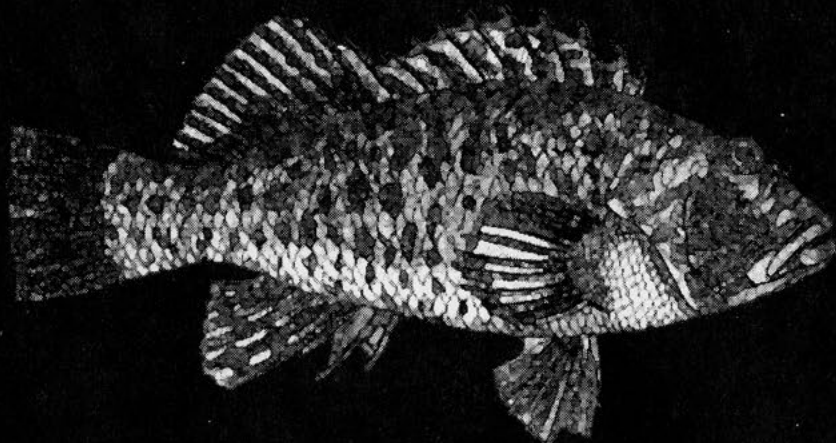
Yet, it is noteworthy that in some places a new center is emerging—or perhaps it is the old center reemerging. On a recent visit to Russia, I observed churches resuming their original functions after serving as swimming pools, museums, warehouses, and movie theaters. Traditional religious culture—the former center—is reemerging.

It was a thrill on this trip to meet volunteer lay missionaries and teachers from the LCMS successfully sharing skills and knowledge with zeal, compassion, and understanding. They, and numerous missionaries elsewhere, clearly understand that the traditional center must be touched and appreciated before effective mission can take place. Working with the people as equals and demonstrating compassionate understanding of traditional cultures vastly different from our own are vital to world mission.

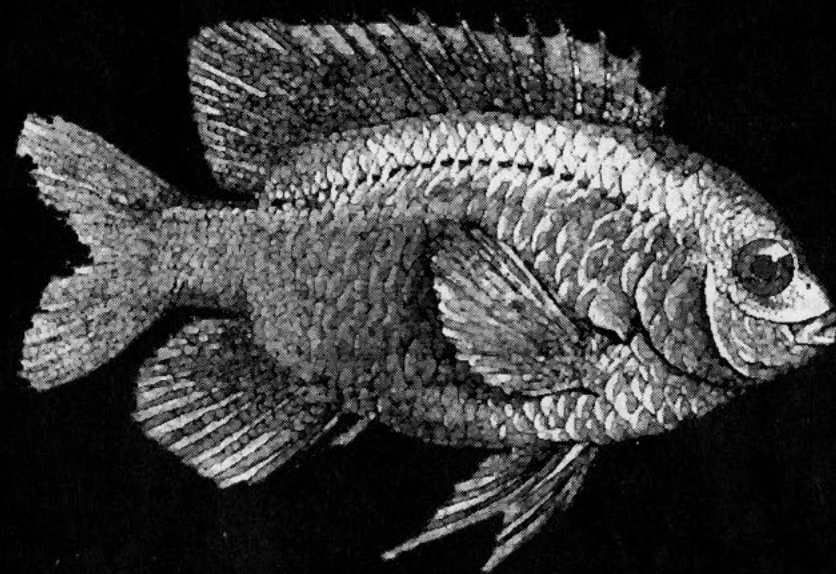
Robert D. Fiala
Professor of History
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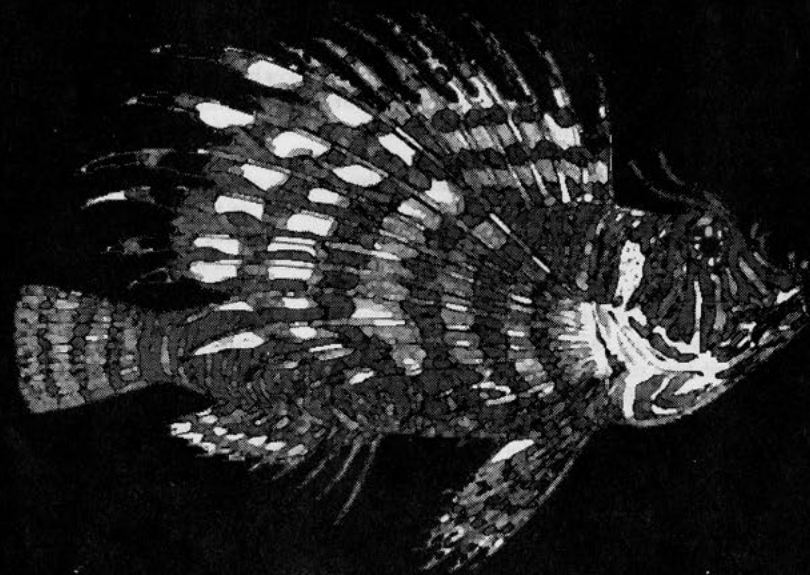
WORLD MISSIONS: AN OVERVIEW



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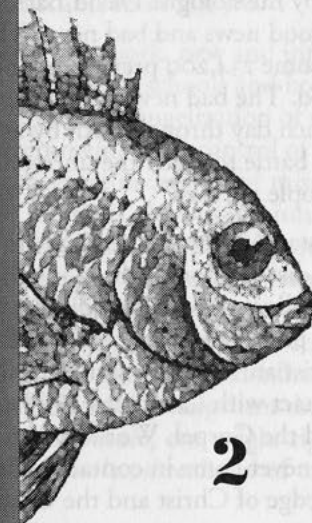
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Dr. Allan Buckman is the Director for World Areas for The Board of Mission Services of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

The Mandate

NEAR THE CONCLUSION OF HIS MINISTRY on earth our Lord informed His disciples that “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

The same mandate is reflected in both the goals and the assumptions included in the “Mission Blueprint for the Nineties” adopted by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod during the Pittsburgh (1992) Convention. Three of the assumptions are:

In the 1990s and until the Last Day:

- Christian Mission activity will proclaim the divine, revealed Law, from whose condemnation Christ sets us free. (Romans 3:31, Galatians 3:13)
- Christian missionary action will teach and build upon Jesus Christ; His person, life and its meaning for us. (1 Corinthians 3:11, Augsburg Confession III)
- The Holy Spirit will work through the community of Christian believers (the congregation) to reach out in mission to gather all who will be saved (Large Catechism II, 40-42; 53)¹

Guided by the above, the world mission program of the LCMS has adopted as its priorities for ministry the planting of churches and the training of indigenous church leaders worldwide.

The Challenge

BY THE MID-1990s approximately 5.7 billion people will be living on the face of the earth. Of that number only

2.0 billion will claim membership in any Christian denomination. Non-Christians will number approximately 3.7 billion. This great unfinished task can probably best be described in terms of Unreached People Groups. A working definition of this group is "A people group within which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize this people group." There are reportedly 12,000 such Unreached People Groups worldwide with a combined population of approximately 2.7 billion people (almost 75 percent of the entire Unreached population).²

It is important to note in this day of ethnic reaffirmation that these people can be reached only by crossing barriers of language and culture. Many of these language barriers are indeed enormous. An example: For 12 years, my wife and family and I served as missionaries among the Yala people of southeastern Nigeria. The Yala language has three tone levels, and the meaning of a word may change depending upon the tone assigned to it. For instance the word "ene" may mean "mother," "three" or "tree" depending upon the tone used with the vowels. Needless to say, it required considerable effort on our part to achieve even minimal fluency in the Yala language.

In addition to the barriers of language and culture, there is also the "Closed Country" factor. Simply put, more and more countries are closing their doors to missionary activity. In 1980 approximately 40 countries restricted missionary activity to some extent. Now there are 76 closed countries as per the following categories: Totally restricted—3; example: North Korea. Extremely restricted—23; example: Cuba. Highly restricted—19; example: Burma, Egypt. Moderately restricted—31; example: Niger, Thailand.³

In addition, other countries are in the process of putting some restrictions into place (examples: Lebanon, Taiwan). Often this is accomplished by adding to the qualifications required of those to be considered for mission work in a given country, or by reducing the missionary quotas allotted to the established churches. As restrictions increase, must mission activity inevitably diminish? How do we minister to the ever growing population residing in closed countries? Needed now are numbers of non-resident missionaries, who live outside a restricted area, yet establish relationships and develop methods whereby they can minister effectively to those who live within these areas.

The worldwide trend toward urbanization constitutes yet another enormous challenge. In 1890, approximately 15 percent of the world's population lived in cities. By 1970 the number had risen to 38 percent, and by the year 2000 it is estimated that 51 percent of the world's population will live in urban areas. The ten largest cities will be: Tokyo, 28.κ; Sao Paulo, 22.6κ; Bombay, 18.1κ; Shanghai, 17.4κ;

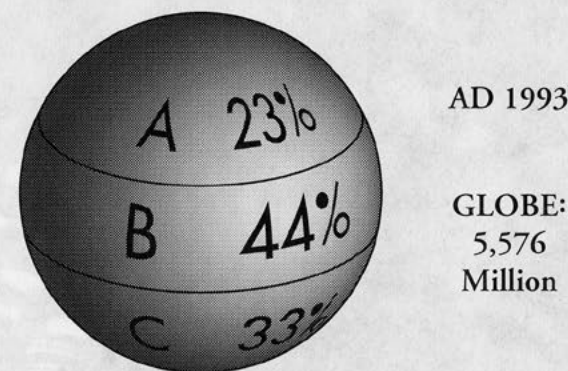
New York City, 16.6κ; Mexico City, 16.2κ; Beijing, 14.4κ; Lagos, 13.5κ; Jakarta, 13.4κ; Los Angeles, 13.2κ.

It is estimated that by the turn of the century there will be 21 megacities with populations of 10 million or more. Of these, 18 will be in developing countries, including some of the poorest in the world. Clearly, the urban challenge is upon us. How do we minister effectively in the megacities? How do we place churches among the poorest of the poor?⁴ Attempts are being made to do this in the USA and elsewhere. These efforts, however, must be intensified.

Current Status

EACH YEAR the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* publishes an "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission" prepared by missiologist David Barret. The 1993 issue includes good news and bad news. The good news is that each day some 234,200 previously unevangelized people are evangelized. The bad news is that the unevangelized people increase each day through birth by 257,800. Overall, we are losing the battle to reach the unreached at the rate of 23,600 people per day.⁵

To understand why, it is necessary to know something about the distribution of those involved in evangelistic work. The illustration below divides the world population into three parts. World C consists of those who call themselves Christian. World B stands for non-Christians who are in contact with Christians and have some knowledge of Christ and the Gospel. World A stands for non-Christians who have never come in contact with Christians and have no knowledge of Christ and the Gospel.⁶



Ninety-one percent of those engaged in evangelistic work are working in World C, eight percent in World B, and less than one percent in World A. How can this imbalance be corrected? Obviously there is a need to commit far greater resources to the evangelization of the unreached population

in the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and also the USA.

How is the world mission program of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod doing? Directly through missionaries, or indirectly through Partner Churches, the LCMS supports mission work in 43 countries around the world. Missionaries stationed in 23 countries work almost entirely among the unreached peoples. Over the past 10 years mission work has been established among 34 unreached people groups, most of them in Africa.

Moreover, the Lord has richly blessed this work. In Africa, for example, the number of congregations and preaching stations has increased almost three-fold over the past 10 years, from 236 to 851. The number of baptized numbers has also risen rapidly, from 46,860 to 117,910.

To establish and maintain new work, new and innovative strategies are required. In the past, schools and hospitals played an important role in the evangelization of unreached peoples. As national governments took control of these institutions, however, it became necessary for mission agencies to develop new methods. As a result, missionaries moved away from the institutions and into villages where they put considerable effort into learning the vernacular language, training lay preachers, and assisting with the implementation of carefully selected social ministry projects. "Evangelism through language and culture" became the new reality in place of "evangelism through institutions." Looking to the future, one might rightfully ask, "What will be some of the 'new realities' of tomorrow?"

The Future

A Redefinition of the term "Mission Field"

IN THE PAST a dichotomy prevailed regarding those "sent" and those "receiving" the resources mission agencies were able to provide. Those sent were almost always missionaries from Europe and North America. Those receiving the mission resources were people living elsewhere on the planet. This is no longer the case.⁷

The growth of "Two-Thirds World" mission agencies is definitely a "new reality." (Two-Thirds World refers to the area outside North America and Western Europe, roughly two-thirds of the world.) At the end of 1990 there were 48,884 non-Western missionaries in service worldwide, 36 percent of the total. If growth continues in the future as it has in the past, by 1995 Two-Thirds World missionaries will number 86,490, and by the year 2000 A.D. the number will be 162,360. If these numbers become reality, by the end of this century there will be more missionaries from Two-

Thirds World countries than from all of the Western nations combined. In other words, there is now a growing number of missionaries from all parts of the world committed to working among the Unreached Peoples, wherever they may be found, including the USA and Western Europe.⁸

The Multiplication of Mission Societies

IN JANUARY, 1992, the Nebraska Lutheran Mission Society was legally incorporated for the purpose of initiating mission work in Jamaica. Established in consultation with LCMS Board for Mission Services, this society has as its twin goals the planting of Lutheran congregations in Jamaica and the training of national church leaders. By means of a service agreement with the BFMS, the society is committed to providing both prayer and financial support for this work. The BFMS is pledged to provide pre-field training as well as direction and guidance required for planning and administrative purposes.

This is the first, but by no means the only mission society to be formed in this way. More recently Compassion Vietnam was incorporated in California to initiate new work in Vietnam. Terms and conditions of the agreement between this agency and the BFMS are similar to those described above.

Other societies now in the process of formation include those committed to work among American Indian, Muslim and Jewish populations in the USA. This new reality of congregationally based mission societies will almost certainly extend the mission effort of the LCMS in a dramatic new way. This development reflects what missiologists have observed, not only in the USA, but in other parts of the world as well—the rediscovery of the congregation as the primary agent of mission.⁹

New Initiatives Through Education

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) has served as a vehicle for mission efforts in Asia for some years. The LCMS has over 35 volunteer ESL teachers in Japan and Taiwan, all of them working through the Lutheran denomination established in those countries.

What has suddenly burst upon the scene as a "new reality" within the past couple of years, however, has been the rapid expansion of this type of ministry to China, Russia, Slovakia and even Paraguay. It is truly astonishing what these teachers are able to do. In Russia, not only are they free to organize Bible study activities on the school premises after class hours, but they also are equally free to witness or even read the Scriptures in the classroom. Such activities would be unthinkable in the public schools of the USA!

Growth of Volunteer Workers

IN THE PAST, volunteer missionaries played a meaningful, though unheralded, role in cross-cultural missions. No longer! These faithful workers, formerly on the periphery of the mission agenda, are rapidly moving to center stage. Another new reality!

For 1993 the LCMS world mission program has placed 161 positions on its Personnel Requirements List. Ninety-five of these are for volunteer workers—almost 60 percent of the total. The majority of these are for ministry in education, often ESL. Nevertheless, volunteers are required for virtually every kind of ministry, from accounting and construction to leadership training, including in-service training for national pastors. Indeed, volunteers have become so numerous on some fields that volunteer coordinators are required to provide logistic support and coordinate their activities!

Theological Education by Extension (TEE)

THOUGH ACCURATE RECORDS are not yet available, it is estimated that the Board for Mission Services regularly assists with the training of at least 1,000 church leaders outside the USA each year. The majority of these are trained via some type of extension program.

The advantages of an extension program are many. It avoids cultural dislocation and its twin sister, dependency. The student does not have to leave home to study for long periods of time in an expensive residence program that one cannot afford. Moreover, this program enables a person to obtain a quality education at moderate cost. Upon graduation, a student continues to obtain support in a manner similar to the way in which one secured support when entering the study program. No mission agency funds are required for personal support or ministry. Church planting through leadership development has become a reality in many nations, and this approach is on its way to becoming a reality in the USA as well.

New Initiatives in Preparing for Cross-Cultural Ministry

SEVERAL SYNODICAL SCHOOLS have developed, or are developing, programs which prepare students for cross-cultural ministry, at least in a preliminary way. This is to be applauded and encouraged. As our society becomes ever more pluralistic, opportunities will be found to utilize and further develop these skills.

But what about the person who has no intention of ever attending a synodical school? What about the business executive or professional sent by his or her firm to some far corner of the earth for purposes of commercial enterprise?

Could there not be some way for that person to obtain the skills required for cross-cultural ministry? Or what about the student at a secular university who may feel led to be involved in cross-cultural ministry, but has no idea about how to develop the necessary skills? Is it not possible to formulate a plan—a new initiative—for developing such skills? Can this not also become a new reality?

The Promise

OTHER "NEW REALITIES" may also be described. Realities such as the development of huge mission-related data banks with astonishing amounts of information about unreached people groups and the status of Christianity, country by country around the world, will make significant contributions. A focus on research related to mission expansion will certainly develop in the future.

Quite evident is the growing impact of technology, especially in communications. Via computers and satellite links, we can exchange E-mail messages with our missionaries in St. Petersburg, Russia, almost as readily as we can with fellow staff members at the International Center.

Our final reality is the most reassuring. It is the reality found in Acts 1:8, quoted at the beginning of this article. We "will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon us." In Matthew 28:20, we are reassured that "I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Notes

¹ *Mission Blueprint for the Nineties*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992.

² Schrick, H. and Barrett, D. *Unreached Peoples: Clarifying the Task*. Monrovia: MARC, 1987.

³ Buckman, A. "Global Commitment." An unpublished report submitted to the LCMS Mission Task Force, 1991.

⁴ See the January 11, 1993, issue of *TIME* magazine for a description of life in the world's megacities.

⁵ Barrett, D. "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 1993." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. January, 1993, pp. 22, 23.

⁶ Barrett, D. "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 1991." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. January, 1991, pp. 24, 25.

⁷ For an interesting personal reference on this same subject, see "Trends in Missiology Today" by Eugene W. Bunkowske, published in *Missio Apostolica*. April, 1993.

⁸ Pate, L. "The Changing Balance in Global Mission." *The International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. April, 1991.

⁹ Bosch, D. *Transforming Mission*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991.

Dr. Henry Rowold is Director of the China Coordinating Center of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in Hong Kong.

Henry Rowold

EDUCATING FOR WORLD MISSIONS: A MISSIONARY PERSPECTIVE

THE MOST WORRISOME CRISIS the church in China is facing is no longer overt persecution. The government tried that for a long, bloody decade, and it backfired. The church not only survived, but emerged resilient and invigorated. As the Communist Party went spiritually bankrupt, people looked to the church as the one group in all of China with integrity, with joy and hope in a joyless, hopeless society, and with genuine love for the motherland. To this day, the church is still growing.

That failed policy has not deterred the Communist Party from its drive to eradicate religion (especially Christianity), however. The Party has simply taken another tack. One part of that tack is infiltration. As is true in many nations, there are government plants at various levels of the church. Everyone knows it, and the church tries to work around it, and where possible, to turn the plant into a transplant. Another part of that tack is containment. By stipulating that the church may do church-y things only in church-y places (sanctuaries), only at church-y times (Sunday mornings), and only as led by church-y people (pastors and elders), the Party is trying to force the church into a ghetto, where only the "religiously inclined" are allowed. As those "religiously inclined" folks become increasingly out of step with the life of an intentionally secular society, however, the church will be more and more isolated and marginal. When finally those remaining "religiously inclined" wander away or die off, the church will die a quiet, unofficial, unnoticed, and unprotected death.

The challenge to the church, then, is to avoid being imprisoned behind the church walls that the state builds around it. Put differently, the church is struggling to find ways to keep from being confined to doing merely religious things religiously behind religious walls.

If this were an article about the church in China, we would go on to describe how the church there is fighting hard to be a church in mission. It is an exciting story, and the battle still rages, but that is not what we are about in this article.

This article is rather about our own church (and congregation and school). There is a reason for beginning with what is happening in China, and that is to emphasize how powerful the drive to mission is that God puts into the heart of the Christian church, even (especially?) those churches living under harassment and persecution. There is a force, enkindled by the Force (Holy Spirit), which springs from the irrepressible mission of God. That Force keeps reaching out through the church to the world with the love of God Himself.

Ironically, the crisis the church in our country is facing (often by its own choice) is not significantly different from the crisis the church in China is facing, namely living a ghetto existence, being content with keeping the religious machinery oiled, keeping up the flow of religious activities and groups, but losing touch both with the world around us and with the mission to which God propels us.

Mission, then, is the fundamental issue—God's mission, which both precedes and leads to missions.

Mission: The Local Context

OUR FIRST EMPHASIS is that the fundamental matter, mission, begins at home, in our local church, and not overseas. This is where people, joined by God in family and community, celebrate His Gospel together, proclaim it, and live it—whether child or elderly, single or spouse, female or male, all are involved. Each of us has a circle of life within which we live and work (home, school, office, factory). That circle of life is not merely incidental to who we are, but the key to who we are. In the same way, that circle of life is the key also to our mission, because that is where our mission gets carried out with commitment, integrity, and effect. We are agents of the Lord, placed by Him in our various turfs to share His love. And there is no more basic task for the local church than finding ways to sensitize and equip people for that mission, and finding ways to coordinate those individual missions within a corporate mission to our society.

Global mission is rooted in and grows from our local mission.

From Mission to Missions: The Wider Context

MISSION CANNOT BE CONFINED to our own locale, however. Our view must be as wide as our Lord's, to all people in all parts of this fragile world we live in. Mission does lead to missions, because the Body of Christ extends around the world.

Where the local congregation plugs into that wider mission is not always obvious, though. One real problem is that we often end up the day drained, without getting any farther than problems at home. Overseas missions can seem like just another program competing for energy, attention, and money, all of which are already in short supply. Because overseas missions are by definition far removed from home, do not fit easily into our normal routines, and do not promise much immediate pay-off, it is easy to dismiss them as basically irrelevant for our normal church/school life.

The flip side of the self-sufficiency that Americans pride themselves in is that we do not often brush up against people of other countries, or find ourselves learning other languages or knowing much about other countries. We are learning, though, how important it is to think globally about political and economic matters (trade balances, open markets, etc.), not from simple curiosity, but from the awareness that they affect our lives directly. In the same way, we look to the wider context of the church's mission, not merely out of a sense of duty or loyalty to a mission program, but because our mission is affected by what is happening in other parts of the world: the militancy of Hinduism in India and of

Islam in the Middle East, the fascination with Eastern and/or New Age religions in our own country, the persecution of the church in parts of Asia and Africa, the explosive growth of the church in China. We are part of this same world, and have much to gain as well as to give in this global mission.

Linking Local Church with Global Mission

WHAT FOLLOWS ARE REFLECTIONS designed not only to shorten the distance between Bismark and Bangkok or between Lincoln and Lagos. They explore ways that what happens in Nashville and Nanjing can strengthen each other, so that all parts of Christ's Body grow together in our common mission.

Linking with Missions: Information

ONE OF THE BASIC STEPS is simply being more aware of the wider world we live in, and what kinds of problems are facing people and churches around the world. Newspapers and weekly/monthly magazines can help, and so can selective viewing of news and features on television. There are some periodicals that speak specifically of the work of the church in other countries, including *Harvest* produced by our own LCMS

Linking with Missions: The Stranger Among Us

LEARNING ABOUT AND KEEPING STRAIGHT NAMES and places we have never seen before (and may even have trouble pronouncing properly) is a tough thing to keep at. What would be most helpful would be to have some person around whom to focus your interest, and to reinforce it. But who?

The first place to look is in your own community, for non-Western people living among you. It is nothing short of astounding how multi-cultural the USA is becoming. That is true not only in coastal cities like New York or Los Angeles, where whole communities (groceries, shopping centers, movies, newspapers, even television stations) have become Chinese or Korean or Vietnamese. It is true in less cosmopolitan areas, too. Look at how many Chinese restaurants there are all over the States, or doctors with non-Western names, or students among us for a few years, or business people with ties to many parts of the world.

If what we said above is true (that we are placed in our circle of life by the Lord so He can reach through us to those around us), it is no less true that it is He who has brought other people, including "newcomers," into our lives and communities. He has brought them to us so we can reach out to them, and so that He can bless us through them. Rather than pick a missionary from a list for an

overseas contact, why not begin with folks there in your own community. Bring them into your lives, your school, your activities, your congregation. Invite them to share with you their customs, foods, holidays, arts and music, home towns, and cultures. As time goes on, there may be sharing of fears and concerns, loneliness, and religious yearnings. Share yourself with them openly, invitingly, humbly, and include the faith that forms the core of your own life.

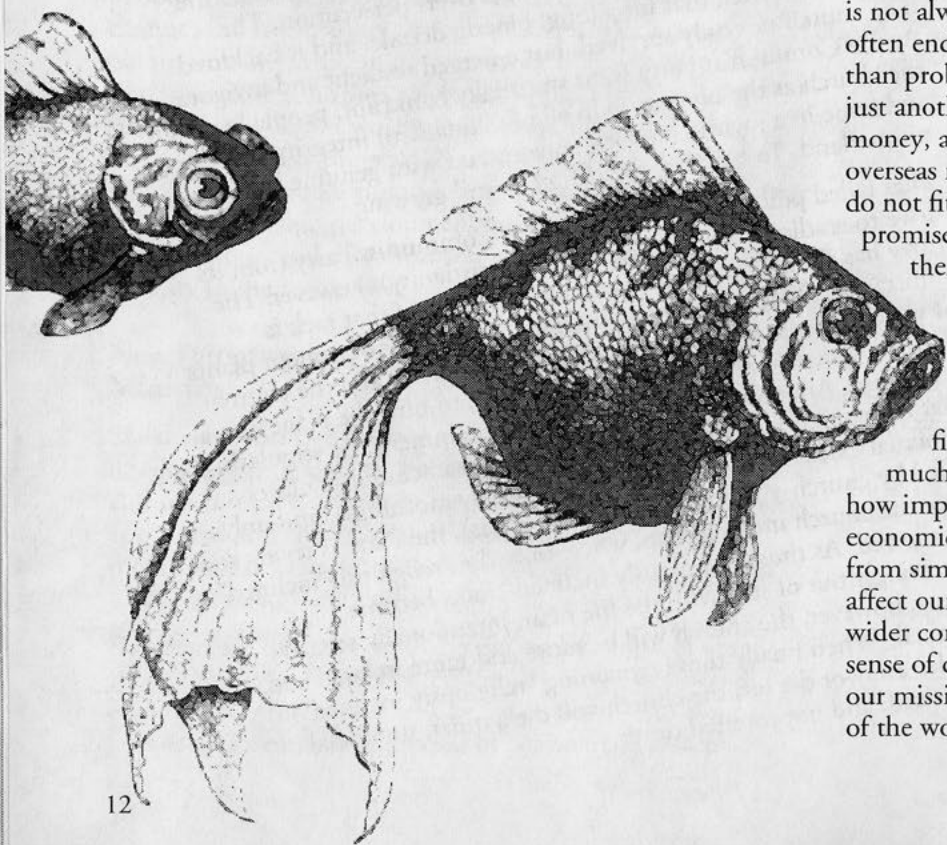
These people may not be Christians and may not even be inclined to be at this time. That is a matter for the Holy Spirit (working through our own witness). What they can do, at the least, though, is open up whole new worlds to us. We will understand whole new aspects of what it means to be a Christian in those parts of the world. We will be able to pray much more informed and track-able prayers.

Some congregations may be able to take this even one step further, if there is a large enough ethnic group in your neighborhood. That could begin with making church facilities available to them for their fellowships, festive holidays, etc., and for Bible studies or worship if they are Christians. In some congregations, that has led to church members being invited to their activities, or their being invited to congregational activities and worship. In a few cases that has led to ethnic congregations being formed, even becoming part of the original church. Talk about global awareness! Home towns and foods and holidays will be commonplace talk in the congregation, as will visits to and from home countries, as will awareness of the work of the Gospel around the world.

Linking with Missions: Overseas Missionaries

ANOTHER RESOURCE for enhancing involvement in global mission is, of course, the missionaries our LCMS has sent to many parts of the world. While a missionary's first task is to the people to whom she or he is sent, missionaries are happy, even eager to share their life and work with churches back home. Let me share a few thoughts, though, based on our experience overseas, to maximize your contact with missionaries.

Our most satisfying relationships with congregations have been those that have lasted some years. Some congregations virtually made us adopted members of the congregation. They helped us observe important days in our lives (birthdays and anniversaries, as well as festive seasons). They had photographs and brochures that were on display, so we were known to people. We wrote regularly to those churches, sharing our joys and sorrows, which in turn helped them join us in prayer for common concerns. When we get back in the States, we try to arrange a personal visit, though sometimes other obligations make that easier said



than done. We have even had people from some of those churches visit us, and had a great time sharing our home and work with them. While we do appreciate the occasional letter or card from people assuring us of their interest and prayer, these ongoing relationships have a much fuller pay-off. There is much comfort in knowing that people who have begun a caring, ongoing relationship with the missionary regularly pray for him or her. Missionary life can be lonely, and a missionary can get into ruts and self-pity just as deep and confining as can folks back home. They are not looking for people to patronize them, and certainly not to idolize them. They are looking for partners, for a congregation to bring the missionary into its ministry, as the missionary brings the congregation into his or hers.

Many congregations have formalized the relationship just described through the Together in Mission program. This is not meant to be a commercial for a synodical program, because we have had (and continue to have) some very enriching relations outside that program. However, the TIM program is set up to do exactly what I have been describing, and I recommend it highly.

Linking with Missions: Overseas Churches

ONE VARIATION (actually, best done as an extension) is for a congregation to reach beyond (or through) the missionary to a congregation overseas. We have been involved in setting up some Sunday school-to-Sunday school or youth group-to-youth group, and even congregation-to-congregation relationships. They have shared photographs, art, music (via tape), worship forms, customs and holidays. This can be a very useful exchange, though there are some cautions that need to be mentioned. Most basically, a congregation that begins such a program must be very clear about what its objectives and expectations are. It must be sensitive to economic or other inequities, and how money can complicate and even ruin a relationship, sometimes unknown to the donor church. If it is possible to establish a three-way relationship (USA congregation-overseas congregation-missionary), some of those cultural trip-wires can be avoided.

Organizing for Mission/s

ALL OF THE BRIDGES between Springfield and Sapporo or Marshall and Manila can be helped greatly by having a congregational mission team or committee, whether a committee of its own or part of another committee or board. This team could do a variety of things: reading, clipping, and sharing news about partner countries and/or churches; corresponding with missionaries or partner congregations; serving as liaison with ethnic people/groups in your area and/or congregations; arranging regular

displays or activities in various parts of the congregation (Sunday school, youth group, Bible class, women's or men's groups); helping plan mission Sundays.

I would also recommend that each congregation have at least one mission Sunday per year. It is always good, of course, to have a special speaker who is directly involved in mission overseas, whether an overseas national or a missionary. The reality is, however, that there are not enough to go around in the first place. Besides, most of the limited number we have come to the States only in the summer, which is not when most congregations want to have a mission Sunday. To make things even tighter, they need to give first priority in their visitations to their supporting TIM congregations. One alternative to that is for a group of congregations (a circuit? or two?) to arrange enough activities to bring such a speaker in for a week or two so that many congregations (and schools) can have direct contact. Another alternative to overseas nationals or missionaries, however, is our mission executives. They know the global mission well, and many of them served as missionaries themselves. Even some of our district presidents have spent time observing life and mission overseas. Still another alternative is former missionaries (retired or relocated), who enjoy sharing the ministry they had overseas. District or synodical mission personnel can put you in touch with them. Another option, admittedly better for a school setting than for church worship, is a slide or video presentation that some missionaries have put together. As a variation of that, the Board for Mission Services continues to produce video materials, and it is putting together packets from various countries for use in displays.

From Missions back to Mission

THE POINT OF THIS ARTICLE is not to encourage a church or school to add still another program to an already overburdened schedule. The point is to renew ourselves in and for the mission God has given us by seeing folks around us in a new light, by opening ourselves up to people God brings into our expanding circle of life, by building up people in other places in their ministry, and by making that our ministry, too, by incorporating them into our ministry, by giving our prayer life a new relevance and urgency, and by sending folks overseas (even if only on tours) to see and hear first-hand what the Lord is doing.

We are not talking programs; we are talking mission—God's mission—His mission in China, His mission in Nigeria, His mission among us—and therefore our mission.

B. Steve Hughey

EDUCATING FOR GOD'S MISSION IN LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONS AND SCHOOLS

The Reverend B. Steve Hughey serves as the Director of Mission Interpretation, Education, and Support of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Involvement: The Goal of Mission Education

"The downtown area is really shot up. All the buildings have bullet holes in them."

"There are military checkpoints every few miles."

"The water is on this morning. We have been told that it has not been on for a week or more."

"We bathe by pouring water over us with a cup. We get about a half gallon of water to bathe with. This water drains into a small plastic tub that you stand in. After the bath we pour the dirty water into a bucket and use it to flush the toilet. We only flush the toilet when the bucket is full, usually about once a day."

"This has been a day of mixed emotions for me. My relationship building is going much better than my 'mechanic-ing'."

"I spent the day on the brakes of the diesel Land Rover. I ended the day with no working brakes, and one wheel locked up. This is a problem I have never encountered, and I don't know how to resolve it. Alvina says I am getting a real taste of what it is like to be a missionary in a foreign land. I just hope it will all look better in the morning."

"Bia's wife is still grieving from the war. She cried several times during dinner."

believe I am doing some of these things. I just let the Lord lead me.”

These excerpts are from the journal of Keith Montague, a member of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Carrollton, Texas, who was on a short-term mission team from his church that went to war-torn Liberia in early 1992. Like the other eight members of the team, Keith, a computer programmer, had to raise his own funds—about \$2,000—to make the long, difficult trip. Spending two weeks in Liberia, the team helped build a computer lab for the Lutheran Bible Translators, worked on broken vehicles, and did whatever they could to help the missionaries and the Liberian Christians.

“Adults are not the only ones becoming personally involved in mission outreach.”

“I don’t think I will ever be the same,” said Keith after his trip. “Now I see that my real purpose for living is to do mission work. My computer programming job is what I do to make money to do my real work—going on short-term mission trips and helping others do the same.”

Montague and his fellow members at Prince of Peace are part of a growing phenomenon in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. They are not content with just sending in financial gifts to LCMS World Mission and other agencies; they are getting personally involved.

Rev. Paul Liersmann, mission pastor of Prince of Peace and a former chaplain who has traveled around the world, helped prepare the servant team and others from his church. Team preparation begins up to a year prior to a mission trip. It includes classes about cross-cultural issues, language acquisition, fund-raising and spiritual preparation. Liersmann believes that working with a congregational mission team helps assure accountability from the team members while bringing new ideas to the congregation and stirring mission zeal. He and other mission leaders recruit team members who can best help fulfill a specific mission task.

Liersmann indicates that there are at least five different kinds of mission teams:

- Fact-finding teams of two or three people who explore possibilities for future mission work.
- Service project teams—dubbed “sweat” teams since they focus on physical work where language is not a crucial issue.
- Prayer and renewal teams that focus on prayer for a

mission field and for missionaries who might be dealing with specific difficulties.

- Evangelism teams that help train others to witness about their faith in Christ.
- Church-planting teams trained to help long-term missionaries establish a new congregation in an unreached people group.

Prince of Peace’s mission team members say that while mission trips are sometimes expensive and difficult, the experience challenges them, changes them and helps them become sensitive to people from other cultures.

Faith Lutheran Church in Troy, Michigan, also has made a big commitment to helping its members become directly involved in cross-cultural mission work. Like Prince of Peace, Faith called a full-time director of mission, Dale Grovert. Among other duties, Grovert leads four to six

mission trips to Africa, South America, Europe or Asia each year. In 1993, teams are scheduled to visit Mexico, India, Brazil, Slovakia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Nigeria.

To date, this program has involved about 75 people, some more than once. Members see first-hand what is happening on the mission field and are able to share with fellow members. Volunteers train fellow Christians in Africa and South America to witness and to lead Bible classes. Others help with building projects or health care.

Another example of the involvement trend is Resurrection Lutheran Church in Spokane, Washington. Under the direction of its Director of Outreach, Sandy Anderson, the congregation sponsors regular mission servant events to Mexico. Anderson, who has led mission teams to Mexico for the past 15 years, regularly invites interested mission leaders from other congregations to accompany his teams in order to help others develop similar programs. The congregation is now supporting a pastor who serves the Mexican people and wants to do more to help the Mexican Lutheran Synod reach the many unreached Mexicans moving to the border areas near Texas and California.

Adults are not the only ones becoming personally involved in mission outreach. Youth volunteers help scrub, paint, and carry materials at mission construction sites, share their faith with the unchurched, and teach God’s Word to other young people. For example, Rev. Jay Reinke, pastor of Faith Lutheran Church, Pierre, South Dakota, trained 17

youth to teach Vacation Bible School at St. John the Evangelist Lutheran Church in Brooklyn, New York.

“From the moment we arrived,” said Reinke, “friendships blossomed between our youth and the black and Hispanic youth in the inner-city neighborhood. It was amazing!”

Lutheran congregations and individuals are also becoming involved in long-term mission commitments. For example, Trinity Lutheran Church in Arapahoe, Nebraska, recently entered into a partnership with LCMS World Mission to sponsor a new mission start in Jamaica. Members of the congregation’s mission committee have helped develop a mission society, complete with bylaws and procedures. The congregation sent representatives to Jamaica to help survey the mission opportunities and is working with LCMS World Mission staff to call a qualified missionary. The congregation will also be responsible for the missionary’s salary and benefits.

Other LCMS congregations and individuals are becoming more involved in cross-cultural mission work in the United States through the development of similar mission societies. For example, CLAIM (Committee for Lutheran American Indian Mission), is a new mission society formed to encourage new mission work among American Indian people. This organization recently called Dr. William Heinicke of Denver, Colorado, as executive director. To encourage this trend, LCMS World Mission has established guidelines to help such mission partnerships and works with the societies to provide counsel and coordination.

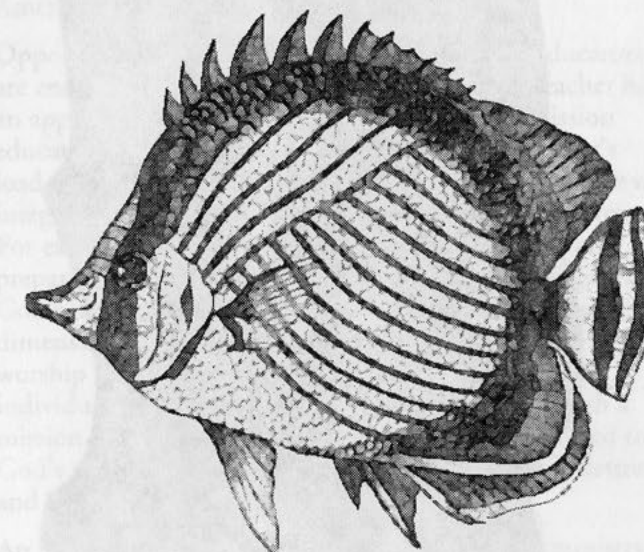
Mission involvement describes how these and other congregations help their members fulfill the Great Commission. Such involvement builds on mission inspiration and information, the traditional ways congregational leaders develop mission awareness and motivation. Examples of mission inspiration and information include:

- Using mission Bible studies;
- Singing mission hymns and hymns from other cultures;
- Sharing mission news; and
- Inviting a missionary to speak to the congregation.

While these activities are important when developing a mission-minded congregation, mission education cannot stop there. All members, including children and youth, need to become actively involved in God’s mission. Indeed, many congregations, looking for a reason for their lack of purpose in general and their lackluster approach to mission in particular, discover they have short-circuited the mission process. Instead of encouraging active participation in mission, they advocated an essentially passive approach. In effect, while not necessarily intending to do so, they treat their members as consumers of information or “contributors” who can give their money so someone else can fulfill God’s command to disciple the nations.

As church leaders reexamine their approach to mission and ministry in the ’90s and listen to their members, they have begun to change the way they go about carrying out the Great Commission. Pastors who desire to be mission leaders understand that adults as well as children learn best by “doing” rather than by just listening.

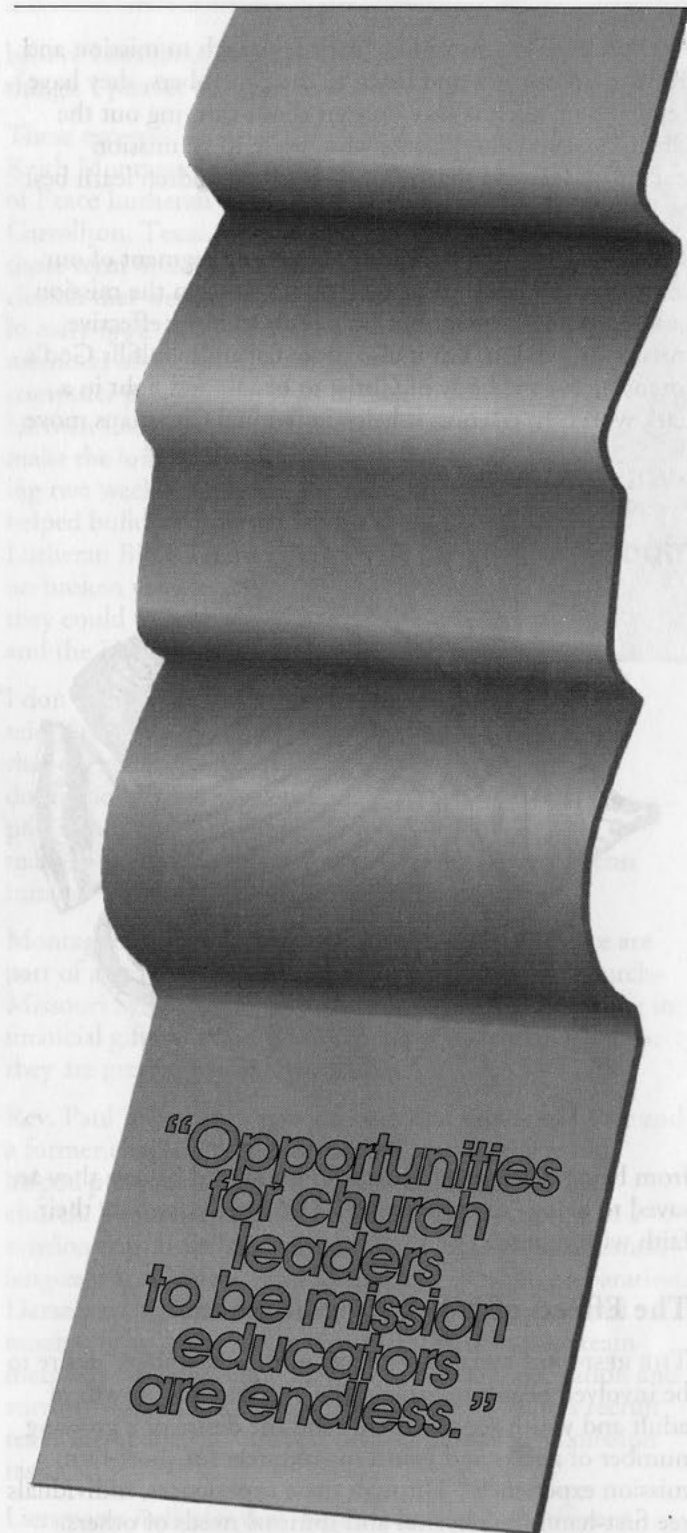
The so-called “baby boomers,” a growing segment of our congregations, want to be directly involved in the mission task. This involvement not only leads to more effective mission education, but it also more faithfully fulfills God’s intention for the body of Christ to be salt and light in a dark world. In essence, it helps individual Christians move



from being disciples of Jesus who know and believe they are saved to being “disciple-makers,” who actively share their faith with others.

The Effects of Mission Involvement

THE RESPONSE BY LCMS PASTORS to their members’ desire to be involved begins to explain the phenomenal growth of adult and youth servant events and the desire of a growing number of adults and youth to volunteer for short-term mission experiences. Through these experiences, individuals see first-hand the physical and spiritual needs of others. And, as these volunteers report, “their lives are never the same.” Involved people begin to understand God’s purpose for their own lives. Most report becoming more involved in their home congregation and a growing sensitivity to cross-cultural opportunities and social needs in their community, along with a desire to do more personally to help fulfill the Great Commission.



Not surprisingly, as a result of short-term involvement, more adults become interested in long-term missionary service. Out of the 205 missionaries who make up the current LCMS world missionary staff, 132 are laypeople. Many now serve as career missionaries because of an earlier short-term mission experience.

After visiting a mission field or serving in a cross-cultural servant event outside their home area, laypeople are becoming more involved in outreach and service at home, including cross-cultural mission work in their own communities. The growing enthusiasm of laypeople breathes new life into older congregations. It also provides a model for younger congregations that tend to "wait" until they are "strong enough" to reach out to others.

In effect, we are seeing the beginning of a revolution in the way The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod defines the "mission." Instead of seeing mission work as done only by career missionaries, we recognize that there is a role for every baptized member. Instead of limiting mission work to activities done overseas to reach the lost, we are defining mission as everything that contributes to "making disciples of all nations." Instead of seeing a conflict between outreach and nurture functions of the church, we recognize that we are to build up people in their faith so that they might share it with others.

The term "mission church" is being redefined as more congregations act on the idea that every congregation, not just those on subsidy, is a "mission" church. As congregations organize their work around the Great Commission, God's mission becomes their "passion," what they live for!

Instead of delegating all their mission responsibility to a mission agency like LCMS World Mission, congregations recognize their own responsibility to help develop a global consciousness among their members. They work to equip members to witness in their daily lives, to evangelize the unchurched and to help plant the church among unreached people.

This direct involvement in God's mission by individuals and congregations has the potential to change not only the way The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod does mission work, but how that work is perceived by others and how it sets its priorities at the congregation, district and synodical levels.

The Goal of Effective Mission Leadership

PASTORS WHO RECOGNIZE that God's Holy Spirit is behind this mission movement gladly embrace it and accept their calling as equippers and mission educators. They see that their goal is:

... to equip all congregation members so that they

understand, celebrate, and act upon the fact that, by virtue of his or her baptism, each one is a partner with God in the greatest enterprise of all: making disciples of all nations.

Such mission education includes learning about God's mission and celebrating our partnership with God. But most of all, effective mission education means to become involved in God's mission, "doing the mission deeds" as well as "sowing the mission seeds."

Key Mission Education Functions of a Mission Leader

TO HELP FULFILL THE MISSION GOAL stated above, pastors, teachers and Christian parents can do some important things that motivate mission partnership, commitment and involvement. These include preaching, teaching, praying and leading others in prayer, recruiting, counseling, helping and witnessing.

Motivational preaching intentionally stresses God's call to His people to be involved in His plan to make disciples of all nations. Pastors who accept their role as mission educators will look for the mission message in their sermon texts. They will measure the success of their sermons not only by how well they rightly divide Law and Gospel, but by how well they communicate the mission message in a particular text.

Pastors, Sunday school teachers, and Christian day school teachers will teach Christian doctrine with an eye to helping their students see clearly how they can actively participate in God's mission.

Pastors, teachers and parents will ask the Lord of the Harvest to send out laborers into his harvest field (Luke 10:2). They will regularly pray during worship services and in their private and family devotions for God's mission and His missionaries and will encourage others to do likewise. They might use the prayer section of *Harvest* newsletter or the missionary birthday list in *Alive* to pray for missionary servants who are serving God cross-culturally.

Key mission leaders will accept their role as "mission recruiters," and counselors to help children, youth, and adults discover their spiritual gifts and use them to fulfill the Great Commission. Pastors and Christian teachers will also be aware of short-term mission opportunities in order to help their members and students become involved in servant events and mission trips, and to assess their gifts and personal experience in light of mission service opportunities.

Congregations and their mission education leaders can encourage members to help those who are already active in God's mission. For example, many missionaries need help

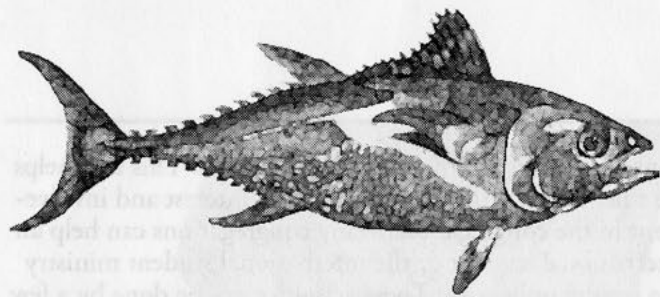
to prepare and send their missionary letters. This task helps the missionary while building mission interest and involvement in the congregation. Many congregations can help an international student or the international student ministry at a nearby university. These activities can be done by a few interested people or by the whole congregation.

Mission leaders can witness to non-Christians and serve as missionary models. In a new mission video, "Sharing in the Telling," Missionary Deaconess Carol Halter, who works in Hong Kong, reports that she always takes someone else with her when she visits a hospital, takes food to the street sleepers or makes evangelism calls. In this way, she is constantly helping others learn how to "share and tell" the Gospel. Many Christian church leaders here in North America can emulate this example.

Opportunities for church leaders to be mission educators are endless. If every role and task of a pastor or teacher has an appropriate mission education component, mission education does not need to add to the church worker's load. The mission-minded and involved church worker will integrate mission education into one's existing ministry. For example, it should take no longer for a pastor to prepare a sermon that holds up the mission challenge for God's people than to prepare one that leaves out this vital dimension. Or, it takes little effort to include in the worship service specific prayers for God's mission and individual missionaries. A Sunday school teacher with a mission heart can encourage students to be committed to God's mission by regularly reading missionary newsletters and by helping a class write to a missionary.

An intentional mission focus can tie together all ministry and educational efforts around the Great Commission in a satisfying, appropriate way. This will help the congregation and school to unify efforts around a central goal instead of being pulled in many directions.

Christian parents who desire to be mission educators but are faced with many demands and activities in their family life can make Christ's Great Commission the central focus of their family life. For example, as they guide their children in a career choice, parents can help their children consider how they can best serve God with their unique gifts and talents. Instead of just passively waiting to see what develops and whose schedules permit an activity, Christian parents can plan a family trip that is not only interesting and fun but also helps family members grow in mission commitment and involvement. My own family vacations have included family servant events that have turned out to be memorable. One trip to the Bahamas included swimming and touring the island in the mornings and working at an orphanage in the afternoons. Interestingly, the children remembered their work at the orphanage long after they forgot the tourist events.



Key Mission Responses to Mission-Focused Leadership

WHAT RESULTS CAN WE EXPECT from leaders who are "mission focused"? As they share God's Word and show by example what it means to reach out to hurting people, leaders can expect to see God's people respond by *learning, praying, giving, telling, sending, going* and *celebrating*. As children and adults listen to God's Word, are counseled by other Christians, and study God's Word regarding their own involvement in His mission, they will respond in appropriate ways that lead to the fulfillment of Christ's Great Commission.

Mission-related *learning* will answer questions like, "What is God's view of the world? What is God's mission goal for the world? Who are the people God cares about and where do they live? What is our church doing to reach these unreached people? Who are the missionaries acting in our behalf and what are they doing to accomplish God's mission?"

Mission-related *praying*, another key mission response, moves from praying in general to praying for world evangelization, for specific missionaries and their families, for unbelievers known and unknown, and for one's self to be a better witness for Jesus Christ.

Another key mission education response, *giving*, goes beyond giving to a worthy cause to giving money to my church to support mission work or giving money to special mission projects. It means giving time to learn more about God's mission and to demonstrate Christ's love to those in need.

God's people can also respond to His love in Jesus Christ by *telling*. I can tell my family members, friends and neighbors about the Lord Jesus and His love for all people.

Sending is yet another appropriate mission education response. God's new life people can send others until we can go ourselves or because we cannot go to an unreached people group. We can send and support others by praying, writing, giving money and offering to help with specific needs.

Going is also a response that brings delight to God. We can go right now to people we know who need Jesus or wherever the Lord directs us to make disciples.

Finally, *celebrating* can be done with God's people around the world. By learning and singing God's praises in differ-

ent languages and by showing in our lives that Jesus is alive, we can demonstrate that we are God's children and that He has chosen us to do a job for Him in His world!

The How of Mission Education

SO FAR WE HAVE CONSIDERED the importance of mission involvement, the results of mission involvement, the goal of mission education, important functions of a mission leader and some appropriate mission education responses. These points add up to the *what* of mission education. Now let's turn to the *how* of mission education.

Mission education that leads to whole-hearted and committed partnership with God in His enterprise to "make disciples of all nations" does not just happen. In addition to the faithful study, teaching and preaching of God's Word, it requires prayer and planning on our part. In addition, we can take steps as a church to encourage mission education leadership and to help our congregations and schools become dynamic mission agencies.

Ways Mission Leaders Can Develop Their Knowledge and Skills

CONGREGATIONAL MISSION LEADERS can develop mission knowledge, skills and competence in several ways.

1. Current and potential mission educators can learn from other mission education leaders. LCMS World Mission has a list of more than 100 congregations that are helping their members to be directly involved in God's mission and the names of key mission leaders who are willing to help others learn from their experiences.
2. One can attend an LCMS Mission Education Convocation or sponsor a SMILE (Sharing Mission Education in Lutheran Education) Seminar in your area. Qualified staff will share important mission information and resources and provide training in how to use mission curriculum and other mission education resources in church or school. In addition, such meetings provide an opportunity for pastors, teachers, and lay mission leaders to learn from one another.
3. LCMS Mission Education has an eight-chapter *Mission Education Handbook* to help mission leaders develop mission vision, commitment and knowledge. This resource book is given to participants at regional mission education convocations and other special training events.
4. LCMS Mission Education produces an annual mission education catalog. This free resource

describes hundreds of audio, visual and print resources including mission Bible study guides, mission bulletin inserts, mission videos and brochures about every world mission field. Ordering, viewing and reading these resources can help the mission leader grow in understanding and competence of current mission challenges and opportunities. In turn the leader can use many of these resources to help others understand more about God's mission around the world and how to be part of it.

In every LCMS district there is a mission education representative or other district staff to advise congregation leaders. Individuals can call their district office or LCMS Mission Education to contact these leaders. LCMS World Mission has the names of 500 former missionaries who can be contacted to help mission education leaders or to speak at congregation mission events.

5. Another possibility is to visit a mission field or accompany a more experienced mission leader on an adult servant event or mission trip. Such an experience will awaken a desire to help others experience the joy of participating directly in cross-cultural mission work. A mission leader's interest and desire is even more important than experience and knowledge. Apathy, not lack of experience, keeps many mission leaders from leading more intentionally and effectively.

6. LCMS seminaries and colleges have an important role in preparing pastors, teachers, directors of Christian education, and future mission leaders who will equip the whole church to be involved in God's mission. For this to happen, LCMS higher-education institutions need to emphasize mission education in their existing curricula and to develop new course offerings. Such courses are important not only to share methods and resources but also to provide the Bible based theology needed to guide the church into enthusiastic involvement in God's mission. Leaders who understand and are committed to the Great Commission as central to the life and work of the church will integrate this focus in all of their ministries.

Developing a Congregational Mission Program

PASTORS AND SCHOOL PRINCIPALS usually have people in their congregations and schools who are potential partners in developing an effective mission education program. Some may be quite interested and willing to help. LCMS Mission Education has developed model job descriptions

and an implementation plan for congregation and school-based mission education committees. These resources can help mobilize a group of mission educators who can help the congregation and school carry out God's mission while involving more and more members, students and teachers. Also, such a board or committee can help the congregation/school coordinate activities and focus ministry around the Great Commission. In this way, congregations and schools can become dynamic mission agencies, impacting society positively while fulfilling Christ's Great Commission.

The new *Mission Education Handbook* mentioned previously includes: questionnaires to help congregations, schools, and individuals evaluate their mission commitment and involvement; information about strategy to awaken mission interest and equip congregations for an active mission role; ideas to develop a congregation or school-based mission education program; and lists of leaders and organizations to help mission leaders and congregations to participate more faithfully in God's mission.

Conclusion

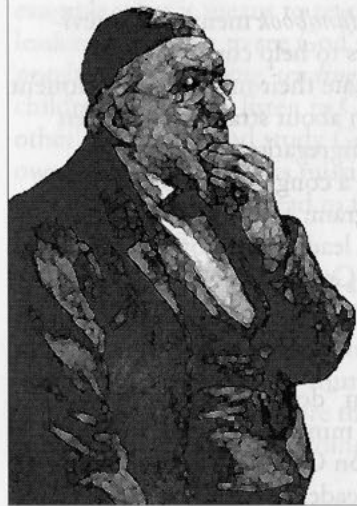
IF WE ARE EVER TO MOVE from "doing ministry for others" to "equipping others for their ministry," we must become mission educators. Focusing on Christ's Great Commission as we minister gives mission leaders an integrating principle around which to organize our congregations and schools. When we focus on God and His plan, we know what we are to do and where we are to go in ministry. We have a way to plan and evaluate our work. "What really helps us fulfill the Great Commission?" can become the question to help us consider our options and carry out God's plan in our part of God's kingdom.

Mission education is at the heart of all we are about as a church. It is at the heart of what Christ called us to do when he said in Matthew 28:18-20:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age."

Note: Information about Mission Education convocations, SMILE Workshops, the *Mission Education Handbook*, resources such as brochures and videos, and ways to contact district representatives is available from LCMS Mission Education by calling 1-800-433-3954, Extension 1318.

book reviews



THE GOAL OF THE GOSPEL: GOD'S PURPOSE IN SAVING YOU by Philip M. Bickel and Robert L. Nordlie. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992.

What pastor has not agonized over the question posed by the opening vignette of this book, "How do I motivate people for dedicated Christian living without whipping them with the law and losing sight of the Gospel?" That the authors undertake a laudable challenge is unquestioned. Their answer to that challenge raises many questions.

The authors believe they have discovered an antidote for ecclesiastical sleeping sickness which can revitalize the church, namely, an emphasis on obedience as the goal of the Gospel. They see this emphasis as having three facets: 1) obedience to God's revealed will; 2) world evangelization through the proclamation of the Gospel; and 3) living to the glory of God. In a book punctuated with many anecdotes that illustrate the point, the authors set out to show how God's people may be moved to greater service to Him, namely, through much greater emphasis on obedience as the goal of the Gospel.

The first section of the book traces the development of this theme through the Scriptures, pointing out that obedience is a frequent accent throughout the Bible. The final chapter of this section, entitled "Sanctiphobia," speaks of the dangers of preaching too much sanctification on the one

side, suffering from a Gospel deficiency, and fearing to challenge people to courageous living for their Lord on the other, which is termed "sanctiphobia."

The second section looks at Romans in greater depth before concluding with two chapters on multicultural and mission emphases. Though the authors suggest a different thematic content for Romans than traditional analyses, this section offers a good deal of insight.

The greatest difficulty for this reader is getting past the main theme. Obedience as the goal of the Gospel is a phrase fraught with difficulty. The purpose of the Gospel is the salvation of human beings, the eternal life which is made possible by the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. While the authors recognize that the *ultimate* goal of the Gospel is eternal life, obedience as the goal of the Gospel is repeated throughout. The accents on the grace of God as seen in the work of Jesus stirring the Christian to life, the coupling of creation and redemption, the work of the Christian as flowing from His relationship to the Christ of the cross, seem too often to be themes of secondary importance. Though sound Lutheran principles are enunciated in many places, the overall emphasis leaves this reader feeling that the book was written closer to Geneva than Wittenberg. It will undoubtedly provoke a good deal of discussion in the current dialogue over sanctification taking place within our church.

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NEW AGE SPIRITUALITY: AN ASSESSMENT. Duncan S. Ferguson, editor. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993.

For many the New Age brings to mind images of Shirley MacLaine's *Out on a Limb* or *Dancing in the Light*. But that was nearly ten years ago, and as movements transform themselves and evolve, this movement has expanded, evolved, and radically divided itself into a host of interests. William Bloom's book, *The Seeker's Guide: A New Age*

Resource Book, includes a plethora of topics, listing some 40 headings, ranging from Goddess Spirituality to Chaos Theory to Holistic Business to Deep Ecology.

The essays in Duncan's anthology underscore the fact that the New Age Movement is no longer single issue-focused as were the works of Shirley MacLaine. Moreover, New Age is anything but monolithic and ordered; rather it is filled with ambiguity and picaresque "saints." This study will take you into the psychological, sociological, historical and philosophical dimensions of the movement. The essays highlight the quest of the divine, selfhood, planetary transformation as viewed from various vantage points, and concludes with a section with critical responses to the less than wholesome aspects of the movement.¹

After hearing various accounts of the underlying desperation of people engaged in spiritual quests for meaning and no longer turning to the Church and classic forms of worship, it came as a relief to reach the closing portion of the anthology of essays which is a critical appraisal of *New Age Spirituality*. But I was immediately disappointed with reviews by Lisa Woodside, Harmon Hartzell Bro and finally Matthew Fox. I had bristled throughout the work when classic Christianity and fundamentalism with its sin/redemption motif were chided. But the final critiques are more a critique of what may be at fault in classic churches and theology!

Maybe there is something to learn from such reviews. As I moved from essay to essay, it was apparent that New Age has a definite message for the Baby Boomer generation and post-Boomers! Indeed, John Naisbitt and Patricia Auburdene in *Megatrends 2000* note well the fact that the New Age is short on dogma, oftentimes shallow, and self-centered. Nonetheless, its more mature forms of expression are committed to a new cosmology which seeks to embrace science/religion, body/spirit, matter/consciousness, thinking/feeling, male/female, and other perspectives.

Secondly, the New Age is committed to a doctrine of divine immanence, or divine presence in nature and the earth, and all things living.

Thirdly, it is dedicated to amending what is wrong with our world and culture, its materialistic value systems, those ideologies which divide

peoples, and those moral and ethical practices which exploit both earth and peoples.

The reflective Christian reader must ask, "What must we do better to reach this generation—what must we do and say that we have not been doing or saying?" Is it not time to reexamine how we do theology in the classroom, school, parish and Church! We need not scuttle the great theme of sin/redemption, but we do need to speak Law/Gospel in the context of creation. We need to search for new ways to reach those committed to the widely diverse aspects of the New Age!

What implications does all of this have for the Church? The first and most obvious need for us Lutherans is a recovery of Luther's theology of creation and eschatology, a rediscovery of the first and third articles of the Creed. Matthew Fox, Dominican, now dismissed from his order, is not a Luther, but he does urge a recovery of first article theology.²

Lutherans have a rich heritage of creation, redemption and sanctification theology to share along with an ultimate eschatology! New-Ager blunders surface throughout the reading and beg for a theology which knows the need of spiritually hungry people who need to be fed with the Word and sustained through Word and Sacrament. The mission call should be heard loudly when you reach the end of the book. It will be heard by anyone who is sensitive to the Law-Gospel theme as we confess our faults, and as we review and seek out better ways to communicate the Gospel.

¹Religious/spiritual failures of the movement from a Biblical/theological perspective are discussed in the following:

How to Respond to the New Age Movement, Concordia Publishing House, 1988;

Lochhaas, Philip, "Comments on the New Age Movement," *Lutheran Witness*, April, 1987, pp. 8-10;

Groothuis, Douglas, "The Shamanized Jesus," *Christianity Today*, April 29, 1991;

Hinlicky, Ellen and Paul, "Gnosticism: Old and New," *Dialog*, 281, Winter, 1989, pp. 12-17;

Peters, Ted, "The Gospel and the New Age," *Dialog*, 281/1, Winter, 1989, pp. 18-29;

Groothuis, Douglas, *Unmasking the New Age*, Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1986.

²For a cutting critique of the excesses of Matthew Fox's views, see Ruether, Rosemary Radford, "Matthew Fox and Creation Spirituality," *The Catholic World*, July/August, 1990, pp. 168-172.

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JOY TO THE WORLD: GOD'S GLOBAL MISSION FOR LOCAL CHRISTIANS by Philip M. Bickel. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989.

Families in Bosnia, Togo, and Turkey; an unemployed single Hispanic mother in Los Angeles; a Jewish attorney in New York; a seaman from a faraway land docked in Seattle—today's mission opportunities. "The joy of the Lord is our strength," and we are compelled to share our Lord with a world in need of joy. *Joy to the World* challenges each Christian to acknowledge his/her call to be a world Christian, "a believer who, laying aside all provincialism, recognizes the global nature of God's Law and Gospel." The world Christian leads his/her church to become a world congregation, organized intentionally to share Jesus Christ on this continent and beyond.

Missionaries who cross cultural and environmental barriers are one kind of world Christian. But not all are called to leave the comforts of home in order to participate in mission work. A "commissionary" works with the missionary to fulfill the Great Commission by praying, writing letters of encouragement, educating fellow members, and providing financial support. Each Christian is to find his/her "one-person-sized role" in evangelizing the world.

World evangelization is good, important, necessary, commanded by our Lord—but not happening. "Frustration, guilt and a sense of burden have hindered the mission joy of many Christians, leaving them overwhelmed, incapacitated and discouraged." Bickel develops this theme, stating that Christians must recuperate from "hardening of the hearteries" in order to share Christ effectively. The congregation and members need to

identify the issues or mindsets which hinder their outreach.

Does our church take the mission call seriously? We become engrossed in home concerns: leaky roof, pastoral vacancy, differences of opinions among members. World evangelization can be the unifying purpose of the church. Members, staff, and friends of the congregation consider ways to reach out to those who do not know Christ. I may be able to visit an inner city mission to provide my mission assistance. Another member prays daily for multiple missionaries, keeping in touch through an extensive correspondence. The staff provides a vision for missions, identifying laity who can provide leadership to congregational efforts. Bickel makes sure to include numerous practical ideas of how individual members can be involved in mission outreach. Each chapter concludes with "Do Something Now," a series of suggestions the reader can pursue to learn more about missions.

Designed to be read by every Christian, but especially the Lutheran Christian, *Joy to the World* may best be utilized by a congregational board for missions that can spearhead efforts to involve each member in outreach. Bickel has a readable style, enhanced with numerous vignettes from the mission field. He provides Biblical and historical perspectives on missions which will motivate readers to take up the work of previous generations.

It is not law but the work of our Lord that causes us to reemphasize the importance of missions. As we review our church history, we are reminded of our role models, those who laid the groundwork for a world church. "Joy to the world, the Lord is come . . . And heav'n and nature sing." We cannot keep it to ourselves, but must share the joy within. *Joy to the World* provides the theoretical and historical undergirdings, as well as practical suggestions, to reenergize our efforts.

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book reviews

reflections

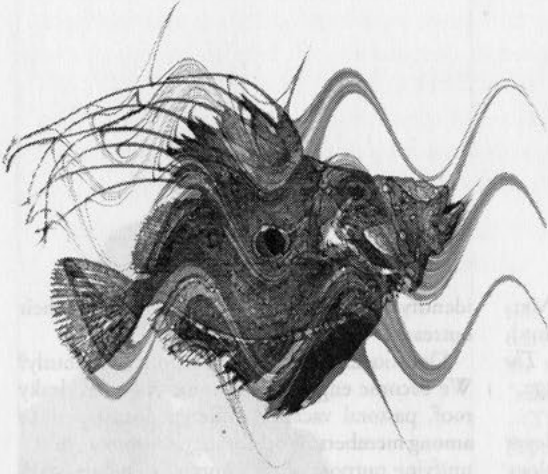
reflections

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Steve Hughey emphasizes that a goal of mission education is involvement. Just as educators have known that children learn best by doing, rather than only listening, likewise all Christians need to be actively involved in the Great Commission proclamation. He suggests that this enables individual Christians to "move from being disciples of Jesus, who know and believe they are saved, to being 'disciple-makers' who actively share their faith with others."

The emphasis of this *ISSUES* is not on more programs. What is highlighted is mission—God's mission. The plea is to move us from doing ministry for others to equipping others for their ministry by becoming mission educators. May each reader be renewed in the mission God has given us, seeing people around us in a new light, opening ourselves to people God brings into our expanding circle of life, thereby enabling us to strengthen fellow Christians in other places in their common ministry with us.

Orville C. Walz



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