

A Movement Divided

Three approaches to world evangelization stand in tension with one another.

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Those who want to make social issues a bigger part of the world evangelization agenda have "met with the opposition of evangelical forces that seem committed to pull the [missions] movement backwards, towards mission styles of the Cold War era and towards pushing the imperial marketing of theological and missiological packages created within the framework of North American society."

This article examines the Lausanne movement, including the landmark evangelization conferences of 1974 and 1989 and focuses on questions of social issues and the gospel.

The major purpose is to identify and describe three missiological streams which must establish dialogue with one another if the task of world evangelization is to be accomplished.

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missions task, approaches that stand in tension with one another, particularly with regard to the issue of social transformation. I believe these tensions must be resolved or they will continue to have a negative impact on the task at hand.

I call the three missiologies post-imperial missiology, managerial missiology, and missiology from the periphery. I will describe each of them in detail later in this essay, but first the historical context.

A BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW

Following World War II, independent faith-missions and conservative denominational agencies for the most part took control of the Protestant missionary effort from North America. Their enthusiasm and dynamism in the decades after 1945 stood in contrast with the decline of the foreign missionary enterprise of mainline Protestant denominations. The reasons for the decline in the mainline missionary effort are open to debate. Some blame theological debilitation in the sending churches. Others cite mainline churches' recognition of the decolonization process that accelerated between 1945 and 1955 and the resultant rise of national churches

in the emerging Two-Thirds World, a reality that demanded a new type of missionary effort.¹

In any case, a major characteristic of the independent missionary movement was militant conservatism, in its theology as well as in its predominant perspectives on social issues. The movement was highly influenced by Manichean ideological perceptions of the Cold War according to which the world was divided in two sides, the "Christian West" and the Communist "Evil Empire". A review of missionary literature of that era reveals a strong anti-communist fervour. Such sentiment was a strong motivator for missions activity. Calls to send missionaries to "save Latin America from communism", for example, were common. In this respect, Evangelicals were no different from their Roman Catholic counterparts. Among the enthusiastic promoters of missions who linked the effort with a crusading Anti-Communism were people such as Cardinal Cushing in Boston² and magazines such as *Christianity Today*.³ By 1961, evangelical missiologists, including Eric Fife and Arthur Glasser, had begun registering their concern about the church being identified with "the political programme of the West in its cold war with the communist powers".⁴

The landmark 1974 Lausanne conference on world evangelization introduced new ideas and theological perspectives on the task of world mission. Among the most significant developments fostered by the Lausanne movement has been the rediscovery of the transformative dynamism of the gospel, not only at the personal level, but also in the structures of society. The very name of this publication, *Transformation*, testifies to evangelicals' attempts to take seriously both the social context and the social effects of missionary action based on biblical models.

I detect three distinct trends within the evangelical missions movement. They represent three distinct approaches to the

¹ An excellent collection of historical studies pioneering serious research about these problems has been provided by a volume recently appeared, edited by Joel Carpenter and Wilbert Shenk, *Earthen Vessels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990).

² Cardinal Cushing saw to it that volunteers (as well as other

Latin American missionaries of that day) received copies of J. Edgar Hoover's *Masters of Deceit*, as well as his own *Questions and Answers on Communism*, says Gerald M. Costello in *Mission to Latin America* (Maryknoll, New York, 1979).

³ Edgar Hoover's Anti-Communist writings were also published

in *Christianity Today* Vol V, Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 19, 1960 - 1961.

⁴ Eric S. Fife and Arthur F. Glasser, *Missions in Crisis*, (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1961), p 61.

To turn the Christian message into an ideology of social conformism or conservatism was to betray the biblical Gospel

One of the effects of this conservative anti-Communism was the blinding of missionaries and mission boards to the inevitability and the promise of some of the processes of social transformation that were taking place, especially in the Two-Thirds World. Alert voices that in no way could be accused of being communists started calling attention to the fact that to turn the Christian message into an ideology of social conformism or conservatism was to betray the biblical Gospel. In the missionary or evangelistic conferences that preceded Lausanne 1974, warnings to this effect were sounded. They came in part from missionaries and theologians from younger churches in the Two-Thirds World and from other mission frontiers.⁵ In documents such as the "Declaration of Bogotá", issued by the First Latin American Congress of Evangelism (1969), and the Chicago Declaration of Social Concern (1973)⁶, it is possible to detect a new Evangelical awareness of the need for social transformation. These documents state or strongly imply that the announcement and acceptance of and obedience to the Gospel are bound to produce a measure of social change.⁷

THE CONFLUENCE AT LAUSANNE 1974

The resurgent post-war evangelical missionary movement of the 40s and 50s, with all its virtues and defects, was only one of the streams that came to a junction at Lausanne 1974. Another stream consisted of the evangelical leadership representing young Two-Thirds World Churches that had grown significantly in

the decades after World War II. Sponsorship and enthusiasm for the movement came also from a third stream, one represented by evangelistic organizations such as Billy Graham's. Such groups called attention to the fact that in North America and Europe there was a new awareness of spiritual needs and a religious vacuum that was not being filled by institutionalized Christianity. The fourth stream was the revival of Evangelical scholarship in biblical and theological studies, especially in Great Britain but also in other European countries. This stream was related to and represented by, for example, evangelical student work of Inter Varsity, which combined missionary zeal and scholarly concern.

At Lausanne 1974 evangelicalism was forced to deal with the dramatic context that surrounded mission in places like the Two-Thirds World or poor sections of Europe and North America. It also had to take seriously the social implications of the Gospel. Even during the preparation for the Lausanne Congress, for which the texts of the main presentations were circulated in advance, there was an unexpected enthusiastic reception to papers such as those of Rene Padilla and myself.⁸ This welcome came especially from national delegates of countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and from the most mature European mission leaders.⁹ But there was opposition, including some from strong missionary sectors in North America, who wanted to dismiss the proposals of these and other speakers as either heterodox or impractical. As it happened evangelicalism left the confluences and confrontations of Lausanne 1974 (or Lausanne I) with a "new face" and with the consensus of a renewed missiological discourse expressed in the Lausanne Covenant.

An attentive reading of the Covenant reveals the character of this evangelicalism with a new face. On the one hand, it expressed a clear and unequivocal commitment to the evangelical foundations regarding the authority of Scripture, the biblical definition of evangelism, the missionary imperative of the Gospel, the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and his atoning work, the costly discipleship to which the Lordship of Jesus Christ calls his followers, and the

final hope only in the return of Jesus Christ and not in humanistic utopias of any sort. But what was new in the evangelical agenda as expressed in the Covenant was a commitment to take seriously the missiological consequences of those beliefs. It was at these points that Lausanne fostered a desire to move forward in obedience and not just to produce a "safe" perfunctory recitation of theological common places.¹⁰

Lausanne fostered a desire to move forward in obedience

The Lausanne I event, as well as the Covenant, embodied at least four points at which we can see a forceful challenge to adopt a new form of missionary practice and reflection. The first was a commitment to the concept of *holistic* mission, as opposed to the dualistic spiritualizations that had predominated in some forms of postwar missionary practice. Second was the call for *cooperation* in the missions task – between church and para-church, mainline and evangelical, Pentecostal and Reformed – on the sole basis of the missionary passion shared at the Lausanne event and the theological consensus reached in the Covenant itself. Third was the awareness that in the post-imperial era in which we live, the missionary and theological tasks have a *global* dimension wherein neither imperialism nor provincialism have a place. And fourth was the commitment to consider seriously the *context* of missions: the social, ideological and spiritual struggles that surround and condition the missionary enterprise. Of these four points, the first and fourth in particular significantly influenced how Christian mission and social transformation were and are perceived.

FROM LAUSANNE I TO LAUSANNE II IN MANILA

After Lausanne I, a process of reflection and clarification more visibly accompanied evangelical missionary

5 My own participation in the Berlin Congress on Evangelism, "The Totalitarian Climate", was very explicit. See Carl F.H.J. Henry and Stanley Mooneyham, Eds., *World Congress on Evangelism. One Race, One Gospel, One Task* (Minneapolis: Worldwide Publications, 1966), Vol. II. See also chapters 3, 4 and 5 of the book *Missions in Crisis* mentioned in the previous note.

6 Ron Sider, *The Chicago Declaration*, Carol Stream, (Illinois: Creation House, 1974).

7 A valuable example of the process that was taking place are

the messages of the 1970 Urbana Missionary Convention, John R.W. Stott and others, *Christ the Liberator*, (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1971).

8 Padilla's paper dealt with "Evangelism and the World", and was critical of the way in which the evangelistic message coming from North America was distorted by North American Culture. My own paper dealt with the social implications of the Gospel, under the title "Evangelism and Man's Search for Freedom Justice and fulfillment".

9 From the almost 700 responses to my own presentation at

Lausanne I, most were positive and in agreement with the need to reformulate the Evangelical position about social responsibility as part of the Christian mission.

10 This is evident for example in the extended commentary to the Covenant written by fifteen Evangelicals from around the world, see C. Rene Padilla, Ed. *The New Face of Evangelicalism*, (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press and London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975).

action. The Lausanne Committee sponsored a series of consultations, which attracted the participation of missionaries, pastors, mission executives and missiologists from many evangelical bodies, including the World Evangelical Fellowship, the Latin American Theological Fraternity, the Fuller School of World Mission, World Vision International, and Evangelicals for Social Action. These gatherings became platforms for missions practitioners and theorists engaged in the task of "doing theology" together, on a global scale. At one of the first such consultations, participants reached and expressed a commitment: "We should seek with equal care to avoid theological imperialism or theological provincialism. A church's theology should be developed by the community of faith out of the Scripture in interaction with other theologies of the past and present, and with the local culture and its needs".¹¹

Missionary and theological tasks have a global dimension wherein neither imperialism nor provincialism have a place

Some evangelicals became very critical of the kind of missiological and theological agenda expressed by the Covenant¹². Some tried to reduce the Lausanne movement to a fundamentalistic programme. There were those who found it impossible to accept the commitment to globalism and to respect the legitimacy of Third World concerns and challenges.¹³ Nevertheless, between Lausanne I in 1974 and the second conference sponsored by the Lausanne Committee, Lausanne II in Manila in 1989, the movement encouraged and fostered a fair degree of missionary activity and reflection. The balance among those with different ideas was fragile, and in many instances it almost came to breaking point. But unity prevailed thanks largely to the maturity

and diplomatic abilities of evangelical statesmen such as John Stott, Leighton Ford, Emilio Nunez, Bishop Jack Dain, Gottfried Ossei-Mensah, Dick Van Halsema and others.

However, as the date for Lausanne II approached, several missionaries and theologians, especially in the Two-Thirds World, expressed apprehension about the direction the movement seemed to be taking. They detected a mood of retreat from territory gained in 1974 to narrower and "safer" positions. They perceived efforts among organizers to avoid controversial issues and speakers. They feared Lausanne II would be used as a marketing joint for missionary packages devised in North America.¹⁴

Lausanne II was held in Manila, Philippines, July 11-20, 1989, fifteen years after the first conference. Chris Sugden and Valdir Steuarnagel have interpreted this second event in the pages of *Transformation*.¹⁵ Robert T. Coote wrote an excellent interpretative chronicle of the conference in the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*.¹⁶ From my own perspective, in Lausanne II we had a clear demonstration that at the grassroots level, all over the world, there has been significant progress in the practice of mission following the agenda of Lausanne I. Voices such as those of Caesar Molebatsi from South Africa, Valdir Steuarnagel from Brazil, Peter Kuzmic from Yugoslavia, and Jovito Salonga from the Philippines, could not be barred from the platform. In addition, hundreds of practitioners of holistic forms of mission shared their experience, their joys, their pain, their frustration and their hopes in various seminars and workshops. However, this progress in the application of Lausanne I has met with the opposition of evangelical forces that seem committed to pull the movement backwards, towards mission styles of the Cold War era and towards pushing the imperial marketing of theological and missiological packages created within the framework of North American society.

In spite of the relatively little space given to issues of holistic mission in the programme, and the prominence of a North American conservative agenda, some crucial moments at Lausanne II highlighted again the relevance of the Lausanne I agenda. These moments were the most challenging from a missiological

perspective. The testimony of Lucien Accad about the suffering and anguish involved in missionary work in Beirut, for example, illustrated the reality that in many places around the world, mission takes place in situations for which there are no easy solutions or magical formulas or answers to be conveyed in statistical charts. Another of these challenging moments was when Os Guinness presented the dilemma posed by modernity to the church in a brilliant paper that ought to become a point of reference for evangelical missiology for years to come. "To the degree that the church enters, engages and employs the modern world uncritically, the church becomes her own gravedigger", warned Guinness. Indeed, some of us felt that the programme of Lausanne II had been so conditioned by an uncritical use of modern technology that Guinness' warning should have been heard when the event was being planned.

In his presentation "The Challenge of Other Religions", Colin Chapman questioned the pragmatism of those who go about devising strategies to reach people of other faiths without having done their biblical and theological homework. Chapman was exploring an area in which evangelical missiology is weak, partly due to its inherent triumphalism.

THREE MISSIOLOGICAL TRENDS

In my view, we witnessed in Lausanne II three distinct mission theologies currently developing in the evangelical world. They have gone their own separate ways within the evangelical missionary movement. The cause of mission would benefit greatly if the three could find ways to interact. This is especially important as a fresh missionary thrust develops in the churches of the Two-Thirds World, churches in search of models for their participation in the global missionary task of the coming decades. However, the Lausanne consensus has been a fragile platform, and constructive interaction has proved almost impossible. Coexistence has not developed into cooperation. Given the urgency of the tasks ahead, and the growing scarcity of resources, we should try our best to have a real dialogue and to adopt new forms of cooperation. In the remainder of this

11 From the Report issued by the Willowbank conference about Gospel and Culture, sponsored by Lausanne. See report and papers in John R.W. Stott and Robert T. Coote, Eds., *Down to Earth. Studies in Christianity and Culture*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978).

12 Notable among them Arthur P. Johnston, *The Battle for World Evangelism*, Wheaton: Tyndale, 1978.

13 The best study of this aspect of the post-Lausanne process

is the PhD. dissertation of Brazilian missiologist Valdir Steuarnagel, *The Theology of Missions in its Relation to Social Responsibility Within the Lausanne Movement*, Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, 1988.

14 As an example of this perception, Rene Padilla who was a speaker at Lausanne I, did not accept the invitation to Lausanne II. See his editorial comments in "Mission y compromiso social", *Mision*, Vol. 8, No. 4, Buenos Aires, Dec. 1989, pp.

120-121.

15 Vol. 51, 7, No. 1, January-March 1990. This issue contains also the text of several presentations and documents from the Conference.

16 "Lausanne II and World Evangelization", *IBMR*, Vol. 14, No. 1, January 1990, pp. 10-17.

essay, I shall outline the three missiological approaches I see at work, especially as each relates to the Gospel's transformational dynamism.

POST-IMPERIAL MISSIOLOGY

Post-imperial missiology emanates mainly from evangelicals in Great Britain and Europe, and is characterized by a clear post-imperial stance. For this missiology, both the disestablishment of Christian churches in Europe and the emergence of new forms of Christianity in the Two-Thirds World pose serious questions to missionary activity from the West. Post-imperial missiology has taken new realities into account and developed a new frame of reference for mission. For post-imperial missiology, missiological construction has moved in at least three directions. First is the renewed search for biblical patterns to correct and illuminate contemporary mission activity. The field was pioneered by John Stott in his biblical studies about the Great Commission and in his definition of keywords such as "salvation", "conversion", "evangelism", "dialogue" and "mission".¹⁷ Another systematic contribution that focused on evangelism in the Apostolic era came from Michael Green, in a book that summarized the findings of contemporary scholarship from the perspective of an evangelist.¹⁸ Other evangelical contributions exploring the New Testament material have important missiological consequence as they clarify the relevance of New Testament ethical teaching¹⁹ or social practice.²⁰ Missionary practice, especially its social and political dimensions, has been the source of the questions brought by these scholars to the exploration of the biblical material.

The second direction taken by this missiological exploration has been the critical work of writing and interpreting the history of missionary activity in a way that takes very seriously the ambiguities of the Western imperial enterprise and attempts to detach missionary obedience from it. This view of history uses critical insights from the sociology of knowledge

and the sociology of religion, but clearly differs from the reduction of missionary history to a form of class struggle or imperial advance, as proposed by some forms of liberation theology.²¹ Missiologists from the ecumenical movement who consider themselves evangelicals, including Max Warren²² and Stephen Neill,²³ pioneered this effort of missiological clarification. An excellent methodological introduction has been provided by Roger Mehl, himself a theologian and a sociologist.²⁴ Recently evangelicals have added some valuable contributions.²⁵

Post-imperial missiology has taken new realities into account and developed a new frame of reference for mission

One important consequence of this approach has been to clarify the degree to which missionary ideas and practices were influenced by the social context from which missionaries came. In this way it is possible to distinguish the biblical content of their teaching from the trappings of their national loyalties and class-conditioned attitudes. This is especially helpful as a generation of leaders in the younger churches engages in the theological task of contextualizing the Christian faith in various cultural settings. Max Warren's analysis of the British missionary movement was very valuable in this regard. Also, American missionary anthropologist Jacob Loewen has been one of the most consistent scholars in his use of insights from anthropology to evaluate critically the missionary enterprise from North America.²⁶

The third direction of this missiological exploration is the visualization of the future of mission as a

global task in which the churches of the North Atlantic world enter into creative patterns of partnership with churches in the Two-Thirds World. In relation to this, Andrew Walls has explored the missiological significance of what he calls "the massive southward shift of the centre of gravity of the Christian world",²⁷ and the theological consequences of this shift for the self-image of churches in both North and South. Maurice Sinclair provides an excellent introduction to mission from this perspective.²⁸ What is distinctive about the partnership proposed by this missiology is that the Two-Thirds World churches are seen as agents and originators of a missionary effort and of a missiological reflection that is valid in its own right. They are not simply being asked to join the missionary enterprise devised in the mission centres of North America or Europe. This point is especially important given that the missionary agenda in the Two-Thirds World cannot avoid the issues linked to Christian mission and social transformation, issues such as human rights, the socio-political consequences of missionary action, the ideological use of the Christian message for political aims and the religious sanction for contemporary forms of economic or cultural colonialism.

The Two-Thirds World churches are seen as agents and originators of a missionary effort and of a missiological reflection that is valid in its own right

What characterizes this missiology is that the traditional evangelical missionary zeal is matched with a disposition to take courageously the lessons of history and to explore God's Word using the best

17 See especially his Bible expositions in Berlin 1966, and his book *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1975).

18 *Evangelism in the Early Church*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970).

19 Especially John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972).

20 See especially the pioneer work of Edwin A. Judge, *The Social Pattern of Christian Groups in the First Century*, (London: Tyndale Press, 1960). A more recent summary of this kind of research is Derek Tidball, *The Social Context of the New Testament*, (Zondervan 1984).

21 This kind of reductionism was expressed, for instance in the

WCC sponsored "Declaration of Barbados" which caused an uproar in the 70's. See *International Review of Mission*, July 1973. See my discussion of this matter in *Christian Mission and Social Justice*, (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1978), ch. 3.

22 Max Warren, *Social History and Christian Missions*, London: (SCM Press, 1967).

23 Stephen Neill, *Colonialism and Christian Mission*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1966).

24 See Roger Mehl, *Sociology of Protestantism*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970). Especially valuable are the introductory chapters I and II, and chapter 8 "Sociology of Missions".

25 Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag*, (Leicester: Inter

Varsity Press, 1990).

26 Jacob A. Loewen, *Culture and Human Values: Christian Intervention in Anthropological Perspective*, (Padadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1975).

27 Especially his articles "The Gospel as the Prisoner and Liberator of Culture", *Evangelical Review of Theology* (ERT), Vol. VII, No. 2, Oct. 1983 pp. 219 ff; and "Culture and Coherence in Christian History", *ERT*, Vol. IX, No. 3, Jul 1985, pp. 214 ff.

28 Maurice Sinclair, *Ripening Harvest, Gathering Storm* (London: MARC, 1988).

tools of Biblical scholarship. More than a closed package that is to be protected from the tough questions that come from life, mission theology is grounded on basic convictions but it is also an open enterprise, leaving missionary practice open to correction. Missionary practices of various British and European agencies tend to express these convictions; agencies such as Tear Fund, the South American Missionary Society, Overseas Missionary Fellowship and the Evangelical Union of South America try to shape their policies according to biblical principles more than to pragmatic considerations.

Some of the best missiological moments of Lausanne II were instances in which this missiology was expressed. It was especially evident in the Bible readings of John Stott and David Penman and in some of the plenary papers. However in the development of the programme there was no effort to grapple with the consequences of the truth that was taught from the platform, and the rest of the programme developed without specific reference to that biblical and theological foundation. Nothing new was explored from a missiological perspective at Lausanne II. There was not even an adequate treatment of new issues that have developed between 1974 and 1989, issues such as pluralism, the expansion of Islam, or the presence of missionary minorities in secularized European nations.

MANAGERIAL MISSIOLOGY

The distinctive note from the missiology that has developed especially around the cluster of evangelical institutions in Pasadena linked to the idea of "Church Growth", is the effort to *reduce Christian mission to a manageable enterprise*. Every characteristic of this missiology becomes understandable when perceived within the framework of that avowed intention. Concepts such as "people-group", "unreached people", "10-40 window", prayer methodologies, courses on signs and wonders, or evaluation tools, express both a strong sense of urgency and an effort to use every available instrument to accomplish the task. As a typical school of thought coming from the modern United States, the quantitative approach is predominant and the pragmatic orientation well defined. One way of achieving manageability is precisely to reduce reality to an understandable picture, and

then to project missionary action as a response to a problem that has been described in quantitative form. Missionary action is reduced to a linear task that is translated into logical steps to be followed in a process of management by objectives, in the same way in which the evangelistic task is reduced to a process that can be carried out in accordance with standard marketing principles.

Movements that express this approach have proliferated – perhaps due to some artificial sense of urgency – as we come to the end of the century. Organizations and strategies using the year 2000 A.D. as a date to complete world evangelization received considerable publicity at Lausanne II; an array of "arresting but mystifying statistics" were offered in highly promoted packages.²⁹ The use of statistical information in order to visualize the missionary task, as well as the use of key dates in order to motivate missionaries is not new in the history of missions. The famous "Enquiry" written by William Carey in 1792 to promote Protestant missions devoted a good number of pages to statistical charts about the population of the world and the religious affiliation of the peoples. Similarly, some of the great missionary conferences of our century featured detailed statistical information compiled for the purpose of communicating the scope of the missionary effort required and to promote a sense of urgency about it.

Managerial missiology has historically used statistical analysis as a way of measuring the effect of missionary action in an effort to reduce the lack of clarity that surrounded it, to offer objective criteria to define and evaluate mission success. This evaluative methodology was at the service of a narrowly defined concept of mission as numerical growth of the church. Mission was also understood largely – in fact almost exclusively – in terms of preaching the gospel among those who had not yet heard or accepted its message. The late Donald McGavran championed this position, which stood in contrast to more inclusive definitions of mission predominant especially in the conciliar ecumenical movement. In one of his last writings McGavran posed the dilemma very clearly: "In short, is mission primarily evangelism, or is it primarily all efforts to improve human existence?"³⁰ His choice is clear: "Winning many to the Christian life must be the dominant concern of all Christians. All those engaging in missiology need to be all things to all

people in order to lead some to believe in Christ and receive everlasting life. Once that is done, then limitation of population, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, developing just forms of government and other steps toward the better life will become much more possible and more permanent."³¹

Developments over which McGavran had no control aided in the formation of managerial missiology as we now know it. Because some acts of verbal communication of the Gospel – such as distribution of the printed page, hours of broadcasting through radio or TV, massive gatherings for evangelism, groups of new believers organized into churches – are all activities that can be counted and registered, they helped give birth to a managerial approach to the missionary task. At this point, this missiology has been subject to severe criticism, because of its yielding to the spirit of the age. Anyone who has engaged in mission in the Two-Thirds World or among the poor in the First World knows that the neat distinction established by McGavran is artificial. It was good for debate against exaggerations, but it does not function in practice. The reality is that missionary work cannot be reduced to statistics. Managerial missiology fails to appreciate those aspects of missionary work that cannot be measured or reduced to figures. In the same way it has given prominence to that which can be reduced to a statistical chart.

Missionary work cannot be reduced to statistics

The second important characteristic of this missiology is its pragmatic approach to the evangelistic task. Such an approach de-emphasizes theological problems, takes for granted the existence of adequate theological content, and consequently majors in method. An enterprise that presupposes that the theoretical questions are not important will be by force anti-theological. It is the kind of process that demands a closed view of the world in which the tough questions are not asked because they cannot be reduced to a linear management-by-objectives process. This system cannot live with paradox or mystery; it offers no theological or pastoral resources to cope with the suffering and persecution that many times are part of the missions reality, because it is geared

29 See Coole, *op.cit.*, pp. 15-16.

30 Donald McGavran, "Missiology Faces the Lion", *Missiology*

17 (3), p. 338.

31 *Ibid.* p. 340.

to provide methodologies for a guaranteed success. Yet it is only such categories as paradox, mystery, suffering and failure that enable us to grasp something of the depth of the spiritual battle involved in mission. And so managerial missiology either silences or underestimates these aspects of the history and current reality of missions because they do not fit the mathematical categories of so called church growth.

The pragmatic bias accounts also for the reductionist theological foundation of this missiology. The missionary effort is reduced to numerical growth and anything that would hinder such growth has to be eliminated. If the struggle for obedience to God in holistic mission involves costly participation in the processes of social transformation, it is simply eliminated. The slow process of development of a contextual theology for a young church tends to be considered inefficient and costly. It is replaced by prepackaged theologies translated from English. Efficient educational techniques such as "extension" have been developed within the frame of managerial missiology, but there has not been much progress in the production of contextual textbooks. Charles Taber points to the evangelical origins of the theological presuppositions of the Church Growth school, but he proves that its foundation is a "narrowed-down version of the evangelical hermeneutic and theology".³²

In the third place, with respect to the transformative dynamism of the Gospel, the strong influence of the American functionalist social sciences accounts for an important deficiency in managerial missiology. The structural-functional model of cultural anthropology is based on a static view of the world for which, as Taber says, "'Cultural givens' take on permanence and rigidity; it suggests that whatever is endures. This cannot help but undermine the hope of transformation which is central to the Gospel."³³ Peruvian missiologist Tito Paredes has developed this critical point, showing how managerial missiologists' reading of Scripture is affected by this socially conservative approach, resulting ultimately in a reductionist understanding of the Gospel and Christian mission.³⁴ Harvie Conn has studied the development of the missiological thought

of Donald McGavran³⁵ in relation to this area, especially the concepts about discipling and perfecting as phases and moments of the missionary process. Conn suggests that McGavran's evolution and self-correction have not always been adequately noticed or followed by his students and defenders. As an insider in the movement, Arthur Glasser has also provided a brief and clarifying evaluative chronicle.³⁶ Also some anthropologists of this school, especially Alan Tippet³⁷, Charles Kraft³⁸ and Paul Hiebert,³⁹ have been working patiently in a clarification of methodologies from the social sciences as they are applied to missiological work.

The enthusiastic fervour and the militancy of some proponents of managerial missiology, as well as the great amount of material and technical resources with which they promote their cause, has created a suspicion about motivation, especially in the Southern hemisphere. The idea that an accumulation of material resources is bound to produce certain effects, is reflected in the constant preoccupation with augmenting the missionary force quantitatively, without much debate about the quality of that missionary action. The suspicion of some Two-Thirds World Christians is that they are being used as objects of a missionary action that seems to be directed to the main objective of enhancing the financial, informational and decision making power of some centres of mission in the First World. Warning against this type of ecclesiastical and cultural imperialism, the Lausanne Covenant states clearly: "Missions have all too frequently exported with the Gospel an alien culture, and churches have sometimes been in bondage to culture rather than to the Scripture. Christ's evangelists must humbly seek to empty themselves of all but their personal authenticity in order to become the servants of others ..." (par. 10). This is precisely the kind of attitude and action that cannot be grasped or fostered by statistical analysis. Properly speaking the managerial school more than a missiology is a methodology for mission. And if it limits itself to that realm, accepting the need to enter in dialogue with theology and other missiologies, it could make its valuable contribution to mission in the third millennium.

A CRITICAL MISSIOLOGY FROM THE PERIPHERY

From the lands that used to be missionary territories where missionary action coming from the North took place in the past, a new missiology has started to develop and let its voice be heard. Lausanne I was characterized by the openness to hear this new reflection, which was and is both contextual and engaged. We could say that the basic thrust of this missiology is its critical nature. The question for this missiology is not *how much* missionary action is required today but *what kind* of missionary action is necessary. And the concern with quality links naturally with the questions about the social dynamism of the Gospel and the transformative power of the experience of conversion to Jesus Christ.

What characterizes evangelical churches in the Two-Thirds World, especially in Africa, Latin America and Asia, is their evangelistic and missionary dynamism. And that is clearly reflected in their missiology. None among the pastors, missionaries and theologians from the Third World who spoke at Lausanne I or Lausanne II proposed a moratorium of evangelization or a concept of mission that would deny the priority of announcing the message of salvation in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. Most of them however would agree about the need to distinguish between the Gospel and the ideologies of the West, between a missionary action patterned by the model of Jesus Christ and one that reflects the philosophies and methodologies of the multinational corporations. Latin American theologians Rene Padilla and the late Orlando Costas have paved the way in providing a solid biblical foundation to the two-fold missiological approach of evangelicals from the Two-Thirds World: the criticism of existing patterns of mission and the proposal of a missiology that corresponds to the missionary challenges of the day.

Costas' approach was evangelical in its inspiration and emphasis, and he tried to formulate basic missiological concepts that would incorporate some insights from liberation theologies as well as from church growth methodologies. His holistic concept of church growth is an

32 Charles R. Taber, "Contextualisation?", in Wilbert R. Shenk, Ed. *Exploring Church Growth*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), p. 119.

33 Taber, op. cit., p. 119.

34 Tito Paredes, "Culture and Social Change", in Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden, Eds. *The Church in Response to Human Need*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, Oxford: Regnum, 1987), pp.

67-71.

35 Harvie M. Conn, "Looking for a Method: Backgrounds and Suggestions", in Wilbert R. Shenk, Ed. *Exploring Church Growth*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), pp. 79-94.

36 Arthur F. Glasser, "Church Growth at Fuller," *Missiology* 14 (4), pp. 401-420.

37 Alan R. Tippet, *Introduction to Missiology*. (Pasadena:

William Carey Library, 1987).

38 Charles Kraft, *Christianity in Culture*, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1979).

39 Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1986).

excellent summary of his efforts towards a synthesis⁴⁰ that could be communicated and implemented at the level of the local church. His missiological exploration into biblical themes is especially valuable in his posthumously published work *Liberating News*.⁴¹ His study of the significance of the ministry of Jesus in Galilee and from Galilee provides a paradigm for mission from the Two-Thirds World; he describes it as "a model of contextual mission from the periphery". In the light of it, Costas believed that "The global scope of contextual evangelization should be geared first and foremost to the nations' peripheries, where the multitudes are found and where the Christian faith has had the best opportunity to build a strong base."⁴² Many historical examples, as well as the tremendous dynamism of churches in Africa and Latin America today, prove his point and mark some guidelines for the future of mission, not so much as churches adopt managerial plans from the North, but as they develop their own missionary projects that express their genius and ethos.

Padilla also offers a missiological reflection that is especially committed to take seriously the biblical text. His most complete proposal thus far is in his book *Mission Between the Times*.⁴³ Padilla finds in the biblical text solid ground for a concept of the Gospel and Christian commitment in which the socially transformative dimensions are unavoidable. Conn thinks that Padilla's

dealing with issues such as the "homogeneous unit principle" provides "a powerful model of exegetical interaction with the church growth paradigm", and "an articulate example of the way in which these questions ought to be approached from a biblical-theological perspective".⁴⁴ What this example offers to missionaries is an exploration into the depths of the social significance of the basic Christian truths. This is precisely the kind of evangelical depth that is missing in managerial missiology and that makes sense to those who minister in the name of Jesus Christ, in the midst of poverty and the pain of social transitions.

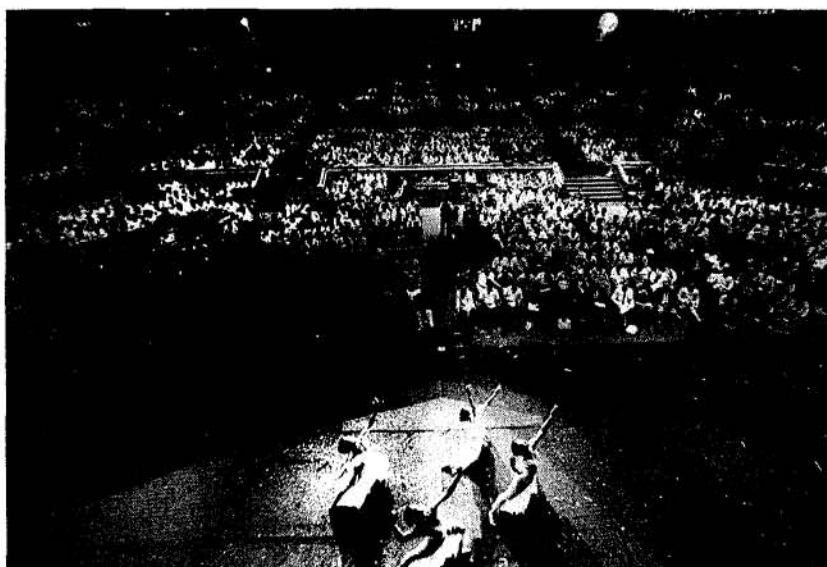
Three collective volumes contain some of the missiological contributions from evangelical theologians of the Two-Thirds World to the ongoing dialogue, with special reference to the relation between mission and social transformation. A careful consideration of their content will show that this missiological concern is not something added artificially to what otherwise would be purely evangelistic emphasis. It is a concern that comes from the demands of both the evangelistic and the pastoral activity these practitioners of mission cannot avoid. What is at stake every day and every week in the ministry of these men, be it in the ghettos of North American cities or in the dusty roads of Latin America, Asia and Africa, is their credibility as messengers of Jesus Christ. Thus a renewed Christology is essential for their mission⁴⁵ as well as for the way in

which churches can respond to human need⁴⁶ or proclaim Christ among those who have not come to a saving knowledge of him.⁴⁷

Contributions from missiologists such as Kwame Bediako and David Gitari in Africa, or Vinay Samuel and David Lim in Asia, to the above mentioned volumes have posed special questions in the area of the relationship between Gospel and Culture and the way in which evangelicals rooted in the context of non-Christian cultures will deal with their historical memory and their own religious past. From the Catholic context of popular religiosity and syncretism in Latin America, these questions have a different twist in the work of men such as Tito Paredes and Key Yuasa. In all these contexts, the religious experience cannot avoid reference to its social conditioning and its social impact. As militant social scientists put missionary work in the Two-Thirds World under the microscope of their research, missiologists have to come to terms with the lights and the shadows of a missionary enterprise made up of human frailties and ambiguities. The missiologist in the Two-Thirds World cannot avoid the evaluative questions not only for the defense of missionary work as it stands today, but also for the formulation of a missionary strategy for the coming decades.

These three missiological trends cannot keep going each one in its own way. The time for dialogue and construction is short

If evangelicals are going to be faithful to the missionary call in what is left of our century and on into the next century, these three missiological trends cannot keep going each one in its own way. The time for dialogue and construction is short. We should aim to match renewed zeal with tough and clear thinking, evangelical commitment with intellectual creativity, readiness to the promptings of the Spirit with openness to the judgement and the hope that come from God's word. ●



Thai dancers at Lausanne II.

40 Orlando E. Costas, "A Wholistic Concept of Church Growth", in Wilbert Shenk, Ed. *Exploring Church Growth*, pp. 95-107. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.

41 Ibid. p.67.

43 Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985.

44 Conn, *op. cit.* p. 85.

45 Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden, *Sharing Jesus in the Two Thirds World*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983).

46 Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden, Eds. *The Church in Response to Human Need* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987).

47 Vinay Samuel and Albrecht Hauser. *Proclaiming Christ in Christ's Way, Studies in Integral Evangelism*, (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1989).