

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

The Edifying Word: The Word of Hope

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The Binding Nature of Synodical Resolutions
for a Pastor or Professor
of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod

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Evangelization *and* Humanization

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(ED. NOTE: Mission is the central concern of the Christian church, as it is of the God who calls the church into being. Today Christians are asking what is included in the mission: Is it just preaching, or is social and political action a part of the basic mission? The NCC and the WCC have in general stood for the latter option. The former position has been vigorously supported in the Wheaton Declaration and, more recently, in the Frankfurt Declaration. The latter document was designed to be a call to the WCC to rethink its mission theology. The Frankfurt Declaration speaks of the importance of the good deeds of Christians, but does not view these deeds as an integral part of the mission. For the benefit of our readers who may not yet have seen the declaration, we print the full text which first appeared in English translation in *Christianity Today*, and attach to the text a careful analysis of the book on which the declaration is based. The book is titled *Humanisierung — einzige Hoffnung der Welt?* and was written by Peter Beyerhaus, who is also the chief mover behind the declaration. The analysis has been prepared by Won Yong Ji, a clergyman of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, currently serving as secretary for Asia in the Department of Church Cooperation of the Lutheran World Federation. He was formerly the director of the Lutheran Theological Academy of the Korea Lutheran Mission. He served as professor there and at the United Graduate School of Theology in Yonsei University, Seoul, Korea. In his article Dr. Ji offers a review and critique of the Frankfurt Declaration and indicates the nature of a sound conjunctive relationship between evangelization and humanization in the Christian mission today. Variations of this article have appeared in *Lutheran World*, XVII (1970), 358—361, and *Lutherische Rundschau*, XX (1970), 468—472.)

TEXT OF THE DECLARATION

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

This is the way that Christianity has always understood the Great Commission of Christ, though, we must confess, not always with the same degree of fidelity and clarity. The recognition of the task and the total missionary obligation of the Church led to the endeavor to integrate

missions into the German Protestant churches and the World Council of Churches, whose Commission and Division of World Mission and Evangelism was established in 1961. It is the goal of this division, by the terms of its constitution, to insure "the proclamation to the whole world of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to the end that all men may believe in him and be saved." It is our conviction that this definition reflects the basic apostolic concern of the New Testament and restores the understanding of mission held by the fathers of the Protestant missionary movement.

Today, however, organized Christian world missions is shaken by a fundamental crisis. Outer opposition and the weakening spiritual power of our churches and mis-

sionary societies are not solely to blame. More dangerous is the displacement of their primary tasks by means of an insidious falsification of their motives and goals.

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

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

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

Seven Indispensable Basic Elements of Mission

1. *Full authority in heaven and on earth has been committed to me. Go forth therefore and make all nations my disciples; baptize men everywhere in the name of the Father and the Son and*

the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you. And be assured, I am with you always, to the end of time {Matt. 28:18-20; this Scripture quotation and those that follow are from the New English Bible}.

We recognize and declare:

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

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

2. *Thus will I prove myself great and holy and make myself known to many nations; they shall know that I am the Lord {Ezek. 38:23}.*

Therefore, Lord, I will praise thee among the nations and sing psalms to thy name {Ps. 18:49 and Rom. 15:9}.

We recognize and declare:

The first and supreme goal of mission

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

We therefore oppose, the assertion that mission today is no longer so concerned with the disclosure of God as with the manifestation of a new man and the extension of a new humanity into all social realms. *Humanization* is not the primary goal of mission. It is rather a product of our new birth through God's saving activity in Christ within us, or an indirect result of the Christian proclamation in its power to perform a leavening activity in the course of world history.

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

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

We recognize and declare:

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

We therefore challenge all nonchristians, who belong to God on the basis of creation, to believe in him and to be baptized in his name, for in him alone is eternal salvation promised to them.

We therefore oppose the false teaching (which is circulated in the ecumenical movement since the Third General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi) that Christ himself is anony-

mously so evident in world religions, historical changes, and revolutions that man can encounter him and find salvation in him without the direct news of the Gospel.

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

4. *God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, that everyone who has faith in him may not die but have eternal life {John 3:16}.*

In Christ's name, we implore you, be reconciled to God {II Cor. 5:20}.

We recognize and declare:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We recognize and declare:

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

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

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

We therefore oppose the view that the Church, as the fellowship of Jesus, is simply a part of the world. The contrast between the Church and the world is not merely a distinction in function and in knowledge of salvation; rather, it is an

essential difference in nature. We deny that the Church has no advantage over the world except the knowledge of the alleged future salvation of all men.

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

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

We recognize and declare:

The offer of salvation in Christ is directed without exception to all men who are not yet bound to him in conscious faith. The adherents to the nonchristian religions and world views can receive this salvation only through participation in faith. They must let themselves be freed from their former ties and false hopes in order to be admitted by belief and baptism into the body of Christ. Israel, too, will find salvation in turning to Jesus Christ.

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

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

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

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

We recognize and declare:

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

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

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

We refute at the same time the enthusiastic and utopian ideology that either under the influence of the Gospel or by the anonymous working of Christ in history, all of mankind is already moving

toward a position of general peace and justice and will finally — before the return of Christ — be united under him in a great world fellowship.

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

We do, however, affirm the determined advocacy of justice and peace by all churches, and we affirm that "assistance in development" is a timely realization of the divine demand for mercy and justice as well as of the command of Jesus: "Love thy neighbor."

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

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

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

REVIEW AND CRITIQUE

On March 4, 1970, Prof. Peter Beyerhaus of the University of Tübingen and several associates of the Theological Convention in Germany issued the Frankfurt Declaration, calling for a clear concept of the Christian mission.¹ Already by April 17, 1970, Professor Beyerhaus, director of the Institute of the Discipline of Missions and Ecumenical Theology at Tübingen, had proposed to the World Council of Churches that vital issues pertaining to the Christian mission should be discussed within the framework of that declaration. He approached Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, and on May 12, 1970, defended the Frankfurt Declaration by saying that it

is not meant to be a vote of distrust against some organizations or some people in general, but rather . . . an attempt to testify to the unchangeable motive and aim of Christian mission and to safeguard against their falsification which is coming up at present in many quarters at the same time, due to the universal tendency to level down the transcendence of the gospel into an innerworldly utopian ideology. All these alienations have of course to do with the present general crisis of faith which has befallen our Christian Churches.

In other correspondence (May 16, 1970) Beyerhaus firmly warned the World Council of Churches that it would be wise to integrate the concerns of "genuine conservative evangelical missiologists" into the

¹ An English translation of the Frankfurt Declaration appeared in *Christianity Today*, XIV (June 19, 1970), 3—6, together with a comment on the Declaration by Dr. Donald McGavran of Fuller Theological Seminary.

WCC's Department of World Mission and Evangelism rather than to force them to voice their views in the form of an increasingly violent protest against the WCC.

In response to Beyerhaus, Dr. Blake said: It is essential to the ecumenical movement that there should be the kind of concern that you share with us for the truth of the Gospel and for its communication to men. It is also a basic characteristic of the movement that this concern be conducted in mutual trust and in fairness to what has been and is being written and done.

Dr. Blake, however, was somewhat cautious about arranging a meeting in Geneva with those conservative evangelical theologians and missiologists alone. He was concerned to involve representatives of all the churches in order to promote "a genuine ecumenical discussion on these issues for the sake of more faithful witness."

To date no formal meeting has been arranged in Geneva for an exchange of viewpoints on missiology between representatives of the WCC and Beyerhaus and his associates, although many interested parties are studying the Frankfurt Declaration and its implications for understanding and expressing the nature of the Christian mission. At present opinions vary widely about the significance of the stir caused by Beyerhaus.

The Frankfurt Declaration

The Frankfurt Declaration, about 2,000 words long, was originally signed by 14 German Protestant theologians.² The doc-

² Prof. P. Beyerhaus, Prof. W. Böld, Prof. H. Engelland, Prof. H. Frey, Prof. J. Heubach, Dr. A. Kimme, Prof. W. Künneth, Prof. O.

ument is a search for the true foundation and goal of Christian mission in the midst of general confusion and uncertainty about that mission today. Although it may reflect some of the current tensions in the German church scene, the Frankfurt Declaration is somewhat reminiscent of the Wheaton Declaration, which originated in Wheaton, Ill., in April 1966. It is perhaps briefer and less comprehensive, yet its treatment of the subject of Christian mission is not distinctly different from that of the Wheaton Declaration. Similar concerns are emphasized in virtually the same way in the seven points of the Frankfurt Declaration and in the ten points of the Wheaton Declaration. Both documents articulate their areas of concern related to the missionary enterprise—for example, the nature and purpose of the *missio Dei*, proclamation, service, syncretism, universalism—in a persuasive, apologetic manner. The Frankfurt document also engages in polemics. Yet the target at which both statements are primarily aimed is the social action consciousness of certain so-called “ecumenicals.” For this reason it may not be far off to conclude that the Frankfurt Declaration is a German version of the Wheaton Declaration.

The basic intentions of the Frankfurt Declaration are indicated in Beyerhaus' booklet *Humanisierung — einzige Hoffnung der Welt?* (*Humanization — The Only Hope of the World?*), a monograph that expressed his reaction to the 1968 Uppsala assembly of the WCC.³ Both

Humanisierung and the Frankfurt Declaration are, in general, attempts to make a critical appraisal of both the theology and the practice of mission that are being developed by some leaders in current ecumenical circles who display a humanistic bent. Beyerhaus' writings endeavor to introduce a new and presumably more correct understanding of mission, its genuine motives and goals, and are intended to influence the WCC to alter the direction of its mission effort and its priorities in mission. To understand the Frankfurt Declaration, therefore, one must examine the booklet *Humanisierung — einzige Hoffnung der Welt?*

In the first place, the subtitle to Beyerhaus' book on humanization—“The only hope of the world?”—is both fortunate and unfortunate. It is fortunate because it helps the reader to predict the conclusion even without reading the book. It is unfortunate because it indicates either an obvious prejudice against “humanization” or else a fixed image of that process (whether Beyerhaus' image is right or wrong is not our concern here!). The book is aimed squarely at “humanization,” and the use of the exclusive word “only” to refer to a phase of Christ's redemptive work as applied to people, namely, “humanization,” seems most unfortunate for the positions of both supporters and opponents.

Verlag, 1969). The booklet consists of 69 pages. Attention should also be called to his dissertation, *Die Selbständigkeit der jungen Kirchen als missionarisches Problem* (Wuppertal-Barmen: Verlag der Rheinischen Missions-Gesellschaft, 1959), and to his latest monograph, *Die Versuchungsstunde des Ökumenischen Rates, Christusbekenntnis heute*, Nos. 6/7 (Bad Liebenzell: Verlag der Liebenzeller Mission, 1970).

Michel, Prof. W. Mundle, Prof. H. Rohrbach, Prof. G. Stählin, Prof. G. Vicedom, Prof. U. Wickert, Prof. J. W. Winterhager.

³ Peter Beyerhaus, *Humanisierung — einzige Hoffnung der Welt?* (Bad Salzungen: MBK-

Second, even without reading Beyerhaus' comments, one is immediately made aware of the distinct accents, or tendencies, manifested in the views of liberal ecumenicals and conservative evangelicals.⁴ It is conceivable that certain emphases in mission theology and subsequently in mission practice may set the stage for a "confrontation." The functional dimensions of man's response to God's action in and through Jesus Christ—that is, the proclamation of the Gospel (*kerygma*) and Christian action and service (*diakonia*) in the world—inevitably create some tension in ecumenical theology and practice in our time. Nevertheless, it is doubtful that the differences and priorities between the two camps are as sharp as described in Beyerhaus' book. Perhaps the differences have been overemphasized and to some extent oversimplified in order to draw a convenient line between two trends in mission theology. One may question the validity of assuming that an accent on the "horizontal" dimension represents the liberals, whereas an accent on the "vertical" dimension represents the conservatives. Too frequently churchmen have viewed mission theology and practice in antithetical terms, namely, evangelical verticalism vis-à-vis ecumenical horizontalism, proclamation vis-à-vis service (or social responsibility), church growth vis-à-vis Christian action, *Heilsbegründung* vis-à-vis *Heils-*

zueignung, social-ethical quietism vis-à-vis this-worldly activism, evangelical-soteriological concerns vis-à-vis socio-ethical concerns, divinity (Christocentric tendency) vis-à-vis humanity (anthropocentric tendency), and so forth. None of these varying aspects is mutually exclusive, much less antagonistic. One should view each set of terms in a "both-and," not an "either-or" relationship.

The main issue then is the *nature* of that conjunctive relationship—humanization *and* evangelization, the vertical *and* the horizontal, and so on. Previous documents on missions indicate that both dimensions have been incorporated. We can indeed observe the vertical aspects of mission theology in Uppsala's "Renewal in Mission," for example, although they may be somewhat less accentuated, while the "horizontal"—*diakonia* aspects—are by no means absent in both the Wheaton and the Berlin Declarations of 1966. Priorities naturally differ according to respective emphases. But we need to emphasize the social relevance of the vertical dimensions of mission as well as the theological relevance of the horizontal dimensions. Theological convictions, spiritual experiences, and active participation in life together enable us, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to transform the world—and that is the primary task of the *missio Dei*.

Third, how is it possible to alleviate the tension? Beyerhaus calls for a theologically acceptable "synthesis" of both the evangelical and the ecumenical understanding of mission, a "balance" between proclamation of the Gospel and Christian *diakonia*, and a reconciliation of the two discernible trends in mission theology and practice.

If one looks at these two poles in the

⁴ See the essays, reaction papers, and studies from the Lutheran World Federation Commission on World Mission meeting in Asmara, Ethiopia, in April 1969, the Vatican II document *Ad Gentes*, the report on "Renewal in Mission" from Uppsala, the Wheaton Declaration (1966) and the Berlin Declaration (1966). See also the LWF's *Department of World Mission News Letter*, No. 34 (June 1969), pp. 5–14, and *Lutheran World*, XVI (1969), 354–7.

understanding of the Christian mission, he may conclude that the terms "evangelism" (with more *kerygma*-emphasis) and "ecumenism" (with more *diakonia*-emphasis) nowadays have more church-political implications than they have clear-cut theological ones. In reality, they stand in a dynamic relationship to each other. We have to differentiate between these poles and between ecumenism and evangelism. Ecumenism has an evangelical aspect, since in Christ's name (unless it acts in some other's name!) it reaches out to the world with the task of service; while evangelism likewise has an ecumenical aspect, since it also reaches out in Christ's name to people with the task of proclaiming the universal Gospel. Both the ecumenical and the evangelical aspects are by nature intertwined — complementary and not competitive. The strong emphasis of one position points up the weak areas of the other.

Diverse ways of expressing and practicing mission concerns in an increasingly complex world with multiple needs can be a blessing. We recall the words of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4. The humanization endeavor, which seeks to express Christ's humanity in an increasingly dehumanized world, by no means stands opposed to the oral proclamation of God's unique scheme of salvation to a generation increasingly reluctant to discuss religion. Rather, the opposite seems true. The notable emphasis on the new humanity in the Uppsala document on "Renewal in Mission" 1968 ("the invitation to men to grow up into their full humanity in the new man, Jesus Christ") and the new-birth emphasis in the Wheaton Declaration (which is frequently quoted in *Humanisierung*) are not at all, in my opinion,

strongly antithetical elements that must be mutually exclusive. Whether or not it is advisable under present circumstances to attempt a "synthesis" or a "balancing out" is naturally debatable. At any rate, I do not believe that Beyerhaus' book either exemplifies or produces the synthesis which he evidently hopes to accomplish. By all means we should avoid any fruitless attempts to achieve uniformity through some kind of witty manipulation of people and words in this pluralistic world. Such attempts would be both impractical and useless. Mutual recognition and appreciation of the dynamism in various approaches to and understandings of mission may be a better choice for the present time. I seriously question, therefore, the wisdom of any sharp polarization in thinking about either the theology or the practice of mission.

Taken seriously and with humility, Beyerhaus' book makes an appreciable contribution both to professional ecumenists and to the churches in Europe and their related mission societies and agencies. For ecumenists it can be a challenging call to reexamine the vertical dimension of their work in the name of God and His mission. In the midst of spirited talks about development, service, social action, or dialog, one may rightly ask: Where is the soteriological and pneumatic content of mission which makes these endeavors uniquely Christian? Those "humanizing champions" to whom *Humanisierung* is specifically directed should respond carefully and seriously to every point raised in the book.

To the state or territorial official churches in Europe, which are heirs of the rich history of Western Christianity and its

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all?

theology but are in spiritual and moral confusion and turmoil because of a lack of clarity about the true meaning and application of Christianity, Beyerhaus' monograph is indeed a mission call. It provides almost an *Alarmruf* to the mission agencies. Well-chosen and nicely phrased words about reaching out or proclaiming the Gospel to the heathen and charitable concerns for the development of the "third world" are capable of being applied, perhaps in a slightly different manner but

with the same force, to people in their immediate backyard. So-called Christian people and nations, who are no less materialistically minded "horizontalists" in understanding the meaning of development, mission, and life than real heathen people all over the non-Christian world, should carefully look at the book and should begin to see that the mission is directed to themselves as well as to others.

Geneva, Switzerland

Rather weak critique, with little appreciation of the humanization that is going on apart from the Gospel