

# **The Missionary**

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Do you not know?

Have you not heard?

The LORD is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He will not grow tired or weary,  
and his understanding no one can fathom.

He gives strength to the weary  
and increases the power of the weak.

Even youths grow tired and weary,  
and young men stumble and fall;

but those who hope in the LORD  
will renew their strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles;  
they will run and not grow weary,  
they will walk and not be faint."

Isaiah 40:28-31

## **PREFACE**

A missionary is first and foremost a minister of Christ, an ambassador proclaiming reconciliation to a world of sinners who have been redeemed by the blood of the Savior. The qualifications of a pastor mentioned by Paul in his letters to Timothy and Titus are basic. They apply equally whether serving in the African bush or in a stateside urban parish.

At the same time a missionary is a specialist. He carries on his work in a cross-cultural situation. Self-evidently this will mean learning how to adapt to strange surroundings, how to speak and work in an unfamiliar language, how to live in circumstances which are new and different from anything experienced before.

This book is written to offer information concerning what it means to live and work in one of our world mission fields. One can never really know what this is like, of course, unless one has personally experienced this kind of life. It is also true that with the world scene changing so rapidly these days it is impossible to portray conditions elsewhere as though these remain static. We do the best we can, however, in hopes that the information contained herein will give some idea, at least, of what to expect when venturing forth into exotic situations.

I hope the reader will be left with the positive impression that this work is challenging, exciting and extremely worthwhile. For this it is, in spite of its many frustrations and hardships.

Psalm 96:1-6:  
 “Sing to the LORD a new song;  
     sing to the LORD, all the earth.  
 Sing to the LORD, praise his name;  
     proclaim his salvation day after day.  
 Declare his glory among the nations,  
     his marvelous deeds among all peoples.  
 For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;  
     he is to be feared above all gods.  
 For all the gods of the nations are idols,  
     but the LORD made the heavens.  
 Splendor and majesty are before him;  
     strength and glory are in his sanctuary.”

## CHAPTER ONE - HIS CALL

What makes a missionary? Is he gifted from birth with some special ingredient? Is he the recipient of some inner voice that has moved him spiritually and emotionally in some unusual way and at some unexpected point in time? Is he following a desire that must have grown within him somehow since early childhood?

In some circles the unusual and personal factors mentioned above seem to play a predominating role as to whether or not a parson is serving as a missionary because he has heard some inner voice or received some special gift or is following some childhood ideal. No aspect of the Christian mission is more puzzling than the problem of a call,” writes J. Herbert Kane in the book on *Life and Work on the Mission Field* (p. 1) “It is the biggest hang-up that young people encounter as they face the claim of the mission field,” Kane adds.

Many church-bodies and mission agencies outside our own stress the so-called “inner call,” an inner conviction resulting from what is supposed to be some direct voice of the Holy Spirit. They also emphasize the importance of an individual volunteering for world service. A rigid screening process precedes every missionary appointment, whereby the mission agency, assures itself that the applicant has the necessary psychological qualifications to enter foreign work.

Admittedly there are certain unusual factors that may play a part in a missionary’s call. He may also be influenced by a number of things in reaching a decision as to whether or not to accept such a call. A long felt desire, a special sermon, an unusual experience may very well play a part in influencing a person in a certain direction. A calling agency will also want to have certain information about a man’s physical, emotional and spiritual qualifications before deciding whether or not he is apt for special service. There is a danger, however, in overemphasizing the personal aspect, as though some inner voice or some unusual gift is a *sine qua non* for foreign service.

It is the divine call extended by the church through its appointed agency, which makes a missionary, to be what he is. In the fear of God he has accepted a call from the Lord, received through his church. The call may come as a complete surprise. He may not have especially looked for it or even desired it. On the other hand

it may have answered a long-felt desire. The calling board or agency, we must assume, has acted upon the best information obtainable in determining that he is their choice. Having accepted the call, he trusts implicitly that he is going where he is going because God wants him to go there. Surely personal doubts and human misgivings are always going to trouble us to some extent in whatever we do. But the objective truth that the Holy Spirit through his church has called a certain individual into this important work of the Christian ministry should sustain him more than anything else whenever personal doubts assail him.

### **The Calling Agency**

The world mission program of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod is administered by a Board for World Missions. The history of this board goes back to the year 1892, when our Synod decided to begin work among the Apache Indian tribe in Arizona. This work among the Apaches was administered originally under a General Board for Home, Foreign and Inner Missions. The present Board for World Missions was created in 1955 as a result of expansion into foreign fields. Calls to world missionaries are extended by one of the executive committees making up the plenary board.

In order to get a picture of the structure, function and responsibility of our Synod's Board for World Missions we shall present a summary of our Synod's basic constitutional provisions relating to the board, as formulated by Pastor Theodore A. Sauer, the board's Executive Secretary:

### **Membership of the Board for World Missions, WELS**

1. The Board shall be composed of a chairman, elected for two years, and of as many executive committees as the Synod may deem necessary.
2. The direct supervision and administration of a foreign mission field is vested in an executive committee composed of three members: two pastors and one layman. Each is elected to a six-year term of office.
3. The Board for World Missions is primarily a coordinating and equalizing board. Each Executive Committee, however, must receive the approval of the BWM for its activities.
4. The Board may make its own regulations and effect its own organization subject to the Constitution, Bylaws, and resolutions of the Synod.

### **Organization of the Board for World Missions**

At present the Board for World Missions numbers 16 men and is made up of its chairman and five executive committees:

- Executive Committee for Lutheran Apache Mission
- Executive Committee for the Lutheran Church of Central Africa
- Executive Committee for the Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church in Japan
- Executive Committee for Southeast Asian Missions
- Executive Committee for Latin American Missions

The executive committees are fully responsible for the administration of the fields assigned to them. They set the policies and regulations for their fields. *They call missionaries and determine where they are to serve.* They set up budgets and requisition funds. During periodic visits to the field they maintain contact with the work, plan programs and strategies, and encourage missionaries and their people.

In order to coordinate its work the Board for World Missions calls an *Executive Secretary*. He is among other things to serve as resource person and correspondent of the BWM, to be responsible for budgetary duties and to coordinate the overall policies and work of the Board for World Missions.

In 1978 an *Interim Committee* was formed to carry out the following responsibilities and duties:

1. To serve as an advisory board to the Executive Secretary of the BWM as he deals with requests coming from overseas individuals and groups.
2. To serve as the responsible committee for providing guidance, encouragement and financial assistance to the smaller and newer churches who share our confessional position and to mission fields which have not been permanently assigned to an executive committee of the BWM.

On this committee are the vice-chairman and executive secretary of the BWM two members of the Commission on Inter-Church Relations and two members of the Synod at large.

### **Underlying Principles of the Board for World Missions**

One of the first tasks that faced the BWM after it was formed was to define the principles that would guide it in its work. This resulted in the formulating of a set of underlying principles, which was recommended to and adopted by the 1965 convention of the Synod.

These underlying principles together with the Bible passages on which they are based are worthy of much more time and study than we can possibly give them here. Clearly and in some detail they, set forth the scriptural principles which must form the basis for our worldwide outreach with the gospel. We shall summarize them here as follows:

1. The BWM as the official board charged with the responsibility of advancing the world mission program of the WELS must understand, represent and implement the Lord's Word concerning world missions.
2. The Lord's Word is clear (Mt 28: 18-20). The good news that God has reconciled the world to himself in Christ (2 Co 5: 18-21) is the message which alone is the power of God to convert the sinner and make him a disciple of Christ.
3. It is the Lord's own people who are to win others to repentance and faith in Christ through the preaching of his Word (Ro 10: 14-17). Through his apostles the Lord has also declared his people to be a kingdom of priests, to declare his praises, who has called them out of darkness into his wonderful light (1 Pe 2: 9).
4. We have a divine call to do this at all times and in all places where the gospel has not been preached.
5. This worldwide commission from the Lord is a matter of precious privilege and a primary responsibility for the church. It is of life-and-death importance for those that are without Christ.
6. In its approach to worldwide missions the church must be guided by faith in, love for, and obedience to the command and promise of Christ, as also by a love for the souls whom he loved and for whom he died. Human reason and circumstances, yes, even "sanctified common sense" must not be used to dissuade the church from its God-given missionary responsibility.
7. Those to whom the Lord has given and preserved the gospel in purity carry the greater obligation to share his saving Word with others. Concern for purity of teaching must consistently extend also to those who do not have it and who might become the victim of false teachers, a false gospel, and a false hope.
8. Time for this work is rapidly running out. Christ's faithful followers must carry it out with a sense of urgency, realizing that it must be done before it is too late (Jn 9: 4).
9. This worldwide mission will prosper. It has been commanded by him who has all power in heaven and earth and who has assured us of his abiding presence (Mt 28: 18-20). It has his assured blessing (Isa 55: 9-13).

### **Primary Objectives of the Board for World Missions**

Out of the underlying principles flow the primary objectives, in other words the "how" and the "what" of our work. The same 1965 convention that adopted the underlying principles also approved a set of primary objectives. (These are at present being reviewed and revised by the BWM in order to bring them up to date with conditions as we find them today.) They are as follows:

1. To share the gospel with people living in countries outside the USA who because of language and cultural barriers are not being served by other WELS agencies.

The key here is the phrase “language and cultural barriers.” We expect to find them overseas. On occasion we find them close to home, and this is the reason why our Apache work and some of our Spanish language work in the US remains under the jurisdiction of the BWM. It is entirely possible, of course, that some of this work will one day become a part of our home mission program.

2. To investigate and explore world mission opportunities and to persuade the Synod to extend its world mission outreach.

The opportunities are there. While leads for new work come from many different sources, it is the BWM which must investigate and evaluate these and persuade the Synod to expand its work by entering new fields. Such expansion surely, is in keeping with the letter and spirit of Holy Scripture (Isa 54:2; 62:12).

Such investigation and exploration may be of two different kinds. It may consist of following leads and answering requests such as those, which took us into Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Mexico and Cameroon. It may also take the form of surveys of completely new areas, such as those, which resulted in our mission programs in Puerto Rico, Colombia, and Central Africa.

3. To call, train, commission and support missionaries to carry out the world mission program adopted by the Synod.

From the stand-point of administration this is the aspect of our world mission program which most fully occupies the BWM and its executive committees. Included are the setting up of qualifications for overseas missionaries, their orientation, language training, providing for shipping, housing, transportation, education of children in a foreign environment, and a long list of additional matters.

4. To plant indigenous churches rather than large dependent missions.

5. To encourage and foster Christian instruction of young and old.

High on the list of priorities in each of our fields is the development of sound, scriptural Sunday school and instruction materials and a thorough membership training program for young and old alike.

6. To establish programs for the training of a national ministry, which is qualified to proclaim the Word of God faithfully and effectively in accord with the Lutheran Confessions.

It is in line with this objective that we have already or contemplate establishing worker-training programs in each of our overseas world mission fields.

7. To foster confessional unity of faith among the churches founded through the world mission effort of the WELS.

8. To encourage limited medical and health services in those mission fields in which these are found to be advisable or necessary.

We currently have such medical missions in Zambia and Malawi.

9. To count that work successful which is faithful to the Great Commission and to the Lord’s instruction to “teach them to observe all things which he has commanded.

Here we would like to quote the very fine statement in the Handbook of the BWM:

“Because of the natural desire in men to register demonstrable success and to measure effectiveness on the basis of numerical gains, the BWM would.... express its determination to guard and warn against neglecting the Lord’s only prescription for success in his ministry..... Instead of broadcasting only a vague and elementary gospel, it is the duty of Christian missionaries to follow the counsel of the Holy Spirit in furthering and deepening the faith and knowledge in Christ of those whom the Lord has brought to faith through their faithful witness of the ‘full counsel of God.’ ..... In world mission fields, as in the church at home, we must be ever aware of these things, lest we develop a weak church, unable to discern or to take a stand against false teaching.....To achieve this, the principle followed by St. Paul, the greatest missionary of then all, must ever govern and guide us: ‘For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God’ (Ac 20: 27).”

We have presented this summary of our Synod's BWM's structure as well as its objectives and underlying principles in order to give some idea of the spirit which guides our world mission endeavors. In a sense these objectives and principles give us a unique character in world mission work of today, which has a tendency to place greater emphasis on quantity than on quality, and which considers strong confessionalism as another form of "doctrinal imperialism."

The BWM is presently reviewing and revising its Handbook in order to make it more current with a number of practical changes that have occurred since 1965, when the Handbook was originally presented to the Synod and approved. The basic principles and objectives that were enunciated then are the same today.

This material should be of interest not only to world missionaries and their administrators, but to all pastors and members of the Synod as well. World mission work is the responsibility of all of us.

"Enlarge the place of your tent,  
stretch your tent curtains wide,  
do not hold back,  
lengthen your cords,  
strengthen your stakes.  
For you will spread out to the right and to the left;  
your descendants will dispossess nations  
and settle in their desolate cities."

Isaiah 35:2-3

### **THE MISSIONARY - CHAPTER ONE - HIS CALL FOR DISCUSSION**

1. a. Which factor of those listed below would you consider of primary importance in the making of a missionary?
  - An inner conviction based upon one's own self-assessment
  - A strong personal feeling that this is what God wants one to do
  - A call extended by the church through its appointed agency
  - A long felt desire from early childhood
  - A desire to get away, from the humdrum existence of USA
- b. Which of the above could possibly be a strong influence in making a decision as to whether or not to accept a call into foreign work?
2. Every pastor of WELS ought to know the structure of our BWM. See if you can recall:
  - The Executive Committees which make up the BWM
  - The general scope of the BWM's work
  - Some of the more specific duties of each EC
  - The chief purpose of the board's Executive Secretary
  - The functions of the Interim Committee
3. a. What advantages can you see in the present makeup of the Synod's BWM?
- b. Can you think of any possible disadvantages that could develop under this system as it is presently organized?
4. Anyone acquainted with the history of our Synod will recognize that point 4 of the "Underlying Principles" as summarized on p 5 was once a controversial point under discussion before it was decided to embark on a more aggressive world mission program.  
What was the argumentation behind the thinking of those in opposition to this point?
5. What must be the chief motivation behind our approach to world mission work?
6. Why does our Synod have a greater obligation to share God's Word with others? Cement on whether or not you think we show an awareness of this "greater obligation" in our world mission outreach.

7. Why has it been extremely difficult for the members of the BWM to implement the second of the “Primary Objectives” listed on p 6?
8. Explain what we mean by planting “indigenous churches.”
9. Aren’t we being rather naive when we set for ourselves the goal of establishing national churches that will agree with us confessionally in all respects?
10. Against which popular movement within world mission agencies is point 9 of the BWM’s “Primary Objectives” directed (p 7)?

## **CHAPTER TWO - HIS FIELD**

It was in 1892, 400 years after Columbus discovered America, that the newly founded Joint Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Other States voted to expand its work to an Indian tribe of America’s great Southwest.

In 1924 the Synod began subsidizing Lutherans in Poland, a project which led to the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Dispersion in West Germany following World War II. This church has subsequently joined an amalgamation of free churches in Europe (SELK) with which our Synod is not in fellowship, although a remnant group in Eastern Germany is still holding to our confession and is being supported by us.

In 1936 in conjunction with sister synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America we began work in Nigeria, Africa. After our Synod suspended fellowship with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod in 1961 the bulk of the Nigerian work was taken over by the LC - MS. We are presently subsidizing a group of congregations known as Christ the King Lutheran Church that broke away from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Nigeria for confessional reasons.

Thus it wasn’t until 1932, when our Synod sent a missionary to Japan, that we launched out on our own to do work in a foreign field.

Within the past 30 years, however, world mission expansion in our Synod has been undertaken at a much faster pace. Today our Synod’s world mission program touches 16 countries in 5 continents. Serving in our world mission fields are 30 missionaries, a lay language coordinator, 23 missionary teachers, 37 national pastors and some 50 national evangelists. Membership totals about 16,800 baptized souls and 9,350 communicants. Our annual budget for this program is in excess of 2.5 million dollars.

This may seem like a comparatively small effort in view of the world’s 4 billion people, of which only about 1 billion in some way or other profess the Christian faith. And yet we have made a beginning, one on which we need to build, especially in view of the fact that within another 20 years another 2 billion will be added to the world’s population if it continues at its present growth rate.

Executive Secretary Sauer has prepared an overview of the fields in which our Synod is working today, including a brief historical background and a look at the situation as it confronts our Synod in world mission work today:

### **1. An Overall View**

In our world mission program the Synod has two distinctly different types of activities.

#### **a. Mission fields in which we work directly through WELS missionaries.**

We have missionaries resident among the Apaches and in Spanish work in southwestern U.S.A., in Puerto Rico, Colombia, Malawi, Zambia, Japan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, and Taiwan.

We are also working through missionaries in a number of countries where it is not possible for us because of government regulations to have expatriates reside.

Mexico is served out of El Paso; Cameroon is served out of Central Africa and the U.S.; India is visited from Hong Kong.

- b. **Young overseas confessional churches** that receive some measure of support and guidance through our Board for World Missions. They are located in Sweden, Norway, Nigeria, and Brazil.

## 2. **How We Got There**

There are basically three different ways in which we have come to places where we are working today.

- a. **Taking the initiative and looking for places in which to do mission work.**  
Generally this involves some preliminary study, some field surveys, and an evaluation of surveys. As a matter of policy this is the route through which our BWM prefers to begin work in a new field. It is in this way that we entered Apacheland, Zambia, Malawi, Puerto Rico, and Colombia.
- b. **Responding to appeals.**  
Generally these appeals come from individuals or groups who are already involved in church work and often arise out of confessional concerns. Evaluating such appeals requires a great deal of careful and patient investigation. It is in response to direct appeals that we began work in Hong Kong, Indonesia, Mexico, India, and Cameroon. It is also in answer to such-appeals that we are giving assistance and guidance to the churches in Sweden and Brazil.
- c. **Spreading out from existing missions.**  
Although we didn't begin work in Malawi without first conducting a careful survey and evaluation of this promising field, the work here also grew out of that work which was done in Zambia. A mailing program begun in Zambia reached into neighboring Malawi, especially after many of our members from Zambia moved into that country.  
Taiwan was an outgrowth of the work in Hong Kong. Voice of Salvation broadcasts reached the island. Two Chinese pastors were sent to Taiwan to follow up on those who were listening to the broadcasts.  
Two other areas do not fit the foregoing patterns exactly. Our first contact in Japan was through Missionary Fred Tiefel, who originally was called to "do exploratory work in the interest of our servicemen and women stationed in the Japan-Korea area and also to investigate opportunities for the opening of mission stations for our Board of Missions" (1952 report of the chairman of the Lutheran Spiritual Welfare Commission).  
Our contact with Christ the King Lutheran Synod of Nigeria might seem to fit under number two, "Responding to Appeals." Its members did indeed appeal to us about 12 years ago. It should be mentioned, however, that for the most part these are people and congregations who were served by our missionaries at the time when the Synodical Conference was still intact and was carrying on an extensive program in Nigeria. They really are our spiritual children and have come to us because they could not go along with unionistic trends in the Ev. Lutheran Church of Nigeria.

## 3. **Dates and Places**

Our world mission history spans 90 years. The dates on which we entered new fields are as follows:

1893 - Apache Indian Mission

1924 - Mission in Poland

1936 - Nigerian Mission (In conjunction with the Ev. Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America)



1948 - Spanish Mission in Tucson

1952 - Japanese Mission. This work, as mentioned previously, was begun by Missionary F. Tiefel. When he left our Synod and became a member of the Ev. Lutheran Church of the Confession, he took the Tokyo congregation with him.

1957 - Japanese Mission. Our present work in Japan dates back to this year when Missionaries Richard Seeger and Richard Poetter were called and began to serve.

1953 - Northern Rhodesia Mission (Now Zambia)

1962 - Nyasaland Mission (Now Malawi)

1963 - Puerto Rico Mission

1964 - Hong Kong Mission

1966 - Spanish Mission in El Paso

1968 - Taiwan Mission

1969 - Indonesian Mission

1969 - Mission in India

1975 - Cameroon Mission

The original appeal from Christ the King Lutheran Synod in Nigeria came in July, 1969.

The beginnings of our Synod's contact with the confessional church movement in Sweden date back to 1971. It was in 1975 that the request to work in Brazil came to us from a small confessional congregation in Porto Alegre.

#### 4. **Our World Missions Today**

This report will of necessity be brief. A slide lecture on just one mission runs close to an hour. The report of the BWM to a Synod convention comes to all of 40 typewritten pages. This presentation will therefore be directed to groupings of missions rather than toward a separate detailed study of each field.

##### a. **Our Three Oldest Fields**

It ought not surprise us that the fields in which our work is farthest advanced are those in which we have been working the longest time and in which we have had the largest amount of manpower. We are referring here to the Apache Mission, Japan, and Central Africa.

In Central Africa and in Apacheland we have had our largest numerical growth. Work in Zambia and Malawi has given us by far our largest mission field today.... The number of souls in the Apache Mission represent a sizeable portion of the total population of the San Carlos and Fort Apache Reservations.... Japan is considerably smaller, and yet except for Cameroon ranks higher in the number of members than do any of our other missions.

Future growth is hard to assess. Central Africa has grown 38.5 percent in number of communicants within a two year period. In Apacheland growth has reached a plateau. Continued growth will have to come from within. In Japan with 99 percent of the population still non-Christian the possibility for growth is unlimited, but it will undoubtedly continue to be slow.

In all three missions the church is well organized. Apache congregations function much as established congregations throughout our Synod. During the past year they contributed over \$100,000 for the church's work. Both the Lutheran Church of Central Africa and the Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church of Japan are completely organized church bodies. They have adopted their own constitutions and carry out their work in much the same fashion, as does our own WELS.

A further significant development particularly in Japan and Central Africa is the growing number of national pastors fully trained in our own seminaries

established in those countries. In addition to national pastors who have graduated from the seminary program in Central Africa, this church body has a considerable number of evangelists who are graduates of the Bible Institutes located in both Zambia and Malawi.

All of this has not come quickly or easily. We have had our difficult days in each of these fields. We have made mistakes. But we have also experienced many blessings.

b. **Southeast Asian Missions**

Hong Kong, Indonesia, and Taiwan all have a history which sets them apart from any of our other missions. Though they are all the way from 12 to 17 years old, they are for all practical purposes fairly new missions. In the case of Hong Kong and Indonesia this is due largely to the disappearance from the scene of the men who originally appealed to our Synod to assist them. Their departure, not always in the best of circumstances, necessitated a reassessment of the work and a new beginning in many of its phases.

In *Hong Kong* we began by supplying a Friendly Counselor to the Chinese Evangelical Lutheran Church which had been founded by the Rev. Peter Chang. When he left it was necessary to reincorporate as the Southeast Asia Lutheran Evangelical Mission (SALEM). Intensive work by a team of missionaries which has been sent there, including the difficult task of language study, has resulted in a much more solid and reliable type of work. SALEM continues to operate a middle school with about 250 students, all of whom are not members but a source of prospects. A Bible Institute program has been started here. Growth has been steady, but this mission is under pressure because Hong Kong's years as a Crown Colony of Britain are numbered. What will happen when China again takes over is anybody's guess.

*Indonesia* also is experiencing a new direction in its work with the coming of resident missionaries. Our first attempt to place a resident missionary in Indonesia in 1971 was aborted when the Rev. Martinus Adam, founder and president of the church, was dismissed for cause. The subsequent arrival of the Rev. Dipa Pandji Tisna from the seminary in Hong Kong made it possible to carry on a holding action. We now have a team of three resident missionaries there, and attendance at church as well as in instruction classes is steadily increasing. After three years of waiting the third member of our missionary team, Pastor Robert Sawall, secured a visa necessary for entrance into the country. Understandably much of the early time of our mission staff here has been taken up with getting situated, studying the language, and planning a strategy.

*Taiwan* also now finally has a three-man team of missionaries. They are making good progress in their study of the difficult Mandarin language and are able to plan their work there with a new direction and purpose.

One feels a definite sense of urgency in Southeast Asia. We have already mentioned the possible time limit in Hong Kong. It is far from clear how long we can stay in Indonesia. Tension between Taiwan and mainland China gives this field, too, an element of uncertainty. At the same time we are conscious of the nearness of these fields to China, the border of which have been closed to foreign missionaries for four decades. We do not know what the future will bring here. At times there seem to be a few rays of light coming through the "Bamboo Curtain."

The best way to be ready for any opportunities is to ‘Work intensively in the areas where we already are.

c. **From North to South America**

To the south of us lies a different kind of mission field. The people of Latin America are for the most part nominally Roman Catholic. 90 percent is a figure that is often heard. Only a small portion of these, however, have any real commitment to their faith.

Our Synod’s intention at one time was to work through Mexico and then into Central and South America. It was with this in mind that Spanish work was begun in 1948 among the Mexican people living in and around Tucson, Arizona. This intention was thwarted when the Mexican government adopted regulations that prevent expatriate missionaries from living in Mexico.

We reached South America, however, via another route. A 1961 Synod Resolution authorized the Missioner Corps Program. *Puerto Rico* was chosen to test this program, and the first two missionaries arrived there in 1964. A third man was added to this team. Working largely on the southern part of the island they now have 5 congregations and preaching stations and are approaching 100 communicant members.

After a number of surveys a mission on the continent of South America became a reality when a large gift from a single family provided the funding needed to begin work. *Colombia* was chosen, and work began in Medellin in 1974. Two men with experience from Puerto Rico pioneered the work in Colombia. From the very beginning strong emphasis has been placed here on the participation of nationals in the church’s work. A Bible Institute — Seminary program has been inaugurated. The church body in Colombia, though still small, is organized under a constitution.

Work in Latin America poses some special problems. It is one thing for a Latin to have very little to do with the Roman Catholic Church. It is quite another thing, however, for him to give up even the very loosest of ties with that church and to embrace another faith. Often enough the people are ready to hear. It is the final step of breaking from the church into which they were born and baptized that is so difficult. Mission work requires patience and perseverance. A special measure of both is needed in our Latin American work.

d. **Working Without An Expatriate Presence**

One may have noticed that our *Mexican work* was not included in the previous section that dealt largely with Latin American missions. As mentioned before, in Mexico there is a complicating factor that lies in the fact that we cannot have expatriate missionaries resident in that country. We have tried to solve this problem by placing missionaries in El Paso, as close to the Mexican border as possible. We have established a seminary in El Paso, hoping to have students reside in Mexico and cross the border for attendance. Supervision of the work is carried out from El Paso. This hasn’t apparently worked out very well, and the Latin American Executive Committee is planning a reorganization of the entire program in the hope that it will provide a more effective way of helping the Mexican pastors in their work. For we do have five national pastors, most of whom have come to us when Pastor Orea Luna came to us out of the mission supported by the LC - MS. They came for “confessional reasons,” but when Pastor Luna died a very competent leader of the church was lost to us. Our 8

congregations in Mexico, served by 5 Mexican pastors, have a total of less than 100 communicant members.

*Cameroon*, Africa, is another country in which government regulations make it impossible for us to place resident missionaries. This is a large and a promising field. Our first visit there came as the result of an appeal for help from Lutherans who had come here from Nigeria, but could not be served any longer from that country. This was in 1971. After several exploratory visits the Synod decided in the mid 70s to send in a team of expatriates, but was prevented from doing so for reasons stated above. Statistics show that the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the United Republic of Cameroon has over 1,000 communicants and nearly 2,000 souls. There are 4 national pastors, and over 20 lay evangelists. The problem here, of course, is the lack of a fully trained ministry. We have tried through additional visits and by organizing worker-training seminars to help this situation, but it is evident that the program of seminars will have to be stepped up considerably if we hope to build a strong confessional church here. Plans are in progress to have the Synod authorize the calling of a Director of Worker Training, to serve out of the office of the Executive Secretary of the BWM, who is to see how the seminar program can be intensified here in Cameroon as well as in other world mission areas which are in need of the same kind of assistance.

In *India*, for example, we have one national worker serving about 40 souls. The situation here has changed very little since we began responding to appeals from Pastor Mitra in 1969. Pastor Mitra even attended our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary for a year in order to give him guidance as to how to conduct the work. But more than one worker is needed, and since we are prevented here also from sending in an expatriate staff, our only hope lies in somehow carrying on a worker training program on an extension-seminar basis.

All three of these fields have one thing in common. They are in countries in which we could not begin a mission program of our own no matter how much we wished to do so. We do, however, have an opening through those who are there and who have asked us to help them. More and more this could be the wave of the future as far as foreign mission work is concerned. The time to learn how to do it is now!

e. **Helping Young Sister Churches**

Sweden, Norway, Nigeria and Brazil are not “missions” in the strict sense of the word. They are independent confessional churches, governing their own affairs and served by their own pastors. In each case they were organized as a result of encouragement which they received from us. In varying degree there is an ongoing contact between them and the Interim Committee of our BWM. Some financial help is going to Sweden, Norway and Nigeria in the hope that it will give them the help they need until they are fully able to stand on their own feet. As a matter of policy the Interim Committee feels that these churches should be visited annually if at all possible.

In the case of Nigeria it may become necessary to extend additional worker training help of the type previously mentioned, since this church is not in a position to take care of this need by itself.

So far we have not investigated the possibility of sending expatriate missionaries into Nigeria on a resident basis, since we are not even sure that it would be advisable to do so. This church has done well in governing itself for quite a few

years. Sending a team of expatriates into Nigeria would also be a very expensive business, one that our Synod does not seem to be in a position to assume.

5. **An Ongoing Concern**

One can hardly close a presentation such as this without coming to some conclusions and expressing some overall concerns.

1. In the past three of four decades the Lord has permitted us to see remarkable expansion in our Synod's world missions, especially in the light of our late start in this work. For this we are thankful.
2. Fields are still white unto the harvest. The growth of the world's nonChristian population continues to outstrip the growth of Christian missions. Opportunities abound for new and expanded areas of work. Because of the economic situation in the world and in our country, there is a tendency on the part of some churches to retrench in world mission activities. In our own Synod we've experienced something of a "moratorium" on all further expansion. For this we need to ask our Lord all the more fervently to lift up our eyes and see the harvest that still lies before us.
3. To date we in our Synod are still committing a relatively small portion of our total resources to bringing the gospel to people of other lands and cultures. Our total expenditure for world missions is less than 3 1/2 cents of every dollar brought by our members for the Lord's work.
4. There is an ongoing need for dedicated and qualified missionaries. At some time or other during his ministry a pastor in our Synod has one chance in four of receiving a call into a world mission field. It would seem to be true of our pastorate that "many are called, but few accept."
5. World missions need to have high priority in our thinking, praying and working. There is a flow of information concerning world missions coming to our pastors through the Northwestern Lutheran, the President's Newsletter, Stewardship Department Updates, Synodical Reports and Proceedings, and other sources. Precious little of this seems to filter down to our people, it seems. The bottleneck is the pastor. Not everyone can serve directly in a world mission field. But every pastor can serve the cause of world missions.
6. Let us anticipate the Lord's blessing as we reach out to others with the gospel. In almost at the same breath in which he asked his disciples to lift up their eyes and look on the fields white to the harvest, Jesus also said, "He that reaps draws his wages and harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together" (Jn 4:36).

We look to the Lord of the harvest to give us that joy!

(Note: We are indebted to Pastor Theodore A. Sauer for most of the material which appears in this chapter.)

## WORLD MISSION STATUS OF THE WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

### Summary of statistics – 1/1/83

Mission	Missionaries	Baptized	Communicants	National Pastors	National Evangelists	Mission Teachers
S.W. USA	2	67	36			1
Mexico*	2	350	75	5		

Puerto Rico	3	157	74			
Colombia	5	70	42	1	1	
Apache	6	3,081	1,205			19
Malawi	6	6,578	3,476	2	10	
Zambia	9	4,586	2,107	5	15	
Cameroon	0	1,265	933	3	12	
Japan	7	263	178	4	1	1
Hong Kong	3	100	90		1	1
India	0	20	16			
Indonesia	3	45	14	1	1	
Taiwan	3	101	67	1	1	
Totals	49	16,683	8,313	22	42	22

\*Missionaries to Mexico are resident in El Paso, Texas

### Overseas Confessional Churches

	Baptized	Communicants	Pastors	Evangelists
Sweden and Norway	390	258	9	2
Nigeria	827	605	3	
Brazil	c. 25	c. 16	1	2
Totals	1,296	894	13	2

### THE MISSIONARY - CHAPTER TWO - HIS FIELD FOR DISCUSSION

1. a. Name as many countries as you can in which we in our Synod are doing world mission work with WELS missionaries in residence.
- b. In which foreign countries are we working without expatriate missionaries in residence?
2. a. In which countries did we go in on our own initiative? As a response to appeals from people within the foreign country? As a result of spreading out from existing world missions?
- b. In which way do we prefer to begin work in a new world field? Why?
- c. Why is extreme care necessary when going into a field as a result of appeals from people living in the foreign country?
3. a. Give a brief history of how we got started in Japan.
- b. What mistake was made then which the BWM has corrected subsequently?
4. a. Around what year did our worldwide expansion begin in earnest?
- b. Would this indicate that our Synod is a pioneer in world mission work or a latecomer?
- c. What effect do you think this might have on the progress of the work?
5. a. Underline the correct number in parentheses:  
The total expenditure in our Synod for world missions is less than (3,1/2 cents - 50 cents - 98 cents) of every dollar brought by our members for the Lord's work.
- b. How do you think we rate with other church bodies in this respect?
- c. Is this because our people give less to the church, or is there possibly some other reason for this?
6. Comment on the following two statements found under "An Ongoing Concern":
  - "Many are called, but few accept."
  - "The bottleneck is the pastor."

7. As you review the “Summary of Statistics” of our Synod’s World Mission Stations (p 16), which figures seem unusual to you in regard to:
- The number of missionaries compared to the number of members.
  - The number of missionaries-and national pastors compared to the number of members.
8. Are there any other statistics concerning which you have a question or concerning that you may wish to comment?

### **CHAPTER THREE - HIS QUALIFICATIONS**

Discussing qualifications with a man who has received a call into a foreign field is not an easy matter. Frequently I have found myself in such a situation. The resulting discussion can become very personal. And one is worried that by giving a distorted picture a wrong decision can perhaps occur. One hates to say too much about the hardships involved for fear of giving the impression that only the best of the fittest can survive. One also hesitates to paint too rosy a picture, and then having some disillusioned ex-missionary say later on:” Nobody ever told me it would be this way!”

I must confess that my “batting average” in this matter of giving advice hasn’t been all that good. More often than not the seekers of information have declined the call. One does get a bit provoked, however, when hearing that the call has been refused because of “urgent reasons for staying where one is” only to hear about the same man accepting a call somewhere else a few months later! Was it because I perhaps gave too fearsome and foreboding a picture?

Another reason for hesitating to say too much about a missionary’s qualifications is the fear of giving the impression that one has personally lived up to all the requirements recommended. Having somehow or other survived 16 years in a foreign field I still might say with Paul, “And who is equal to such a task!” It is only by the grace of God that anyone survives, and through his power that anything at all is accomplished.

And yet since foreign work is a special kind of work, a number of factors are going to have to be considered which are out of the ordinary. The question of a person’s physical health, of course, must be evaluated. Stateside ministerial experience is a factor. Emotional stability, especially when considering the prospect of living in more isolated circumstances, plays an important role. People often ask also about the importance of being mechanically gifted, or possibly “an outdoors type,” when going to Africa or some other remote area of the world.

We shall take a look at these as well as at other requirements in the hope of answering a few questions, perhaps, and possibly laying to rest a few misconceptions about what is as well as what is not required of a world missionary.

As mentioned previously, it goes without saying that the qualifications of a pastor mentioned in Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus are basic, also for missionary work. A faithful pastor at home will work faithfully away from home. Failure at home could result in a disaster abroad, since a person’s whole personal life gets upset in the process. You can never run away from yourself! As far as seminary graduates are concerned it should be stated that by virtue of the fact that a seminary faculty declares a candidate to be eligible for a call into the ministry, it is attesting to his fitness. Graduates have been found to work out successfully. However, this is expecting a double adjustment of them: one the transition into ministerial service, the other into service of a cross-cultural nature far away from familiar surroundings.

Let us say that a man has received a call into one or the other of our foreign fields. Naturally if he is serving in a stateside congregation he will want to weigh the needs of that congregation over against the call received. Is he in the midst of a building program? Has he been serving his congregation only a relatively short time? Would leaving his present charge result in serious damage to his flock? These are all questions which will need to be considered.

But now what about the special requirements of working in a foreign field? Here the various factors to be considered are especially the following: academic; health; emotional stability; specific considerations relating to the entire family. Let's look at them in that order:

1. **Academic.** Here we in our Synod are not confronted with the same problems as many other mission agencies. We deal with seminary graduates, men who in addition to having received a college degree have spent four years in specialized ministerial training at a post-graduate level. These are our academic requirements to begin with, the minimum, not to mention whatever experience and further education may have followed. Many of our own people having finished all this still wonder about their ability to learn a foreign language. We'll have more to say about this in another chapter, but on the basis of academic ability this should not be a major problem. In fact, the best Hebrew and Greek students in our system don't always turn out to be the best linguists in a foreign situation.

Stateside experience added to the academic training received in a seminary is, of course, a big plus. Having had the opportunity to put into practice over a period of years the catechetical and homiletical principles learned in a seminary certainly is a big advantage. One learns best by doing. One hesitates to add here that going into foreign work will not be a waste of talents. This should be self-evident, but from remarks heard here and there apparently this is not the case. A gifted preacher, for example, may be tempted to feel that being stuck off somewhere out in the bush will hide his homiletical light under a bushel. He will find, however, that wrestling with homiletical or catechetical situations in a foreign field will tax whatever abilities he may have to the limit. A capable administrator, perhaps, may hear it said that lesser gifts are good enough for the "natives." If ever versatility is called for in administration, however, it is overseas in a foreign context.

2. **Health.** A thorough physical examination should play a part in the decision of anyone wishing to go into a foreign field. While physical perfection is never achieved by anyone, the people going overseas, especially into Third World countries, should have a good health record. People with chronic ailments or cases requiring special medical attention should rule themselves out of consideration. This applies to the entire family. It has happened that a man has been called with someone in the family who needs special medical care, unbeknown to the calling committee. Although the person receiving the call may, be personally inclined to accept, doing so would be asking for trouble. Specialized medical treatment is simply not obtainable in most Third World countries.

3. **Emotional Stability.** J. Herbert Kane has this to say: "Life on the mission field is considerably more difficult than here at home. The problem lies not in nervous breakdowns but in the scores of irritations that are a part of everyday life. Over the long haul these can completely upset one's emotional equilibrium. Persons who are given to introspection, who have an inferiority complex, or who are afflicted with phobias and frustrations of various kinds usually have a difficult time adjusting to the kind of communal life found in some parts of the mission field. Poor mental health and emotional immaturity account for almost 11 percent of all the dropouts in missionary work" (*Life and Work on the Mission Field*, p 27).

Under "emotional stability" one has to include *adaptability*, in other words, not being easily or unduly upset when confronted with the unknown, the unusual. As someone expressed it "In a mission field the rule is to expect the unexpected!"

One also has to include here *compatibility*. A person who is emotionally immature is going to have a hard time adjusting to the kind of teamwork required. Isolation has a way of bringing out the worst in people, and those who have peculiar quirks in this regard, whether it be a tendency toward egotism, moroseness, or uncooperativeness, will find these tendencies aggravated the farther they are removed from familiar surroundings.

One could go on and on listing the psychological requirements of an ideal missionary. Kane quotes an advertisement for missionaries in Polynesia that lists the job-qualifications like this: "Ability to mix with people, mix concrete, wade rivers, write articles, love one's neighbor, deliver babies, sit cross-legged, conduct meetings, drain swamps, digest questionable dishes, patch human weaknesses, suffer as fools gladly, and burn the midnight oil .... Persons allergic to ants, babies, beggars, chop suey, cockroaches, curried crabs, duplicators,



guitars, humidity, indifference, itches, jungles, mildew, minority groups, mud, poverty, sweat, and unmarried mothers had better think twice before applying” (*Standard*, Sept. 28, 1964, p 13).

While some of these items may appear to be facetious, there is more truth to them than it would seem!

If we would want to sum up the factors mentioned so far, we would like to avoid the impression that supermen are required, but emphasize that it all boils down to people who are reasonably normal and well-rounded, with as few hang-ups as possible— in brief, solid and down to earth.

And we hastily add: “And that goes for the wife, too!”

**4. Specific Considerations Relating to the Family.** Here the one question arising more than any other has to do with the education of children.

Although this is not an easy problem to deal with, it is not as complicated as one might think. In many metropolitan areas in Third World countries there are so-called International Schools, organized privately by business missions and expatriates serving overseas for some reason or other, sometimes even by foreign embassies for their staffs. Even though a Third World government may not favor what they call an “elitist” kind of educational facility in an “egalitarian” society, its leaders are realistic enough to realize that specialized expatriate help is still needed, and that they won’t be able to get at that kind of help unless some concessions are made in this direction.

This kind of school doesn’t help the missionary, of course, who is stationed many miles from a metropolitan center. There it may become necessary to resort to some type of home-study program like the Calvert System, a professional agency that specializes in this kind of education.

One simply can’t anticipate all eventualities or satisfy all questions concerning this problem in advance. In the case of my own family we came to Africa with 6 school-age children, not knowing what to expect; over a period of 16 years we encountered all sorts of experiences, both good and bad. The best we could do was take it a year at a time. In spite of difficulties one can say that our experience also had its compensations. These one can appreciate better in retrospect than at the time itself.

In missionary life we can’t expect everything to be beautifully laid out for us. We are going to encounter problems. We can look upon them as great calamities — or as challenges to test us. Under God’s ever-present care and blessing even these difficulties can serve a salutary purpose. If that sounds Pollyanish, so be it. If the early missionaries had turned tail at every problem of this kind, it’s a sure thing that foreign missionary work would never have gotten off the ground.

### **THE MISSIONARY - CHAPTER THREE - HIS QUALIFICATIONS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. This chapter has listed the factors to be considered in connection with world mission work as follows:  
Academic - Health - Emotional Stability - Family Considerations
  - a. Which factor do you think plays the most prominent role in deciding whether or not to accept a call into foreign work?
  - b. Would any of the above factors give you personally reason to question your qualifications to go overseas? Explain.
2. Cases to consider:
  - a. A pastor who has received a call to Africa is a gifted preacher. He seems to have outstanding homiletical abilities. Should this influence him in his decision one way or the other? If so, in what way?
  - b. A man receiving a call to Indonesia feels very strongly that he ought to accept. His wife, however, is very much upset by the prospect of going there. It would seem that she even has problems in the U.S. when moving to a new place. What should he do?
  - c. Both husband and wife are strongly inclined to accept a call into foreign service. One of their children, however, is suffering from an unusual sickness that requires special treatment. What should they do?

- d. A candidate is asked to consider serving overseas. He is an average student, possibly a bit lower than average in language studies. To what extent should this play a part in his decision?
- e. A pastor called to serve overseas considers himself to be inept at fixing things for himself. He has heard somewhere that a missionary ought to be a good mechanic. To what extent should this question play into his decision?
- f. A man is convinced that he ought to accept a call to Hong Kong. His relatives and friends, however, are very much against his leaving. They even intimate that by accepting the call he is “betraying” them. How much should this influence him in his decision?
- g. Why do you suppose so many calls into foreign service are declined, so that a mission field sometimes has to wait from one to two years before filling a vacancy?
- h. Do you think candidates or pastors should be given a chance to volunteer for service as one way, perhaps, of solving the problem referred to in the previous question?
- i. Should a pastor leave the decision as to whether or not to accept a call into a foreign field to his congregation to decide? Explain your answer.

## CHAPTER FOUR - HIS ADJUSTMENT

In 1982 several Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary graduates were assigned to foreign fields. As a part of their orientation I was asked to speak to the graduates and their wives concerning some of the problems they could expect in making the adjustment to missionary life. For this I prepared an outline which I shall follow here basically as I presented things to them at the time.

### I. Initial Adjustments

These begin immediately already *here at home*. After the initial glow of enthusiasm is over, one imparts this good news concerning this marvelous opportunity to serve the Lord in a world mission field to friends, to relatives, or in the case of a pastor to his congregation. But why aren't they also enthused? Why such peculiar reactions! Parents may not express it outright, but leave the impression in subtle ways that you have forsaken them. Or is this feeling, perhaps, coming out of your own imagination? Sort of a guilt complex? Friends may imply that you are rather foolhardy to consider leaving a sure thing behind for all sorts of uncertainties, especially if you still have children of school age. Congregational members will seem to wonder why you show a preference for serving “heathen foreigners” rather than the local congregation which has “been so good to you.” Perhaps we're exaggerating the negative reaction somewhat, but one shouldn't be surprised if others aren't filled with the same positive reactions at the prospect of serving the Lord in some faraway world mission field.

Then come the seemingly endless details with all sorts of preparations: passports, visas (be sure you have a certified copy of your birth certificate!), work permits for foreign countries (you'll have to get somebody to prepare a certified copy of your Latin diplomas in translation), health examinations (from stem to stern), deciding what to take along and what to leave behind (this is where relations behind husband and wife can become a bit strained!), selling a lot of used furniture which has little market value in the U.S., selling your car but trying to hang onto it as long as you're in the states, preparing items for packing and shipping overseas as well as for storing here etc. etc. The list of things to do which one never really thought about seem endless.

In all this it is important, of course, to work in close conjunction with the executive committee which has extended the call to you. They have prepared a list of directives in their policies that are to be followed. They are ready to offer advice on every step of this procedure. It is advisable to listen to their suggestions and follow their regulations rather than to be influenced by others who give the impression that they know it all better. The committee has good reason for advising as they do. They've been through this process many times before. Going one's own way can often lead to a lot of unnecessary headaches.

Waiting for final clearance while living in a state of limbo can also be frustrating. Why are these countries overseas so slow in processing permits for entry into their country? One should think they would like to have rich Americans come and spend money. How much time does one have before the parsonage must be vacated? Having packed all one's goods and prepared things for shipment, how long can a family be expected to live out of a suitcase?

We've indicated just a few of the situations giving rise to a need for adjustments even before setting foot on foreign soil. If the wait for clearance becomes unduly long — one man having accepted a call waited three years for his work permit to come from Indonesia — the question arises as to how best to occupy one's time during the interim. Can one begin language study here in the U.S. before going to the field? Will the congregation want a man to serve them who has accepted a call elsewhere? One can see that an added measure of calm and patience is often needed from the very beginning.

It is well to remember in all this that you are not the first and only person to have experienced all this. Others have done so and have survived. This is simply a part of the whole process. What does it really mean when we hear that the first disciples forsook all and followed Christ? Are these just so many words written in a book to picture an unreal situation? Or do we also apply them to ourselves and say with Paul that we can do all things through Christ who gives us strength?

B. *Initial adjustments* are not only experienced here at home. They are required also *when encountering the foreign field for the first time*. "Is this what I saw on the pictures?" one might ask. They looked so glamorous at the time. Perhaps the pictures were taken on a sunshiny day when all the trees and flowers were in bloom, and you happen to arrive on a soggy day, during the height of the rainy season. One could be very disappointed. Then again, one could be pleasantly surprised. Who is to know?

One's first glimpse of the nationals and their living conditions may be something of a surprise. "Things aren't nearly as primitive as we thought," we say. The cities are modern. The people dress pretty much like they do in America — even out in the bush. And yet it doesn't take long at all to discover that living in a foreign country is quite a bit different from the states. There isn't a McDonalds three blocks away. More often than not the telephone fails to work. Popular music on the radio or favorite shows on TV are either not to be found, or if the country has TV and radio the local productions are hard to get used to. It takes a half-hour to purchase a stamp at the post office, and perhaps longer than that to cash a check at the bank. One sometimes has to figure on a good half day of shopping to purchase what one can obtain in an American supermarket in a half-hour or so. They have what they refer to as "supermarkets," but they're a far cry from what we know as such. The outward facade of similarity is there, yet why is everything so strange? "Why do I feel so isolated?" we ask. "Am I perhaps experiencing the first symptoms of 'culture shock'?"

We'll have more to say about culture shock later on. To begin with it's well to remember that to have these initial feelings of uncertainty because of the strangeness of the surroundings is a common experience. As one gets better situated this feeling diminishes. Meanwhile it is good to remember that not everything in America is the same wherever one goes. South Dakota is not Mequon or for that matter California. I recall my own adjustments when taking up my first residence in a home mission in Washington, Iowa. The town was 75 percent Methodist and Presbyterian, and all the rest belonged to some gospel sect or other. Our place of worship was a rented home, which served as parsonage at the same time. Coming from a Lutheran community like Watertown, Wisconsin, where other Protestant churches were regarded as sects and where most people were either Lutheran or Catholic was a totally new experience. Adjustments, in other words, are not only required of foreign missionaries!

## II. Ongoing Adjustments

Having survived the initial adjustments after arriving on a foreign field, one learns that the matter of adaptation is an ongoing process. Things are simply going to be different! Perhaps the biggest adjustment one has to make is to get used to the idea of taking a back seat for awhile as far as the work of winning souls is

concerned. It takes time to get used to the field, to get to “know the ropes” in a new type of work, to become acquainted with the materials to be used, to try to understand the people, to begin learning about to cultural adaptation,” above all to learn the language in which one has to do his work. This last item could take anywhere from one to three years to begin with—and a lifetime to perfect. In my own case I felt that most of my entire tour of three years was primarily a matter of orientation. Doing this after having served a congregation of over a thousand communicants in both German and English languages meant quite an adjustment when it came to daily schedules.

This can require much patience. One dare not feel guilty about not converting the world right away. There will be days when one feels utterly useless. It is best then to grab a rake or a shovel and work in the yard, or to cultivate some hobby one never seemed to have had time for before, or to take the family for a drive to the nearest swimming pool. “Your strength will equal your days,” is a bit of good advice from Moses (Dt. 33:25). We know that he spent forty years of preparation tending sheep for his father-in-law; surely we can manage a year or so.

During this time of adjustment it is good to remember the rest of the family. They are undergoing the same process in educational adjustments, recreation, hobbies, finding out where to go and what to do about the new environment. The wife, for example, may have to undergo a complete turnaround as far as the daily menu is concerned. Where does one shop for things when there isn’t a one-stop supermarket that has on hand most of the family’s daily needs? How does one cook from scratch when ready-made canned goods, cake mixes and cereals aren’t available? Doing as much during this difficult period as a family is a big help over the rough spots. During our first months in Lusaka we happened to have a public swimming pool not far away. A late afternoon swim for the entire family often made our day.

We also found that our devotional life together took on a new importance. There was no Christian Day School or Lutheran High School for the children to attend. There were no congregational activities for children and youth to help fill the gap. In some areas even the Sunday worship services are conducted in the vernacular. How important, therefore, to organize a devotional program for the family in order to keep in close touch with the Word of Life!

And don’t forget the lines of communication with the part of the family that is still in the United States. A helpful tool for this is to set up a system of communicating back and forth by means of tape recorders. It’s easy to do, and spending an hour or so every week this way with somebody, far away keeps one in touch, perhaps even closer than when living in the same country. A good thing to remember when reporting on one’s activities to people back in the U.S. is to be positive. This applies to life in the field as well as to conditions within the country. We all know what happened to the Peace Corps worker who wrote on a postcard how terrible conditions were in the Third World country where she was stationed. She was promptly sent home as a P I (Prohibited Immigrant). We also know how quickly rumors can spread in the U.S., and how worried parents can get when separated from loved ones who are thousands of miles away. Communicate, but be positive about it!

A general piece of advice to remember during this whole period of adaptation is this: don’t think that problems arise primarily because you are where you are! What happens in Lusaka, Jakarta, or Medellin can happen just as well in Oskaloosa, Tacoma, or Wausau. Especially those serving in a foreign field without having had stateside pastoral experience should remind themselves of this. I can remember having had greater adjustment problem with the first place that I served in the states than I experienced in my entire first tour overseas. Life is full of making adjustments wherever we are. One big advantage in my overseas service was that I had already had twenty years of state side ministry behind me. I knew that it was primarily myself and often my own lack of patience, not the situation, which I needed to cope with more than anything else.

### **III. Interpersonal Relationships**

In speaking to a seminary graduating class as a part of its orientation program President Carl Mischke said, “Most pastoral problems are in the area of interpersonal relationships, either with congregation members or with fellow pastors.” To this statement one can quickly add, “Most missionary problems are in the area of interpersonal relationships right within the mission family.”

In a mission family one often lives side by side with one or more missionaries, on a mission station or at a worker-training school. This has its advantages, of course, when people are compatible. It has its dangers when this is not the case. Aside from the fact that incompatibility destroys the teamwork so vital in world mission work, it is a serious offense to observant nationals. “If the missionaries don’t know how to love each other,” we’ve heard them say, “how do they expect to teach us about Christian love?” A missionary who doesn’t work as a team member is a misfit. A missionary who presumes to know it all before he is dry behind the ears in mission experience is a liability rather than an asset. We wouldn’t mention these things if we hadn’t run across situations like this all too frequently.

But why are mission fields so susceptible to this danger. This is difficult to explain, except that in a stateside parish pastors working together aren’t quite so dependent, perhaps upon the cooperation of others. The very nature of a missionary’s more isolated existence, whereby families are brought close together and are made interdependent both socially as well as in their entire work, must have something to do with this. An extra measure of forbearance with the weaknesses of others is of the essence! Nothing can be more devastating for the entire progress of a world mission operation than incompatibility between missionaries and their families. While we’re on the subject, it should be mentioned that this applies to nurses at a medical dispensary as well.

#### **IV. Adjustments with Nationals**

The day of the “big Bwana” is a thing of the past, thank the Lord! Missionaries today work on foreign soil not in concert with some colonial power. They are there by the good graces of the national government that is in control. Having quite recently turned the tables and come into positions where they now call the shots, nationals are very jealous of this new sense of authority. Any hint of racism on the part of the expatriate can quickly lead to his expulsion.

This also applies to church situations. As soon as possible nowadays some kind of self-government on the part of the national church is organized, in line with the indigenous church policy. The missionary finds himself in a position of being a servant of the national church rather than a ruler. This is a good thing, but how to adjust to such a situation isn’t easy, especially when considerable subsidy still comes from the parent body in America. One may as well get used to the idea that the winds of change have come, for better or for worse!

It is self-evident that this will affect inter-personal relationships with nationals. It is important that the missionary adjust to the ways of the nationals, not insisting that it be the other way around. They have different priorities relating to time schedules, different ways of expressing their displeasure, different ways of voicing “complaints,” different work capacities, different social customs. It is hardly possible to get into all the intricacies of this problem in this study, especially since every one of our world fields would involve a study of its own. About the best advice one can give is for the newcomer to be as observant as possible, to learn as much about the customs and culture of the country as he can, and to realize that to work in an autocratic spirit rather than in a partnership relationship will be a great detriment to the work. To “blow one’s stack” in order to be firm, to cause a national to lose face in the presence of others, to be unsympathetic to his needs and problems — these are matters about which nationals are much more sensitive than often appears on the surface. And once the bond of confidence is broken, one may as well forget it!

I suppose that the upshot of this whole chapter is to emphasize the need to fight against the Old Adam every day, remembering our baptism every day, and putting on Christ every day.

#### **V. Culture Shock**

I have decided to take up the matter of culture shock last, since its consideration is based upon much of that which has already been touched upon in this chapter. J. Herbert Kane defines it as “a sense of alienation felt whenever a person feels himself in an unfamiliar situation surrounded by strange sights and sounds” (*Missionary Life*, p 83). I would add that it’s a personal reaction, experienced by one who is suddenly confronted with a new situation in life involving an entirely new environment. Perhaps Kane and I are saying about the same thing.

Everyone experiences culture shock to some degree. Missionaries who have spent many years overseas find it equally difficult to adjust to stateside conditions as those going overseas for the first time. The traffic, the opulence, the different sense of values — here in America — all these can be just as confusing as going abroad and adjusting to different circumstances in Third World countries.

Differences experienced in other countries are more subtle than what appears on the surface. The facade may be familiar; the inner workings are just not the same. This applies to shopping, banking, posting letters, telephoning, repairing things, what have you! People dress the same, it seems, but they are different. They speak differently; they react differently. It just takes awhile before you can win their confidence and find yourself in more familiar surroundings.

Perhaps the most difficult thing to get used to is the poverty that surrounds one. In Third World countries that have achieved self-government this situation has not been relieved. If anything, it has become worse. The difference now is that some nationals have joined the affluent class, and the poor have become even poorer. Miserable shantytowns surround the rapidly growing urban areas. Cooperative schemes for developing rural areas have often been failures. Industrial projects begun in order to become self-sufficient have been mismanaged. The balance in foreign exchange is usually at a precarious level so that important items are simply not obtainable for long periods of time. And the missionary by virtue of his stateside support sits in the middle of all this as one of the more privileged people, living in a society that exists at a level far below anything he has ever experienced. It takes some doing to get used to all this!

Other factors, of course, enter into the picture. The climate is different — better, perhaps, but different. Dental care is inadequate or non-existent. The family doctor isn’t around. In fact, if major medical care is needed, one may have to have this taken care of elsewhere. Unfamiliarity with language and customs often leads to feelings of helplessness and frustration. One could mention any number of things that would lead one to exclaim, “Why would anyone in his right mind want to exchange the comfortable life in the U.S. for conditions such as these!”

Without a sense of purpose in what one is doing it is certainly true that living under such circumstances could lead to problems. But here is precisely where the answer to this problem of culture shock must lie. If we are not convinced that we are in the service of a Lord and Savior who wants us to be where we are, there is really little point to our being there. Where there is this clarity of purpose, things will fall into proper perspective.

We can also rest assured that the necessary adjustment will come. We’ll learn how to live without supermarkets, television spectaculars, drive-in establishments. We’ll stand in line to mail a package, cash a check, or buy a loaf of bread — never totally satisfied, perhaps, but at least with a better sense of acceptance. We’ll learn how to drive over potholes and on bush trails, in traffic where one never quite knows what the other driver is going to do. Well celebrate Christmas and Easter without the accustomed programs and festivities. Above all we’ll learn to compensate. Reading books is a more profitable form of entertainment than television spectaculars. McDonalds may not be handy, but the outdoor grill can be more satisfying. Telephones may not be in good working order, in fact, they may not even work at all; but one remembers that they can also be a nuisance. Instead of the accustomed kind of musical programs one begins to find joy in hearing people of other cultures do their own thing. And how they love to sing! If it seems that much of what we are doing is a matter of groping into the unknown, we’ll learn to rely all the more on him who can accomplish his purpose as he wills, and whose grace is sufficient for any weakness of our own.

Feeling sorry for ourselves can thus be changed into a sense of appreciating the privilege of doing that which is the greatest work in the world!

*The following is reprinted from a report of the BWM of WELS:*

**HOW MUCH FROM HERE TO THERE**  
**Or**  
**WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC EXPENSES INVOLVED IN GETTING A MISSIONARY TO HIS POST?**

During 1982 seven families made the move from the U.S.A. to an overseas mission field. These families varied in size from two to seven and involved a total of 14 adults and 13 children.

Following are some of the things that they had to do in order to make the move.

1. Get passports and visas.
2. Remove their personal belongings and household goods from the home in which they were living.
  - a. Some of the things they sold.
  - b. Some they put into storage.
  - c. Some they readied for shipment, to their new home in the mission field.
3. Attended to medical matters.
  - a. Medical and physical examinations
  - b. Inoculation against unusual diseases they might encounter enroute or in their new home
4. Arranged for shipment of their goods and for their travel to their new home overseas.

Costs involved in the foregoing are covered by the Board for World Missions. These include the following.

1. Passports and visas
2. Medical and physical examinations where advisable
3. Inoculations and preventive medicines where needed
4. Interim housing where necessary
5. Packing and crating of belongings taken overseas
6. Preparation of goods going into storage
7. Reimbursement for unusual loss in connection with the sale of automobile and major household appliances
8. Travel and telephone necessary for preparation for the move overseas
9. Shipping personal belongings overseas
10. Air fare to overseas location
11. Travel costs enroute

\$ Costs vary according to size of family and according to the area from which and to which they are moving. This is evident from the list below of the high, low, and average costs of moving families overseas during 1982.

<b>Expense Item</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Average</b>
Passports and Visas	315	56	150
Medical Expenses	490	74	130
Shipping	17,707	3,524	9,208
Air Fare, One Person	1,669	600	1,047
Air Fare, Family	5,660	1,200	2,883
Total Cost for Moving One Family	24,620	7,406	14,788

Total Cost for Moving Seven Families, 1982 =103,513

Board for World Missions

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

1-26-83

### **THE MISSIONARY - CHAPTER FOUR - HIS ADJUSTMENT FOR DISCUSSION**

1. What answer would you give to congregation members who say you are “forsaking them” by accepting a call into a foreign field?  
To relatives who say: “Why do YOU have to go?”
2. Why is it best to listen closely and follow the advice of your executive committee concerning matters relating to packing and shipping your personal effects rather than to seek all kinds of advice elsewhere?  
Which of the following items would you consider as top priority in you list of things to take along to the foreign field:
  - your entire personal library
  - a microwave oven
  - toys and books for the children
  - items relating to pet hobbies
  - your prize set of chinaware
  - a set of basic tools
  - an automatic electric dryer
  - a record player with tapes and records
  - sheets, towels, bedding
  - keepsakes, mementos
  - your favorite easy chair
 Why should special care be taken when bringing along electrical appliances?
3. What is the chief problem encountered in trying to learn a foreign language before going to the field?
4. Mention some of the chief things for newly arrived missionaries to remember when encountering all sorts of frustrations and problems.
5. Why are problems in the area of interpersonal relationships between missionaries especially crucial on a mission field?
6. What basic rule must the missionary remember in trying to maintain good relations with nationals?
7. Let us say that you as a missionary are in a supervisory position. One of the nationals serving on your team is guilty of poor behavior.  
Why is it especially important not to give him a dressing down while in the presence of others?
8. What is the most powerful antidote for counteracting the dangers of culture shock?

### **CHAPTER FIVE - HIS METHOD**

Our Lord Jesus during his earthly ministry had a method of reaching out to others with the gospel. He himself, of course, tirelessly went from place to place proclaiming his saving purpose, calling to repentance, revealing himself to be the fulfillment of God’s plan to rescue mankind from sin, Satan and hell. Jesus, of course, was not only the herald of good news; he was the focal point, the means, the way, the truth, the life. By his redemptive work he accomplished that which was to be the heart of the message itself.

His method consisted primarily of gathering together and training a corps of disciples who were to be the bearers of his message of salvation, the heralds of the kingdom. To those whom he sent out to help prepare



his way he gave specific directions. As sheep in the midst of wolves, they were to go to each home. They were to go in pairs. They were not to be overly concerned about their support. Where their invitation failed to produce results, they were to go elsewhere with it. They were to be “wise as serpents and harmless as doves” while fearlessly announcing that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. (cf. Mt 10: 1-42; Lk 9:1-6; Lk 10:1-20).

The Lord’s final instructions, of course, are contained in his Great Commission at the end of his earthly ministry and before his ascension into heaven. Each evangelist stresses the importance of this sending out by the Lord, giving it a special emphasis. Matthew’s record points to the authority behind Christ’s mission, summarizes the mission itself, indicates its universality and closes with the comforting assurance of the Lord’s constant, ever-present help. (Mt 28: 18-20). Mark’s rendition gives special emphasis to the commission’s universality and characteristically points to its urgency. (Mk 16:15). Luke emphasizes Christ’s scriptural foundation for all his work, again indicating its universal nature, stressing the objective truth that repentance and forgiveness of sins be proclaimed everywhere, beginning at Jerusalem (Lk 24:43-49). John records the commissioning as a sending forth, empowered with the Holy Spirit to forgive and to retain sins (Jn 20:21-23).

The Book of Acts demonstrates how this handful of believers, after having received the gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, by word and deed witnessed to the saving power of a crucified and risen Lord and prospered in spite of persecution. In fact, it was through persecution that the early Christians spread into new areas. Luke also records how the church of Jesus Christ spread to the Gentile world through the ministry of the Apostle Paul. Acts is thus a mission handbook par excellence, describing the church’s missionary activity during the first generation of its existence. Again the method presented is simplicity itself. Roland Allen in his excellent study, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours*, reminds us to get back to the basics rather than to diffuse our efforts in all sorts of non-essential activities.

Which brings us to a consideration of mission activity as it has been carried on in more recent times. *The Great Century*, as Kenneth Scott Latourette highlights in his seven-volume *History of the Expansion of Christianity*, was the Nineteenth. During this great period of expansion missionaries worked hand in hand with colonial entrepreneurs in bringing “Christianity and civilization” to recently discovered areas throughout the world. It was the time of the “mission station approach”. Entering places heretofore occupied only by native tribes was for both colonizer and missionary a matter of survival. Large compounds were established where missions began their schools and dispensaries in their efforts to reach out to the “benighted heathen”. Actually these undertakings constituted the beginnings of practically all the health and educational institutions in existence during much of the colonial period.

The church has often been criticized for its “paternalistic” approach to mission work during this era of the establishment of mission compounds. During this time it also became involved in social-betterment programs to such an extent that it has never been able to extricate itself from activities which consume a lot of time and energy, but which are not primarily concerned with an evangelistic kind of gospel-outreach. In defense of these early pioneers one would like to ask what these critics would have done under the circumstances. They were dealing with illiterates, with people suffering from disease and malnutrition, afflicted with superstitious and practices that were fearsome to behold. It was but natural that the churches should become involved in programs other than gospel preaching. That this led to extremes is an unfortunate development, but understandable.

This business of doing everything for the natives, however, often didn’t result in building up strong national churches. As mission agencies began to evaluate results in later years their eyes were opened more and more to the fact that an expensive institutionalized program was not leading to appreciable gains in membership rolls. Neither were they apparently building up strong national churches able to assume greater responsibilities. Voices which had been raised early on by men like Henry Venn (1796-1873) and Rufus Anderson (1796-1880), warning against paternalism and institutionalism, urging the participation of nationals as soon as possible in matters of self-support, self-government, and self-propagation began to be listened to more seriously. This “Three-Self Movement” came to be known as the *Indigenous Church Policy*, setting forth a method that occupied the serious attention of missiologists for the greater part of the Twentieth Century.

There is much that could be added here concerning this policy of helping to establish “indigenous” churches rather than building ever-dependent organizations on foreign soil. One need only read the persuasive writings of a forerunner of the movement such as John L. Nevius (*Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*) or of its later protagonists such as Melvin L. Hodges (*The Indigenous Church and the Missionary*) and T. Stanley Soltau (*Missions at the Crossroads*) in order to appreciate that the policy has much in its favor. On the other hand this policy has had followers who have in a rather stubborn and wooden way frowned upon any help which the parent organization had to offer, either idealistically or legalistically insisting that the nationals stand on their own feet from the very beginning. One has to wonder in that kind of application what the mission was there for in the first place!

More recently the word “contextualization” has supplanted the word “indigenization” in missionary discussions. It’s no longer considered proper to speak of planting “indigenous churches” in foreign soil, no doubt, since such a process already conjures up the idea of a parent-child relationship. *Contextualization emphasizes the importance of relating the message of the Bible to the cultural context of the society to which it is proclaimed.* United Bible Society translators like W. A. Smalley and Eugene Nida (*Practical Anthropology*) maintained, possibly with justification, that a national church could be ever so self-supporting, but if it was merely a carbon copy of the mother church from a cultural standpoint, it could never be considered a true part of the people among whom it was being propagated. A national church, in other words, should reflect the culture of its people so that they could identify with it, feel at home in it, expressing themselves spiritually in their own cultural forms rather than in ways foreign to their nature. That this idea can be carried to extremes is also apparent. Extremists of this school of thought — and many of these have surfaced within recent years — carry out this idea of “acculturation” to a point where culture rather than scriptural truth becomes the criterion according to which church practice is to be regulated (cf. C. Tabor, *Christianity in Context*; Charles H. Krafr, *Christianity in Culture*).

Another more recent school of thought in mission methodology is the Church Growth Movement, fathered by Donald McCavran (*Bridges of God, Eye of the Storm, The Clash between Christianity and Cultures, Crucial Issues in Missions Tomorrow*) and promulgated by his leading disciple C. Peter Wagner (*Church-Mission Tensions Today, Frontiers in Missionary Strategy Today, Stop the World, I Want to Get On, Here Come the Pentecostals*). These people are convinced that church growth is God’s will and therefore essential, that the best way to “disciple the tribes” is by “people movements”, that the church should concentrate its efforts on areas which according to careful analysis show promise of bringing forth results, and that every modern tool and strategy should be put into the service of progressive church planting. While one must admire the zeal which church-growth leaders show in their efforts to reach out to the “unchurched billions”, many of their “Madison Avenue” techniques are based on faulty scriptural exegesis, and tend to be superficial by placing too much emphasis upon outward success. This gives an unreal picture of what miracles of conversion can be accomplished if only the right methods are employed.

(For a more in-depth analysis of these and other trends in mission methodology please see “An Evaluation of Current Missiology”, *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Volume 79, Number 3, pp. 167-194).

So much for others. What about ourselves? Surely we don’t put on blinders and remain oblivious to what the rest of the world is doing as far as mission methods are concerned. Neither do we go against the stream and follow our own ways, regardless of what world trends seem to indicate. We managed to enter the world mission scene as a Synod seriously during the 1950’s, when the mission station approach with its involvement in educational scheme and dispensary programs was still in vogue in Africa. We were swept along with the tide, managing a large number of government schools in the Sala area of Northern Rhodesia and opening a dispensary in the same area. Some have questioned the wisdom of this approach in the ensuing years, but if the whole program had to be done again in the same circumstances, our approach no doubt would have been the same. Fortunately we were able to get out from under the school management program after Northern Rhodesia was nationalized into the independent Republic of Zambia, and when newly-formed governments were eager to

take over everything on their own. We still operate the dispensary, no doubt one of the most worthwhile humanitarian efforts ever undertaken in our Synod!

When the indigenous church policy came more under our scrutiny, and with it the realization that the goal of any mission undertaking would have to be the fostering of a church body which would eventually stand on its own feet, this method was stressed more and more in our circles. Unfortunately there have been times when this principle of trying to foster a self-sufficient national church may have been misunderstood and misapplied, more out of a sense of overzealous idealism and inexperience than anything else. The “do-it-yourself” aspect can be overstressed to a point where more is expected of nationals than missionaries are willing to give of themselves. The result is an unfortunate breakdown of confidence between expatriate and national, stunting healthy growth rather than fostering it.

In our day of mission activity as a Synod it seems that there is a danger in looking too much at what others are doing and failing to appreciate our own unique position as a confessionally Lutheran church body, and to guide ourselves accordingly in everything that we do. We have a doctrinal-confessional heritage that we hold to be both precious to have and to share. It is a part of our identity. It gives us our “*Existenzberechtigung*” no matter how much others may disagree or regardless of how hide-bound, bigoted, simplistic, or insignificant they may think us to be. If we lose our foundation we lose all. We are not one church in Milwaukee or Mequon and another in Lilongwe or Taipei. There is no “undefined neutral area”, as some missiologists like to express it, which distinguishes the theology of missions from the theology of the church. The false ecumenical spirit that pervades many other nominally Christian churches and mission organizations places us in a unique situation. We have no need to be ashamed of what we are, or refuse to accept the responsibility of being what we are and acting accordingly.

This will affect our method, our way of doing mission work. In the work of planting national churches elsewhere we shall want them to grow up into their own identity, but we shall also be concerned that they stand firm with us doctrinally and confessionally. This will mean that our emphasis will be in three primary directions:

1. We in our program will want to train national workers who can stand on their own feet theologically and who are one with us in our confession.
2. We will want to develop and print Christian literature that can serve as adequate tools to convey the precious truth of the gospel message entrusted to us.
3. Our program by its very nature will stress a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach to mission work. This simply means that in our task of discipling the nations we will also want to teach them all things as Christ has commanded us.

Since our program of training national workers as well as our-efforts toward developing Christian literature in our world mission fields constitute the heart and soul of our world mission program, we shall consider these two aspects in separate chapters which will follow.

### **THE MISSIONARY - CHAPTER FIVE - HIS METHOD FOR DISCUSSION**

1. On the basis of passages like Matthew 10:1-42, Luke 9:1-6, and Luke 10:1-20 list a number of practical directives which the Lord gave his disciples as he sent them out to do mission work. Which of these still have practical force for us today? Explain.
2. Which truths does the Lord Jesus emphasize in his commissioning of the apostles in:
  - a. Matthew 28:18-20
  - b. Mark 16:15
  - c. Luke 24:43-49
  - d. John 20:21-23

3. Can you think of any particular principles or policies followed by the Apostle Paul as he carried on his work of spreading the gospel?
4.
  - a. Describe briefly the mission station approach.
  - b. Why has this approach been severely criticized?
  - c. Why is some of this criticism too harsh?
5.
  - a. What is the indigenous church policy?
  - b. What are its advantages? Its dangers?
6. Which word has to a great extent supplanted “indigenization” in missionary discussions, and what does this new word emphasize?
7.
  - a. What are some of the principles set forth by advocates of the Church Growth Movement?
  - b. What are some of the dangers of this movement?
8.
  - a. What must characterize the world mission work done by our Synod? Why?
  - b. How will this emphasis have an effect upon our way of doing this work?

## **CHAPTER SIX - HIS CO-WORKERS**

When we speak of “co-workers” in this chapter, we mean nationals, not expatriates. Training nationals to become lay-leaders, evangelists, pastors, professors, and administrators of their church is the most important task in building up an independent church body which can stand with us doctrinally and confessionally. The need for capable national leaders is so obvious that it is hardly necessary to explain why this is so. We didn’t begin to make any real progress in Africa until we had nationals sharing significantly in the work. Other fields, I’m sure, can point to the same experience. Until nationals can take over the work completely, of course, missionaries and nationals will have to co-operate on a partnership basis. This should begin as soon as the mission is established. As the work progresses, the active participation of nationals will increase and that of the missionaries will decrease. One can well imagine that for any number of reasons a smooth transition in this regard is not easy to accomplish. In fact, while the building up of a national leadership is the most important part of any missionary endeavor, it is most painstakingly difficult and often the most frustrating work of all. J. Herbert Kane underscores this observation with the words: “The greatest weakness of the missionary movement has been the failure to train and educate leaders for the national churches.” (*Missionary Life*, pg. 301).

As mission organizations became more and more aware of the urgent need for national workers, they began setting up institutional programs in an effort to meet this need. The first step in several of our fields has been the Bible Institute, designed to prepare nationals to preach and teach in local congregations by giving them basic courses in Bible study, church doctrine and practice. Also included are more specific instructions concerning how to preach, teach, and conduct a church service. A two to three year course has been designed for this. Some church organizations test their Bible Institute graduates in the field as “evangelists” or “catechists” before bringing them back to a Seminary for more advanced theological training prior to ordination. Others have arranged their curriculum so that the entire worker-training program is covered in one consecutive period of training. In our own Synod the African and Latin American fields have followed the Bible Institute and Seminary (two level) program, while Japan has instituted Seminary training only. Other fields are still in the process of development in this phase of the work. Whether one has one or two levels depends on a number of factors: economy, educational standards, culture, etc.

The language used as a medium of instruction varies according to the field. In Central Africa there are so many native dialects involved in the work that one has to use English as a common denominator. Since English is the official language of the countries in which we are working and is taught in the schools, this does not constitute a great problem. In Latin America and Japan it would be impossible to conduct meaningful classes without using the native Spanish and Japanese languages as the chief means of communication. The same would apply, we expect, to Hong Kong, Indonesia and Taiwan.

A seminary course of training in a mission field will follow the same general branches of theology as in our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (Biblical, Historical, Systematic, Practical) with much the same type of courses in each branch. The academic levels followed will depend upon the educational standards of the country and the levels achieved by the students. It may not always be possible, for example, to do exegetical study on the basis of the Greek and Hebrew in all cases, rather doing what one can here on an individual basis. Courses will also have to take into consideration the historical, cultural and religious backgrounds of the countries in which the work is being done. There are so many variables here according to the countries involved that it is difficult to describe a program that would apply to every field. At World Mission Seminary Seminars, held periodically since 1971, common principles and problems have been discussed and a set of "Guidelines for a Worker-Training Program to Establish a National Ministry" have been formulated. (These are printed in full at the end of this chapter as they were adopted at El Paso in 1978). They take into consideration the objectives of worker-training programs in world mission fields, ways of attaining these objectives, and ways of maintaining these objectives. They view the entire subject in greater detail, taking into consideration some of the peculiarities involved in working in other cultures, and are worthy of closer study by anyone directly associated with this kind of work.

Reference is made in these guidelines to Theological Education by Extension (TEE), a relatively new approach to theological training which has aroused considerable interest in world mission work. TEE began nearly 20 years ago in Guatemala, where young graduates coming out of a Presbyterian Seminary seemed to fail to meet the churches needs. Because of their immaturity they failed to gain the respect of the congregations to which they were sent. Moreover, they expected more money for their services than local congregations were willing to pay.

The answer to Guatemala's problem seemed to be found more in the training of local leaders, men accepted by their communities, men who did church work only on a part-time basis and who were willing to receive theological training right at home through an extension program. As far as local-lay leaders are concerned the program makes good sense. Local congregational leaders do play an important role, of course, in the development of a mission field, but to expect that one can adequately train leaders of a national church organization who can stand on their own feet theologically and who will be able to administer the work of the church as pastors and administrators (as many TEE enthusiasts contend!) is just so much wishful thinking.

TEE has its place and its uses. In Africa we have found these to lie in the area of training local lay leaders, finding prospects for ongoing training programs in a Bible Institute or Seminary, and a way of offering ongoing study programs for those who have already been trained as evangelists and pastors. To look to TEE as the answer to all worker-training needs, as some churches do, however, has not become a part of our thinking.

### **Some Problems with Worker-Training**

The problems associated with working with nationals are as great as the importance of the work itself. Undoubtedly they also vary to some extent with the culture of the country in which one is working. I am more familiar with those, of course, relating to the African context. They may not differ a great deal, however, with those encountered in other fields. Without attempting to list all the types of difficulties, we shall consider some of the chief ones as they occur to us:

1. **Adjusting to the educational level.** This problem is self-evident. How does one set up a course in systematic theology when those who begin have less doctrinal knowledge than a stateside confirmand? One begins by taking nothing for granted, progressing gradually, and working toward a course in dogmatics which is as simple and basic as possible. When using English all materials must be written in a style which takes into consideration the fact that English is a second language. When working in other languages one has to be extremely careful of the terminology. Using the correct doctrinal terms and expressions is a study in itself.

A lecture type presentation is a colossal waste of time! Classes must be of a give-and-take dialogue nature to be sure that the student is actively participating in the presentation. Worksheets with clearly defined assignments should accompany every lesson.

**2. Adjusting to cultural peculiarities.** This topic deserves a book for itself. How do you set up a rations program pertaining to food consumed by people with entirely different eating habits? How do you organize a work program for students, which is firm, fair and yet not too demanding since you don't know what their work capacity is? How strict should you be in matters relating to punctuality with people whose lives have not been regulated by a clock? When can you permit members of the extended family (which in Africa is considerable!) to stay on campus and when not? How lenient dare one be with student loans, payment of fees? Are we "spoiling" the students by taking them out of a village environment into an urban kind of living (running water, electricity, etc.)? One could go on and on. Problems relating to witchcraft — and they do occur — are even more complicated. In Zambia problems with witchcraft led to the temporary closing of the seminary! Such vagaries as acts connected with thievery, sexual immorality, blatant lying, outright laziness and others are so much more gross and commonplace that one is tempted at times to wonder if it's all worth the effort. One can lose heart — and then again one can look more at the positive side, the gradual improvements which are really great leaps forward, and realize that some of our own ways may be just as unintelligible to them as their ways are to us. Thank the Lord that it works as well as it does!

**3. Adjusting to the economic level.** There is such a difference between an average income in many Third World countries and that of the U.S. that the missionary is placed into a high-income bracket. His lifestyle is judged accordingly. This places him at a distinct disadvantage when giving advice to the "have-nots" concerning what they can expect materially from a life of service to the Lord, or when consulting on matters pertaining to subsidies, salary, scales, food allowances and the like. When requests come for aid, as they frequently do, when does one say yes and when should one refuse? Practicing charity with equanimity in a Third World country is difficult indeed!

**4. Matters relating to transportation.** Why does the missionary ride in a car while the student, evangelist and even the pastor must be content with cycle? Questions such as this are a constant source of irritation. To tell people that this is what my people in America support, just as you must be content with what your own people provide is adding insult to injury. To tell them also that there is more to using a vehicle than driving around comfortably as it suits us amounts to the same thing. This disparity will never find a solution until the expatriate once and for all leaves the country!

**5. Finding the right students.** No matter how carefully one tries to set up a screening program for applicants to Bible Institute or Seminary (recommendations of the congregation, pastor, supervising missionary, voluntary service, etc.), there will always be the student who turns out to be looking for a job more than anything else. This shouldn't deter us, however, from building into the system as many tests and checks as possible.

**6. Keeping the right graduates.** By virtue of the educational program which our Bible Institute and Seminary graduates receive, they according to their way of looking at things have advanced a step up the ladder of society. This also in their estimate places them into a higher salary bracket. In other words, what they have received from us *gratis* gives them the right to receive more pay, more at least than a congregation is willing to provide, therefore subsidy is required! Does this make sense? To them it does. Failure to meet their requirements could — and sometimes does — result in leaving the church and working where they can receive more pay. For that matter, why shouldn't the national pastor receive just as much in salary, as the expatriate missionary? He does the same kind of work. He is even more indispensable to the welfare of the church than the missionary. Is the great difference a reflection of racial discrimination?

Because of these and other problems relating to the business of fostering worker-training in a world mission field some have wondered if the training of a professional ministry isn't the wrong thing to do. Won't this lead to an elitism that disturbs the very indigenous goal we are striving for?

Yet what is the alternative? Stephen Neill, one of Protestantism's ablest missiologists and historians in recent years, makes this observation; "it was only gradually that missions and churches became aware that it was useless to talk about the development of indigenous churches unless far more attention was paid to the training and development of the indigenous ministry . . . . A church cannot become genuinely independent unless it has local leaders capable of replacing the missionary on every level of thought and activity. Lay leaders are indispensable; but much depends on the quality of the ordained ministry. Theological training is at the very heart of a younger church." (*A History of Christian Missions*, pg. 260).

Bengt Sundkler, one of Lutheranism's leading missiologists, says practically the same thing in these words: "Theological education is of fundamental importance for the creation of autonomous churches in Asia and Africa. It is the quality and nature of theological education which decides whether or not the church has a group of leaders capable of independent thought and action . . . . Recent experience has shown that the most important factor in the life of the young church is not autonomy but 'Christonomy'; not independence, but Christ-dependence." (*The World of Mission*, pg. 173).

J. Herbert Kane, a past president of the American Society of Missiology, points to the overreaction of many church bodies vis-a-vis their former overindulgent use of foreign funds. "Now the pendulum is in danger of swinging to the opposite extreme," Kane declares, "and the (national) churches are suddenly told they must sink or swim. . . . There is a growing awareness among mission leaders that while the receiving churches should be fully self-supporting at the local level, there is justification for the use of foreign funds at higher levels of administration." (*Understanding Christian Missions*, pg. 411). Kane applies this statement to the continued support needed to foster theological stability. He refers to the more recent efforts of extremists attempting to make Christianity "indigenous," so to speak, by means of cultural adaptation. He asks, "How far can the process of indigenization go without altering the hard core of Christian doctrine and practice? . . . Nowhere is the problem greater than in Africa," Kane points out, "where no less than 7,000 sects have sprung up which are mixtures of animism, nativism, and witchcraft, embellished with Christian elements and external symbols." (*Ibid.* pp. 416-17).

Kane sums up the problem very nicely in these words: "The missionary finds himself in a very delicate situation. If he does nothing and allows the church to lapse into baptized paganism, he will be abdicating his responsibility. If he tries to point out the dangers inherent in the situation he may be accused of 'theological imperialism'. In either case he is in trouble. . . . This is one reason why the evangelical missions should help to train national theologians, who will be able to cope with the problem better than we can." (*Understanding Christian Missions*, pg. 417).

Perhaps we should note these words carefully when in moments of disappointment or frustration we are tempted to cut back on our theological training programs because they are running into "too many problems," or turning out to be "too expensive." Nobody ever said that the job would be free of problems. Neither should we imagine that there are any shortcuts as far as costs are concerned. We began this chapter by stating that training nationals to become lay leaders, evangelists, pastors, professors, and administrators of *their* church is the most important task in building up an independent church body which can stand with us doctrinally and confessionally. If we are really convinced of the truth of this statement, we will carry on this task to the best of our ability and place the results in the hands of the Lord.

## **GUIDELINES FOR A WORKER TRAINING PROGRAM TO ESTABLISH A NATIONAL MINISTRY**

*Note: Presented at the Fifth World Seminary Conference, El Paso, Texas, March 27-31, 1978*  
The following may serve as a starting point, at least, for our consideration:

### **PART I Our Objectives**

The PURPOSE of our worker-training programs in world mission fields is to prepare men for the public ministry who will preach and teach the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ and carry out their pastoral ministrations in accordance with the Holy Scriptures as the verbally inspired, inerrant Word of God and in full agreement with the historic Confessions of the Lutheran Church.\*

- Notes: 1. This purpose has as its objective the eventual establishment of a full-time, fully independent national ministry, consisting of men who meet the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, men who shall be able to teach others also (2 Ti 2:2), men who can stand “approved unto God . . . rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Ti 2:15). It also envisions the eventual setting up of a Seminary program which essentially covers the basic material of all the theological disciplines offered at our Lutheran, Seminary at Mequon, Wisconsin.
2. Steps toward attaining this objective would be considered immediately when opening a new field. Initially these can be in the form of some type of pre-seminary training, but keeping in mind the goal of a full seminary program.
  3. Wherever possible a training program to meet these requirements will be established in the field into which such men are to be called. The mission seminaries shall be governed by boards of control, which include representatives of the national churches.
  4. This purpose does not necessarily presuppose that all those who are to be trained to serve in the public ministry of the national church must achieve this independent status of the Lutheran pastorate, as we know it in America. The worker-training program will also provide for auxiliary forms of the public ministry which serve under pastoral leadership and which can be used as a means of determining prospects for more intensive theological training (cf. Part II, Note 4).
  5. The competency of available students will determine the setting of academic standards and requirements in the seminary, particularly as this applies to the introduction and use of courses in Hebrew and Greek for purposes of exegetical study. One should never lose sight of the prospect that the national church will some day exist as a fully, independent body, and that at least *some* of its leaders should be theologically equipped to work in the original languages of the Scriptures.
  6. All theological training courses should give consideration to the language, history, and culture of the field. This could very well require the production of study courses that meet the peculiar requirements of that field. Wherever possible our world mission fields should collaborate with each other and with our Mequon seminary in this important work.

\*The wording of this “PURPOSE” follows almost verbatim the statement of purpose appearing in the Catalog of the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin. It fit so well as a purpose for all worker-training programs, also in foreign fields, that I made use of it here.

## **PART II**

### **Methods Toward Attaining These Objectives**

In order to achieve the goal of training and ordaining the best possible candidates for the office of the holy ministry, our worker-training programs in world mission fields should incorporate certain safeguards in their recruiting and training system to assure that those being trained and ordained are both Scripturally motivated as well as qualified for such service.

Notes: 1. Such assurance can be sought in various ways:

- a. involving the national church as soon and as fully as possible in the recommendation and acceptance of prospective students;
- b. accepting students who have demonstrated spiritual maturity in their Christian lives and who have offered some kind of voluntary service to the church;



- c. incorporating in the total worker-training program agencies of pre-theological study and service in the church before acceptance into a full seminary study course;
  - d. utilizing fieldwork, as an essential part of the training program;
  - e. testing seminary students through service as vicars, working under competent supervision;
  - f. requiring oral and written tests before a Board of Examiners before the calling and ordaining of candidates for the holy ministry.
2. We have already stated that some type of worker-training of nationals should be inaugurated as soon as work in a foreign field is begun (cf. Part 1, Note 2). At the very outset, where congregations have not as yet been established, it may not be possible to obtain recommendations from the national church itself. Here a good safeguard is to use as mission helpers only such men who are willing to serve voluntarily rather than for pay.
  3. Where a national church exists, the best source of students is to be found right in our congregations among those who have voluntarily demonstrated to their fellow-Christians a love for the Lord as Sunday School teachers and lay workers in the congregation.
  4. By “agencies of pre-theological training” are meant Bible Institutes, TEE programs, Bible correspondence courses, and any media that prepare for a limited type of service in the church as evangelists, catechists, or lay-leaders who work under the supervision of a pastor. (These have been referred to in Part I, Note 4, as “auxiliary forms of the public ministry.” They seem to play a more important role in foreign situations than in the United States, where our people have been trained to support a full-time ministry, and where theological students can also be prepared through Bible study in home and school which begins in early childhood.)
  5. It has been found that in most foreign situations the married student-candidate offers the better possibility of satisfactory performance in the work of the ministry following graduation and ordination.

### **PART III**

#### **Ways of Maintaining These Objectives**

In order to maintain a high level of dedication on the part of those who have been called to serve as national pastors and auxiliary workers, the national church should be encouraged in every possible way to promote ongoing study programs for its called servants of the Word and to exercise Christian discipline among them.

- Notes:
1. Wherever it is organized or constituted to do so, the national church is to be directly involved both in the calling as well as in the support of all those who participate in its public ministry. This applies to pastors and also all auxiliary forms of church service (catechists, evangelists, lay-workers, etc.).
  2. The national church will provide for a visitation system among its pastors, with the purpose of offering mutual encouragement and also exercising brotherly admonition and discipline. Proper disciplinary procedure is to be explicitly outlined, explained and adhered to.
  3. Every possible mean for ongoing study among church workers is to be employed in order to be able to offer continued guidance and encouragement. Suggestions for study programs are:
    - a. well-organized pastoral and church-worker conferences;
    - b. post-graduate refresher courses offered through the seminary program, as well as courses which encourage further study and professional growth;
    - c. regular meetings of supervising pastors with auxiliary workers for mutual consultation and study;
    - d. involvement of pastors to serve on boards and committees responsible for producing sermons, lesson materials and dealing with church-management affairs.
  4. Every national pastor should be encouraged to choose a missionary to serve as his pastoral advisor, at least for the initial years of his ministry.

## **THE MISSIONARY - CHAPTER SIX - HIS CO-WORKERS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. The formal worker-training program in some of our world mission fields is two level (Bible Institute, Seminary). In another (Japan) we have just the Seminary. We say, "Whether one has one or two levels depends on a number of factors: Economic, educational standards, culture, etc."
  - a. How do you think the educational standards of a country could be a factor?
  - b. In what way would culture play a role in this matter?
  - c. What affect would the poor economic situation of a country have in the planning of a worker-training program?
2. In some worker-training programs the national language of the country must be used to a great extent instead of English. Can you think of any problems that could arise out of this situation, especially in a seminary program?
3. a. What kind of exegetical work do you suppose can be done where the students have no knowledge of Greek and Hebrew?  
b. Where their knowledge of these languages is limited?
4. What adaptations would have to be taken into consideration when teaching the following courses:
  - a. Church history
  - b. Polemics
  - c. Pastoral theology
  - d. Stewardship
  - e. Evangelism
5. Why is a study of a country's traditional religions important in a Seminary program in a foreign country?
6. TEE enthusiasts claim that this system of training workers is superior to that carried on in an institution set-up.
  - a. What are TEE's advantages?
  - b. Do you think it can completely take the place of training institutions? Explain your answer.
  - c. What practical uses can TEE best serve?
7. Why is a "give-and-take" method of teaching through dialogue preferable to a lecture type presentation in a world mission seminary?
8. In our Lutheran Seminary in Chelston, Zambia, we had a course labeled "theological terms." Why do you think this kind of course was included?
9. How would you answer this complaint: "The missionary drives around in a motorcar. The African worker does not have that privilege. He's lucky if he has a motorcycle!"?
10. The Board of Control of the Bible Institute in Africa insists that only such applications will be considered where the person has rendered a year's voluntary service to the church, without pay, as a Sunday School teacher or lay evangelist. Isn't this being too legalistic?
11. Do you think that the training of a full-time ministry, also helping the national church support such a ministry by means of a subsidy program helps or counteracts the goal of building an indigenous church? Explain your answer.
12. What danger faces a national church that does not have a well-trained ministry?

## **CHAPTER SEVEN - HIS TOOLS**

People who are genuinely interested in supporting world mission work may at times wonder why it seems to take so long to produce results. As a Synod we solemnly resolve to enter a new field. We send a team of missionaries to that field. But it seems to take ages before the reports show that any appreciable progress is

being made. Sometime after a decade or more in the field we record our membership there in statistics which seem pitifully small in comparison with the area's population. Why this slow rate of increase? And why do other mission agencies seem to outdo us so?

There are any number of reasons for this. For one thing we in our Synod should be aware that we are late in the day when it comes to entering mission fields in Africa, Latin America, and the Far East. Others have been there a century or more before us. Perhaps many of these churches now number their memberships in the tens of thousands. Some even have several million adherents. These same churches, however, waited for years for their first converts during the early period of development.

One thing that in our impatience we forget especially is that it takes time just to put our feet on the ground, to become acquainted, to get situated so that even from a practical standpoint we can start serious concentration on the work at hand. The White Fathers, a Roman Catholic order in Africa, realized this from the start and made it a matter of policy not to do anything in a new field until they had become fully acquainted with the language and the culture of the people. History shows that this order enjoyed considerable success.

Thus to begin with language and culture study are of the essence. And this takes time. There was a time, perhaps, when we might have thought shortcuts to have been possible here. Couldn't we work through interpreters? If there was a national leadership already in the field, wouldn't it be enough to serve as their advisors or "friendly counselors"? Fortunately we've gotten over such naive ideas. There are no shortcuts when it comes to matters pertaining to language.

Neither are there any ready-made tools to work with. By "tools" we mean instruction materials which accurately and effectively convey the message of the gospel in the language of the people among whom we are working. Although other churches may have been there before us, their work has been helpful only in a preliminary way. We are certainly thankful for the work others have done in Bible translation, hymnology and so on. But if our work is to inculcate accurately what we believe and confess, we need our own materials in foreign countries just as much as we do here in America. To make use of Sunday School lessons, instruction books, and sermon materials which come out of a Reformed or Roman Catholic background would be tantamount to forfeiting our right of existence there as Lutherans.

In a previous chapter we stressed the importance of training reliable national coworkers for the development of a mission field. Next in importance we would place the development of adequate printed materials for both missionaries and nationals to use as tools for their work. In Africa the use of nationals opened doors for us which before that had been closed. Side by side with the use of nationals, however, was the development of a literature program for the production of instruction materials, sermons, and hymnals to be used in the gathering and development of congregational life.

Religious materials produced in the U.S. simply, do not answer the need in a foreign field. While the reasons for this should be apparent, it may be well to call attention to some of the chief factors that need to be considered in this connection:

1. **A Different Language.** There is more to this language business than one might think at first. Even the English that we use on a foreign field is not quite the same. It needs to be simplified, freed of all slang expressions, idioms, figures of speech, and put into a form that is reasonably comprehensible to those who use English as a second language.

Attempting to write a sermon or an instruction lesson in English can be a humbling experience for the missionary just starting out. He has to forget about turning a clever phrase or developing a distinctive style. He must learn to use the active form of the verb consistently, avoid the use of pronouns without obvious antecedent, explain terms carefully, be as unambiguous as at all possible. Perhaps these are good rules to observe at all times. It's just that in a foreign situation one has to be even more careful than usual.

Whatever care is to be taken in English applies to the work of making this "translationese" English into the foreign language used. If one is fortunate one may have a Bible in the native tongue where one is working; it is but a beginning. More likely than not we'll be starting from scratch as far as any Lutheran materials are concerned. This means sermon books, instruction lessons including Luther's Small Catechism, liturgies for

church services, tracts, and for that matter any kind of teaching help required for church work. In Africa this involves taking care of all this in six vernaculars! After over a quarter century of work there we've still got a long way to go!

**2. A Different Culture.** To develop a total literature program in a mission field requires more than simply translating what has been developed in America into another language. Examples, references, applications must fit the local scene. There was a time when Sunday School leaflets sent from America were distributed in Africa. Perhaps they helped. Nowadays there is a national sensitivity that resents Anglo-Saxon representation in biblical illustrations. And what good does it do to make applications that fit the American scene when people from other countries have no idea what we're talking about?

Instruction materials for church membership in a foreign field should take nothing for granted. They should begin with Scripture stories, be ultra simple, and include review questions and answers, gradually leading into doctrinal truths. In many mission fields there is a series of lessons leading up to confirmation — thus a two-stage kind of progression.

Sermons that are easiest for nationals to follow are based on story texts. They should be rich in illustrations. Homiletical principles as we know them (theme and parts) are good to follow, but should be clear and easy to follow. Perhaps the nationals will develop a style eventually that is more in keeping with their own manner of presentation (cyclical/repetitive/ proverbial etc.), but until that time comes much guidance is still needed.

Each mission field will also need its own hymnal for use in the congregations. In this area we have perhaps been remiss in not putting more effort into songs, liturgies, etc. which correspond more to the cultural setting of the people. To develop a musical library in which a people can express themselves according to their own culture requires experts who can make a real study of this. Africans, for example, are a musically gifted people. And how they love to express this gift! Not to make full use of their abilities to sing praises to the Lord is missing something vital to our work. Again, it won't do just to take what other churches have produced. Our Lutheran church has a way of using a liturgy as well as its hymns as part of its confession of faith, not merely as a way of expressing its emotional feelings. To miss this element of confessional Lutheranism is to lose an important element in our worship.

What we've tried to say so far is that every field is going to have to develop its own literature program for the writing and printing of tools that are essential to the work. Without such adequate tools the mission works under a serious handicap. The developing of this kind of program is no easy task. A missionary doesn't only teach a course of instruction to begin with. He develops it. He doesn't merely serve as instructor in a Bible Institute or Seminary. He writes his own courses. He doesn't write sermons only for himself. He does this for general use in the entire church body. And then he sees to it that somehow these materials are printed!

How many extra hours of time and effort have been spent with typewriter and mimeograph on a mission field by both missionary and wife would be impossible to estimate. Some missions have been able to set up sophisticated printing presses in order to get their printing needs taken care of. For various reasons this may not be the best way to go. Sophisticated presses need specialists to operate and maintain them. In some countries the press operator may be the only one capable of fixing his machine when it breaks down. Spare parts are often unobtainable unless ordered from overseas. While a mission may be able to support such an undertaking — at great cost, of course — it is questionable that the national church will ever be able to manage such a program on its own.

The question therefore arises as to whether or not a simple mimeograph operation may be the best way to go. It's amazing what can be accomplished with a mimeograph. The operation of typewriter and mimeograph does not require an expert. Nationals can also be trained to take care of these needs. If the church body grows to a point where certain items (Hymnals, tracts, Sunday School lessons, church papers, etc.) are needed in quantities which exceed the capacity of a mimeograph, it may be cheaper to investigate the costs of commercial printers rather than to set up one's own printing operation.

Questions relating to the practical end of the work are best decided by the field. Circumstances will vary considerably. Whatever is decided, the important thing to consider is the essential part that a literature program plays in the life of a mission. When Napoleon declared that the pen is mightier than the sword, he knew what he was talking about. “A word aptly spoken,” as the writer of Proverbs states, “is like apples of gold in settings of silver” (Pr 25:11). The same is true of a word aptly written; it can accomplish miracles, since the Holy Spirit has seen fit to use the Word as his vehicle.

How necessary that we use it as our chief tool in the most important work in the world!

### **THE MISSIONARY CHAPTER SEVEN - HIS TOOLS FOR DISCUSSION**

1. This chapter says: “We are late in the day when it comes to entering world mission fields . . . .” By “we” WELS is meant, of course.
  - a. Which is the “Great Mission Century” when most Protestant missions got started in Africa and Asia?
  - b. How far is our Synod behind in its serious world mission outreach?
  - c. What reasons can you give for this lateness?
2. Why must the development of adequate printed material go hand in hand with the training of national church workers?
3. In what respect would the materials already produced by other churches differ from ours with respect to the gospel? The sacraments?
4. Next to the Bible which book do you think is the most important written tool in our mission work?
5. What special care needs to be exercised with illustrations of Bible stories?
6. a. Why is our homiletical method of developing a sermon with theme and parts not necessarily contrary to the cultural sensitivities of others?
  - b. What care needs to be taken with sermons?
7. a. Which parts would you consider essential in framing a simple liturgy for church services?
  - b. Why is it better to involve the national church in developing the musical settings for the liturgy?
8. Why is it advisable to keep the mechanics of printing as simple as possible?

### **CHAPTER EIGHT - HIS LANGUAGE**

There were several reasons why I never became an expert in language study. Most of my time was at a school in Central Africa where students came from various language areas and where the common denominator of necessity was English. My service to congregations was seldom restricted for any length of time to one area. At times it meant working among the Tonga of Zambia’s Southern Province; at others it was the Sintebeles and Shonas north of Lusaka, or the Chinyanja-speakers in and around Lusaka who needed help. I probably also filled in as often as anyone on the Copperbelt and in the Northwest Province of Zambia, where Bemba, Luvale and Kaonde prevailed. And then there were those groups of Tanzanians in Lusaka’s Mutendele compound who were in need of service. Wherever a vacancy occurred, there I would go — into Africa’s veritable Babel! Since most of my work was of an administrative nature in other respects, this was the way it had to be. This I regretted very much. A missionary who is not assigned to a specific language area where he can immerse himself into the language of the people is missing much of the joy of the work.

During the last year of service I got a taste of what this joy meant when I filled in during a vacancy in Malawi among Chewa-speaking people. Here it meant do or die as far as language was concerned. Imagine, for example, being placed into a situation suddenly and unexpectedly where a funeral service replaces a regular service in a remote village (this happens there!), when nobody among the hundreds of people present can communicate very well in English, and when whatever sermon you had previously memorized in Chewa needs to be replaced on the spur of the moment by a funeral sermon!

What I'm trying to say with all this is that this chapter should be written by one who has made a real specialty of having immersed himself into the language and culture of a specific area. For language and culture are intertwined. Know the language and you know the people — their customs, their identity, their humor, their peculiarities. It is to be hoped, therefore, that subsequently this chapter will be revised or rewritten by someone with more expertise in the subject. Until then we'll do what we can; the subject is of such importance that it dare not be omitted.

In his book on *Missionary Life* J. Herbert Kane observes: "A knowledge of the vernacular is essential to missionary work. The effectiveness of a missionary depends to a large extent on his ability to communicate in the local language in a culturally relevant manner . . . . Other things being equal, missionary work cannot be effective over a long period of time without at least a working knowledge of the language." With this statement one can only heartily agree!

Not all foreign languages, of course are equally difficult. Those that make use of the English alphabet are the easiest. Chinese, Japanese, and Arabic on the other hand have nothing in common with English in their written form. Chinese ideographs are undoubtedly the most difficult of all to master. Chinese is also a tonal language. The same word spoken in different tones can have as many as nine different meanings! Is it any wonder, then, that missionaries learning Mandarin or Cantonese say after several years of intensive language study that they still feel like children of Kindergarten age, stumbling about as they try to express themselves publicly in a preaching or teaching situation!

Even in Africa, where the English alphabet is used and where there are at least some similarities between English usage and that of the vernaculars, there is a wide difference in the effort required for language study. In Central Africa, for example, Tonga is more complicated than Chewa. And then when going to West Africa one finds that the Ibos in Nigeria or Doualas in Cameroon, although also classified as Bantus, speak in ways far more complicated than anything previously encountered. Some African vernaculars are more tonal than others. Missionary Dan Crawford discovered an African language that has nouns in twelve genders and verbs with thirty-two tenses. Talk about "uncomplicated" native in the bush! In many remote areas of Africa and South America the Wycliffe Bible Translators are still at work trying to formulate a written language out of a spoken one.

It is extremely difficult, therefore, to generalize when attempting to describe a process of language study in a mission field. In the Far East, where language study is much more difficult for reasons already stated, missionaries spend most of their first three-year tour at a language-training school in the country to which they have been sent. They consider themselves fortunate if after three years they can present a Sunday School lesson or manage to preach a sermon which they have carefully prepared beforehand. In Africa there are also formal language-training courses organized from time to time, chiefly by the Roman Catholic Church for its many trainees, which we have been able to make use of. Here it is estimated that it takes a year of intensive study (give or take a month or so depending upon the vernacular studied) in order to be able to stumble through the basics of a sermon or Sunday School presentation.

Specialists will tell us, however, that getting to know the basics of a language — whether that takes one or three years of intensive work — is but a beginning. Many missionaries get so tied up with administrative details, and other interruptions in the course of their work that they never get much beyond this preliminary stage. At least they have put forth the effort; they have some idea of what's going on as they, in a limited degree can communicate with their people. Short-term service in a field is also a hindrance for achieving expertise. The average length of service, it seems, is about two to three tours of duty (six to nine years).

Once having gone beyond the preliminary stage, they say, language study gets to be interesting. The idioms, the nuances, the intricacies that are the heart of a language begin to become more apparent. One starts to *think* in another language, communicate spontaneously in it rather than painfully going through a process of mental translation before being able to speak. What a joy it must be when one has reached that stage, and how much closer the expatriate must feel to the work for which he has been called! And how much more effective the work itself!

Those who have gone through the mill, so to speak, having achieved a certain proficiency in another language, will point to a few basic obstacles that need to be overcome if one hopes to succeed:

1. **Lack of self-discipline.** Language study is work, hard work. It takes practice, much practice. Just as an athlete needs to exercise himself hour after hour through a program of self-discipline in order to excel in his event, even so must the language student be willing to subject himself to such exercise. Successfully participating in a structured program of language study is only a first step. Spending hour after hour after the class repeating a certain phrase over and over again, being willing to go the extra mile in a painstaking rote process often makes the difference between winning or losing.
2. **Inhibitions.** Learning Chewa or Mandarin is different from what has been experienced at college with Greek or Hebrew. The latter were, of course, “dead” languages. One learned them in order to be able to translate them effectively, not to speak them. A vernacular is learned in order to be *used* in everyday life. As soon as possible, therefore, it should be *used*, in the market place, when speaking to a servant, when asking directions. But one hesitates because of inhibitions. “I’ll sound silly!” we say. “They’ll laugh at me! I’ll make too many mistakes!”

A missionary tells how he painstakingly tried to formulate a sentence when speaking to a national in the vernacular, only to have the national answer him in English and add, “nice try, sir!” To recover from such an experience and try again takes a person who isn’t going to let what others think or say stand in the way.

3. **Love of “Isolated Security”.** How much easier to live in a ghetto-like bliss, enjoying the comparative comfort of the kind of life and language we’ve always known, than to get out in the boondocks and rub elbows with the Unfamiliar! It is one thing to study a language in a book, to be able to translate written sentences with a certain amount of proficiency. It is quite another to hear that same language spoken in the streets and villages! The way words are actually pronounced by nationals often renders them at first all but unrecognizable. Thus the practice of *hearing* is as important as the practice of speaking.

But how can one hear unless one leaves the comforts of “isolated security” behind and gets out where the action is? Yes, one can even be where the action is and turn his hearing facility off, continuing in isolation, with little benefit at all unless one makes a conscious effort to listen attentively to what is said. Perhaps much will pass one by, sounding at first like an unintelligible gibberish. But here and there a word will be recognized *as it is used in everyday usage*. One step forward! Let’s see if we can recognize another! Write it down in a notebook! Progress, little by little!

In order to facilitate this process of speaking and hearing as it is used, it has been found helpful to hire a native informant, to sit with him several hours a day just to be able to hear and speak the language which is being learned with him. Again this requires effort “over and above” living in “isolated security. But it pays rich dividends!

4. **Interruptions.** These can be frequent in a mission field — and they can be devastating when in a language-learning program. On a mission station problems of survival such as fixing the generator, taking care of some problem, getting necessary supplies, mowing the tall grass, can occur with such frequency that they simply take over. When they are permitted to do so, any disciplined program of language study simply goes down the drain. Family duties, administrative assignments, illness — all these can develop into serious interruptions.
5. **Discouragement.** Progress seems so slow. Often even our best efforts seem to be getting us nowhere. How easy to give it all up as a bad job and try to get by with a second-best effort! The strange fact of the matter is that even when seeming to be getting nowhere we may be on the verge of a breakthrough. To have

succumbed to the discouragement may have made the difference between a missionary putting in his time in a desultory manner and one who continues to grow into his work with a sense of accomplishment.

While discussing the “obstacles” which need to be overcome when hoping to succeed in a language study program, we have indicated at the same time some of the positive forces that are required to overcome these obstacles. To review them briefly we would list them as follows:

1. Dogged persistence in a self-disciplined life.
2. Lack of inhibitions, using whatever one has learned even if it isn't perfect.
3. Hearing the language as it is spoken - preferably with notebook in hand.
4. Making language-study a matter of top priority in the face of constant interruptions.
5. Not becoming discouraged, but looking upon every little improvement as a great leap forward.

If all this seems to demand inner resources that go beyond our own human resources, we ought to remind ourselves of a source of strength that is constantly at our disposal. That source, of course, is prayer. Experts in the business of language study say that spiritual motivation is more important than mental aptitude. Paul encourages us to “do everything through Christ who gives us strength” (Php 4:13). And the Lord Himself has declared that he will do whatever we ask the Father in his name (Jn 14:13). It may very well be true that we have not because we ask not!

Language study is a lifelong process. I'll never forget a Roman Catholic White Father who had spent three decades in Central Africa. He was working on a Chewa dictionary when I met him. I asked him why he was doing this, since there were already several of these dictionaries available. He simply replied that there were still many, many words which had never found their way into these dictionaries, and that there were also words which were incorrectly defined in them. Perhaps that is why he, in spite of his expert knowledge, still walked around, at age 75, with notebook in hand wherever he went!

### **THE MISSIONARY - CHAPTER EIGHT - HIS LANGUAGE FOR DISCUSSION**

1. We say that a people's culture is reflected in its language. Can you think of how this could be true in:
  - a. The way they greet one another.
  - b. Words in their language relating to time.
  - c. Words in their language for family relationships.
  - d. Words in their language for sickness and medicine.
2. In the light of this chapter why is a “one-tour missionary” an expensive budgetary item?
3.
  - a. Why is it advisable, if not absolutely necessary, to do most if not all of language study right in the field?
  - b. If language study is undertaken prior to leaving for the field, what would be essential for that study to be productive?
  - c. When can one say that he has “mastered” a foreign language reasonably well?
4. Is it advisable for a missionary's wife to learn the language too? Why?
5. The following items are listed in the chapter as problem areas for language study. Number them in the order which you think would give you the most trouble:
  - \_\_\_lack of self-discipline
  - \_\_\_inhibitions discouragement
  - \_\_\_love of “isolated security”
  - \_\_\_interruptions
  - \_\_\_discouragements



6. Perhaps all the “problems” of language study, an experienced missionary tells us, can be solved if the learner realizes above all that “language study is hard work and must be taken very seriously if one expects to succeed.” Why do you think this simple statement is at the heart of all problems?

## CHAPTER NINE - HIS FURLOUGH

The purpose of a furlough, it has been said, is to provide a time for R and R, i.e. “Rest and Relaxation”. I’ve heard missionaries say, however, that the two R’s stand more exactly for “Rat-Race”. Perhaps what a furlough turns out to be is a matter of opinion, depending upon the missionary’s personal experience. Ideally, of course, a furlough is designed to keep an expatriate in touch with his base of operations, giving him that necessary contact with the country which is still going to be his future home, at the same time offering him a change of pace from the pressures of overseas work.

The length of a furlough may vary, depending on the field. Three years service on the field and three months furlough at home has usually been considered a pretty equitable arrangement, although as conditions change in this world, also on the mission fields themselves, this division of time has been constantly subject to review.

With the 3 year/3 month arrangement the time, generally speaking, is to be allocated as follows: The *first month* is for getting situated back in the U.S. again. Family and friends that one hasn’t seen for three years are revisited. This is usually an exciting, happy experience. There is much to talk about as one can well imagine . . . . This is also the time to make arrangements for medical and dental checkups, services which were not readily or adequately available in the foreign field. Executive committees require the complete physical examination of the missionary and his family members, and well they should. There is no point in sending someone ten thousand miles away who shows symptoms of some chronic or debilitating ailment. Business affairs also need attention after an absence of three years, such as matters relating to banking, insurance, storage of furniture, personal property and so on. It’s a good idea also to start refurbishing the wardrobes and getting things together for the return to the field in three month’s time. America is the place to buy clothing and other goods at the best possible price, and it’s not a good idea to let this go until the final week or so before departure . . . . Finally, one should make arrangements as soon after one’s return as possible for a meeting some time during the furlough with the Executive Committee. If one can’t meet soon, one should at least compare thoughts immediately as to what the missionary is going to be doing with most of his time during the furlough. Will he be attending some kind of refresher course? Are arrangements all set for his place of residence, his vehicle, his deputation work (these, of course, will have been planned weeks in advance of his return to the states!)? Will he or his family need some special medical or dental care? Does he have some special problem that he wants to discuss with the committee, perhaps the possibility of his not returning to the field? . . . . We can see from all this that the first month after one’s return is not going to be one big happy reunion with family and friends. Neither will it be a grand picnic “away from it all”!

About *six weeks* of the three month’s of furlough time should be set aside for “church business”. These weeks do not always occur consecutively, but one can depend on it that as a missionary back in the states the church will still be making demands on his time . . . . There are conferences and rallies to attend — synodical, missionary, district, LWMS, etc. — where it is usually taken for granted that the missionary will put in an appearance and speak about his work to the constituency which is supporting him (Like: “Tell all about Africa in five minutes!”) . . . . Usually several weeks of deputation work is expected, during which the missionary concentrates on a certain group of congregations for slide presentations (Ah yes, Mr. Missionary, whether you like it or not you had better have some kind of slide presentation ready!) . . . . If it is possible for the missionary to attend some kind of refresher course during his furlough, like the Summer Quarter at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary or a seminar designed especially for missionaries at some other institution, this should by all means be done. The pump needs to be primed again. Spiritual growth needs to be encouraged. All too often a furlough

is looked upon as getting something out of a missionary rather than letting him put something back in. And this should not be regarded as “vacation time”!

If one subtracts the time periods sketched out in the two preceding paragraphs, one finds that there are about *two weeks* left for the missionary to wrap things up before his return to the field. Needless to say, the final efforts toward arranging the return trip, packing and shipping goods, last minute shopping, and saying goodbye for another three years will more than occupy this time.

So there we are! Not a lot has been said here about “Rest and Relaxation”. Perhaps it has seemed more like a “Rat Race”. It’s no wonder, therefore, that a number of requests have been voiced by missionaries to extend the furlough time by at least one month. This is true especially of those who have children here in the U.S. going to school as well as those who are interested in taking refresher courses of some kind while on furlough. Perhaps some executive committees have already made allowances for such situations.

Extending the time of furlough, of course, creates problems on the field. There the work goes on, important work, where it is much more difficult to fill the vacancy than here stateside. Imagine a pastor here every three years taking a three months’ leave of absence! This is why Kane in his book refers to furloughs as “a headache for most missions and mission executives” (*Missionary Life*, pg. 215). How can you find a “vacancy-missionary” to fill the gap when the limited corps on the field is already overburdened with all sorts of responsibilities?

Which leads us, of course, to the matter of *problems* relating to the missionary’s furlough:

1. **The Vacancy on the Field.** We’ve said enough about this problem in the preceding paragraph. It’s an obvious one. So far in all our experience we haven’t seen anyone come up with a solution concerning it, not even a good suggestion. It’s there. What more can one say?
2. **Personal Effects.** One doesn’t simply take off for three mouths without making some kind of provision for personal effects while away. As a rule these must be carefully packed and stored in an out-of-the-way place before the family leaves, and then unpacked after returning. Why all this? Well, for one thing in Third World countries one just doesn’t leave anything of value out in the open in a vacant house. Also, what if for some reason the missionary doesn’t return to the field? Who is going to sort out his personal effects for reshipment back home? It’s a real chore doing all this packing and unpacking, so much so that I’ve even heard missionaries wonder if the whole business was worth the effort!
3. **Furlough Housing.** I can remember the time when I returned to the U.S. with a family of six children, not knowing until somebody met me at the airfield as to where we were to stay during the furlough. No doubt the Executive Committee had its uneasy moments as well! That was before the Synod acquired a furlough house in Milwaukee. While the furlough house in Milwaukee took care of my family’s needs, it didn’t satisfy those who originally came from Texas, Florida, or California. Again we have a problem here that doesn’t have any easy answers!
4. **Education of Children.** It would be nice if a missionary could arrange his furlough so that it would occur during some long school holiday. This isn’t possible. Furloughs have to be staggered. Imagine, for example, three or four missionaries in Africa leaving the field on furlough at the same time! It is also true that school systems in other countries do not have holidays extending over a period of several months. About the longest holiday period in some places is four to six weeks, occurring several times during the school year between terms. So what does one do? Send the child to an American school during furlough time? Obviously this doesn’t work out very well. Expect the child to follow a home study program while on furlough? Again this wouldn’t seem very helpful in the circumstances. Oh for the wisdom of Solomon!
5. **Readjustments.** In a previous chapter we discussed the matter of culture shock. During every furlough the family experiences a “mini” culture shock. Perhaps the greatest reason for this is the affluence of America, including that of church members, in comparison with the situation in the country in which one has lived. Lack of interest in missions is difficult to understand. Why would a congregation, for example, want to add another rank to its already massive organ when it is falling miserably behind in its mission offerings? Why should an athletic encounter on TV cut into the attendance of a mission rally? Why does one receive such

strange reactions when voicing an opinion on matters of this kind? Somehow it seems that one doesn't quite fit into the stream of things anymore!

One could point to other problem areas, not to mention at all the fact that furloughs never work out according to a fixed schedule without some emergency or other arising. On my first furlough (1963) my wife had to undergo major surgery. On the second (1968) I had to cancel a scheduled lecture tour because of failing health on the part of both of my parents. On the third (1971) two of our children were married — and one can imagine what that means when one is without a permanent residence. My next trip back came a year prematurely (1973) because I required two bouts with major surgery within six weeks. On the next furlough (1976) I spent considerable time being checked at the Mayo Clinic because of several severe cases of malaria while in the field. On my last trip home (1978) we experienced the tragic death of a son in a motor accident. The best laid plans . . . . !

By this time someone might wonder if there is anything good to be said for a furlough! We have already mentioned the various things at home that need attention by anyone whose base of operations still remains his homeland, to which he and his family will eventually return permanently. Aside from this a change of scenery is something which can be very beneficial for one who has served in a foreign culture for any length of time. After three years of it the nerves wear pretty thin. One loses patience more than one should. Just to get away for awhile, view the strange environment from a distance, experience that America is not a Utopia either, evaluate the entire situation again, and return to the field with renewed vigor — that's what furloughs can accomplish even though plans often go wry. Frequently missionaries have been heard to have said during the last weeks of their furlough, "I can hardly wait to get back to my home away from home." This is what makes furloughs worthwhile!

### **THE MISSIONARY - CHAPTER NINE - HIS FURLOUGH FOR DISCUSSION**

1. Under "the first month" of a missionary on furlough this chapter has listed the following matters to be taken care of:
  - a. Revisit family and friends
  - b. Medical and dental checkups
  - a. Stateside business affairs
  - b. Refurbish clothing
  - c. Arrange to meet with 'Executive Committee

Do you think one month allows for enough time?
2. Which of the two items planned for the major portion of a missionary's furlough time do you consider the more important:
  - a. Going on a lecture tour
  - b. Taking a refresher course
3. Does a "refresher course" necessarily have to deal directly with some phase of mission work? Explain.
4. Listed below are short-term courses of study offered by the Overseas Ministries Study Center, Ventnor, N.J. (interdenominational):
  - a. The Biblical Basis for Mission
  - b. Christian Witness to Muslims
  - c. Cultural Problems in Missions
  - d. Salvation, Survival and Social Justice
  - e. Evangelization Today
  - f. Understanding Yourself as Person, Partner, Parent
  - g. Reaching Unreached Peoples
  - h. Christian Mission under Authoritarian Governments

Would you recommend that our missionaries on furlough attend these courses?

5. In view of the headaches created on the mission field by lengthy, furloughs, would you think it wise to extend a missionary's furlough time to at least four months?
6. A plan is under consideration to set up some kind of furlough housing on Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary property.
  - a. What advantages would there be with such an arrangement?
  - b. What problems could possibly stand in the way of implementing such an arrangement?
7. A statement frequently heard in connection with furloughs is the following: "Furloughs are necessary in order that the missionary and family keep a proper balance between Parent Church and Mission Field." Discuss the wisdom of this statement.
8. Why do you suppose most missionaries are only too glad to return to the field after their furlough time is up?

## CHAPTER TEN - HIS MISSION

This is a chapter that won't be found in most mission manuals. I debated whether or not to include it. We've already discussed many phases of life and work in a mission field. Why add another chapter on the missionary's "mission"?

The reason is personal more than anything else. In discussing a missionary's life and work in its various phases one gets into all sorts of details, minutiae which somehow do not adequately reflect the glorious opportunity of a missionary's mission. How should he, in other words, view the fact that he has been sent in a special way, to bring the gospel to other nations?

Paul expressed it this way, "Although I am the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph 3:8). First and foremost Paul regarded his mission to the Gentiles as a glorious privilege, an opportunity to work for his Lord. This was a gracious gift, totally undeserved. In no way did his background as a Pharisee, a persecutor of the Church of Christ, qualify him to be a special ambassador for Christ. He was "the least of all God's people" to have received such a calling.

Yet who can reasonably or logically explain the grace of God? God's grace is made effective through his Holy Spirit "*ubi et quando visum est Deo*" (where and when it pleases God), effective "*in iis, qui audiunt evangelium*" (in them that hear the Gospel), as our Augsburg Confession so beautifully points out (Art. V: Of the Ministry). It was by grace that Paul was called to faith in his Savior Jesus Christ. It was also by grace that he together with Barnabas was commissioned by the Christians in Antioch to be God's chosen instrument to carry his name before the Gentiles (Ac 9:15). Paul never forgot this. His mission was by grace alone. This motivated him, giving him that humble spirit in which all of his work was carried out. It also brought out that ceaseless drive to do all that he could according to the power of God working within him.

It is important that every missionary regard his mission first of all in that same humble spirit of an Apostle Paul. Why is he doing what he is doing? This same grace was given him. In no way did he deserve it. Humanly speaking he may have been considered least of all to have been worthy of it. By grace, however, God brought him to faith. By grace God trained him for the holy ministry. By grace God called him into this special service through his church, to be his chosen instrument to nations who are still predominantly Christless in their beliefs. And so his mission is first and foremost a glorious privilege. He's not a hero. Neither is he a martyr. He's a "somebody" because God has made him so, a "man on a mission," the most glorious mission in the world!

Looking back to my own personal experience this same grace to one who was also "the least of all God's people" stands out in bold relief. By grace a Christian, from infancy; by grace a Christian training at home through Christian parents; by grace a Christian education covering a span of twenty years prior to ordination into the holy ministry; by grace the privilege of serving congregations in Iowa, Wisconsin, and

Michigan for another twenty year period. Yet nothing during this time to indicate that I would ever serve overseas. In fact everything else pointed the other way — my age, the number of children in the family, the type of service rendered. And then, out of the blue, a call to serve as a missionary in Africa! Most relatives, associates and friends advised against accepting the call. Human opinions, in other words, did not seem to consider me a very likely prospect. And yet the call itself to serve in this privileged capacity was inescapably compelling. That decided the issue. Why did God call me and not somebody else? The answer rested upon his grace alone, as a part of his wisdom.

If a missionary can regard his mission first of all in the light of God's gracious call, he will be enabled to do his work in the right spirit. Nowadays it seems that so much emphasis is put upon material aspects relating to missionary service. Perhaps even this booklet has reflected as much. What will my life be like overseas? What kind of house will I live in? What kind of services will be available? What will the work be like? Will I be able to put my talents to their best possible use? What about the education of my children? What will happen to my furniture, my property, my obligations here in the U.S.? Naturally we'll think about such things. But they, dare not outweigh the primary consideration that God in his grace through his call has extended to me a special privilege of service in his church, and that the same God who has called me to this service will also see to it that my needs are taken care of in his service.

If we regard our work in that humble spirit, we'll also do it in that spirit. As Paul reminds us: “. . . to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Again, what a privilege! Think of the treasure that is ours to share! The unsearchable riches of Christ! An unconditional gospel-message of victory, over sin, death and Satan! That's the essence of our mission, our *raison d'etre*. This gives purpose and direction to all that we do.

Again it seems that in our day of specialization so much emphasis is placed upon methods that we “don't see the woods because there are so many trees,” to use an old proverb of German origin. Methods have their place. Strategies are important. But all the methods and strategies in the world aren't going to do us any good if we lose sight of that overriding privilege which our Lord has placed into our unworthy hands: to share the treasures of his redemptive work with a world lost in sin. The apostles of “church growth” may be able to give us good suggestions, most of which on the positive side are just good common sense put into practice. The protagonists for “contextualization” and “acculturation” may have some valid warnings against cultural insensitivity and natural tendencies toward paternalism and racism in doing mission work. But let's not bend over backwards so that culture instead of Scripture determines the way in which we ought to go. The gospel of Christ is something concerning which we should never be ashamed.

So much is also being written and said in missionary circles about the conflict going on these days as to whether the missionary is primarily a “soul saver”, seeking converts from other faiths, or a “do-gooder”, concerned about bettering social and economic conditions among the downtrodden. Even *Time* magazine recently devoted a feature article to this question (*Time*, Dec. 27, 1982). Missionaries who proclaim the God of Scripture as the only true God and Christ crucified as the only way to salvation are often regarded as “spiritual imperialists”. Those on the other hand who champion some cause for the betterment of social, racial, economic or political conditions are regarded as the real missionary heroes, working toward a worthy cause.

Sin, however, still remains humanity's basic problem no matter how rich or poor people happen to be, or how privileged as a part of society. The soul that cries out for deliverance from the awesome powers of satanic fear and superstition still issues the most pathetic human cry of all. The spirit that is shattered by the problem of the death of a loved one cannot be restored by all the social betterment program in the world. And the picture of the uncomplicated native existing in his natural, uncontaminated bliss is one of the most distorted figments of human imagination. One has to see the terrible powers of witchcraft in action, or witness the wretchedness of a heathen burial in order to appreciate more fully the terrible emptiness that still exists in so many places of the world today. One also has to know Christ, as the Apostle Paul declares, and the power of his resurrection in order to appreciate the real missionary obligation that rests upon us as well as the unsearchable riches of the treasure which we have to share.

To experience what it can mean to people who have come out of the darkness of sin into the light of Christ's radiance is the most rewarding experience in the entire world. Sometimes it seems that the odds are all against us. Heathen traditions are so deep-rooted. Human nature is so hard-hearted and obstinate. What hope does a foreigner have, he who can hardly speak the language and who comes with nothing but a Word which proclaims an unknown God as the only true God and a crucified Savior as the only hope of everlasting life? And yet we proclaim that Word — first to a handful here and there, in the most primitive of circumstances. The handful grows into a group of baptized believers, and perhaps after considerable trial and tribulation into a Christian congregation. One scarcely knows how it happens, yet it does, and as one sees this congregation come together to worship the Lord one can sense a difference. There is hope where once there was nothing but hopelessness, life where there once was nothing but death, joy where there once was nothing but despair. The change has been gradual, almost imperceptible, and yet nothing short of miraculous.

What has brought about this miracle? Nothing else but the power of God's Spirit working through the gospel. He has brought people out of a tradition so totally different that any human explanation is out of the question. He has nurtured the tiny embryo of faith, caused it to grow into a fellowship of believers known as the Body of Christ. The devil will try to destroy this handiwork of God. One can think of a thousand ways in which this might happen. Only the power of God working through Word and Sacrament can stop Satan's treachery and bring success to this body of believers as they grow in the fruits of the Spirit.

And they do grow! The Lord does open hearts. People are found who are willing to serve the Lord. Students are trained to become evangelists, and then pastors. Laymen are there who help preach and teach Sunday after Sunday. Choirs are organized which sing with joy in their hearts. Children — ill clad, unkempt children — come together who can sing like the angels. And people die and are buried in the hope of a risen Lord and Savior.

And what about the missionary? His satisfaction does not have to lie in the spectacular. The simple experience of attending a service of Word and Sacrament in a place where a few years ago there was nothing but drunkenness, fear, and superstitious practices; seeing the people come to worship the Triune God, hearing them sing and pray and confess their sins and receive absolution; watching them have their children baptized; seeing them kneel before a makeshift altar to receive the Lord's own body and blood; hearing a student or an evangelist or a pastor bring an inspiring message from God's Word; observing their growth, however slow it may be, as they learn to use their gifts and abilities to manage their own affairs; joining with them in liturgical responses and watching them bring their offerings to the Lord; participating in a funeral service as they somberly yet also trustingly bring a loved one to the grave—this is all clearly the Lord's doing. This is in the words of Isaiah “a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair” (Isa 61:3).

As a missionary one may have done nothing more than to observe a Sunday morning service from an inconspicuous corner of the church. No mountains have been climbed; no rivers have been crossed. But one has seen the Lord at work in all his saving grace, thankful that God has been able to use “Jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us” (2 Co 4:7).

That's really what mission work is all about, isn't it? Methods have their place. Strategies are important. But when all is said and done what is needed above all today — even as yesterday — is a corps of ministers of Christ who, constrained by a Spirit-wrought devotion to their Lord and a love for the souls purchased with his blood, are willing to beat the bushes and scour the byways faithfully, heralding his precious gospel of salvation with all zeal, not worried too much about spectacular results, but trusting that the Lord's Spirit of truth will surely accomplish his eternal purposes far beyond what we can ever ask or think. A missionary has a mission because he has the command, he has the means, and he has the assurance that God's blessing is abundant and his almighty presence never-ending. G. Christian Weiss put it this way: “That which actually makes Christian men and women become genuine missionaries is their arrival at certain unshakable convictions from the Bible regarding God's world plan and their Christian responsibility toward the world according to that plan” (*The Heart of Missionary Theology*, pg. 8).

The Apostle Paul, the model “man on a mission,” expresses the goal of his mission as follows: “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Co 4:16-18).

### **THE MISSIONARY CHAPTER TEN - HIS MISSION FOR DISCUSSION**

- I. a. Why can every one of us say with Paul: “Although I am the least of all God’s people, this grace was given me . . . .”?
- b. What attitude will this give us in whatever service we can render to the Lord?
2. Paul adds to this statement: “. . . to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”  
    Give as many reasons as you can think of concerning why we as the member WELS can speak of having “the unsearchable riches of Christ.”
3. Comment on the statement of George F. Vicedom: “Only when we have grasped the fact that the whole purpose of the Bible is the rescue of mankind and therefore mission work, only then do theological thought and every type of church work receive their proper direction.” (*The Mission of God*, Preface XI).
4. The following texts apply to “A Missionary’s Mission”. Choose one and plain how you would apply it:
 

Joshua 1:6-9	Luke 19:1-10
Judges 16:21	John 9:4
1 Kings 19:11-13	Acts 2:1-13
2 Kings 6:15-17	2 Corinthians 4:13-14
Psalms 47	2 Corinthians 4:16-18
Proverbs 30:24-28	2 Corinthians 5:14-15
Isaiah 54:1-3	2 Corinthians 5:18-20
Isaiah 52:7	2 Thessalonians 3:1
Isaiah 61:1-6	2 Timothy 2:1-2
Ezekiel 37:1-14	Revelation 3:8
Matthew 9:35-38	

### **CHAPTER ELEVEN - HIS END**

“The ultimate task of a missionary is to work himself out of a job.” In missiological circles during the time when the indigenous church principle was holding sway, the above quotation was axiomatic. The idea, of course, was that the missionary’s goal was to teach his national understudies to take over so that the missionary would become superfluous. “Mission accomplished!” declares the aged veteran as he walks off into the sunset. Needless to say this ideal has seldom been realized, especially so in the case of missions which have built up hospitals, dispensaries and educational systems. Somehow or other the “expat” is always needed, if for no other reason than to administer affairs behind the scenes, so that the various programs can remain fiscally solvent. In some cases nationals have taken on leadership roles, and done very well, but usually there has been an expatriate advisor around somewhere. While there was a strong move soon after many Third World countries became independent to phase out the vestiges of “colonialism and imperialism and paternalism” as soon as possible, much of this process was found to have been premature. Gradually the expatriates trickled back in, of course remaining behind the scenes as much as possible.

About a decade ago there was even talk in church councils in foreign countries to declare a “moratorium” on all subsidy. After considerable propaganda at first, this idea was also short-lived. Getting rid of foreign aid and with it foreign dependency — was easier said than done. Even those who cried “moratorium”

the loudest were the very people who were salaried for the most part by foreign subsidies. It is naive to think that mission agencies from Europe and America are going to continue to send subsidies without continuing to send their own representatives to see what is being done with this money. And so as long as support-money is being sent, missionaries will have to be sent also, regardless of what others may think or want. Perhaps this all sounds very mercenary, but human nature being what it is, it's a fact of life also in the church.

Within the massive independent church movement in countries where Christianity was first introduced by white missionaries there has been a considerable breakaway from mission subsidy and mission control (cf. David B. Barrett, *Schism and Renewal in Africa*). Over six thousand separate independent church bodies have mushroomed up. Many have claimed that this movement would eventually bring about the end of the missionary. In fact, as the tides of nationalism began to sweep over much of Africa nearly a half century ago, many predicted that the days of the missionaries were numbered. A book entitled *The End of the Missionary* stated flatly that foreign missionary activity would cease as soon as the colonial powers turned over the reins of government to nationals.

This hasn't happened. There are still an estimated 220,000 Christian missionaries at work in the world today: 138,000 Catholics and 82,000 Protestants. Of these 6,000 Catholics and 32,000 Protestants came from the U.S. (*TIME*, Dec. 27, 1982). The number isn't diminishing either. Although liberal church bodies such as those connected with the NCC are sending less missionaries abroad these days, the more conservative Evangelicals have increased their output considerably.

There has been a difference in the missionary's role. The old-style "career" missionary, who dedicated his life and substance to the conversion of the heathen for the rest of his days, if possible, is becoming a person out of the past. Missionary service is now considered on more of a short-term basis. How or why this has come about is difficult to say. Is there less dedication, less willingness to sacrifice than was the case years ago? One would hate to think so. It is a fact experienced by all mission agencies, however, that those who remain in missionary service more than a dozen years or so are the exceptions.

In the case of many mission organizations the role of a missionary has also become more specialized than in previous years. There are medical missionaries, agricultural missionaries, mission developers, specialists in music, printing, language, relief programs, evangelistic programs, housing schemes, educational projects, mass communications, and the many other spheres of activity into which mission work has entered. It's interesting to observe how books on missionary life and work find it necessary to devote a chapter on each of these specialized fields. Schools for the training of missionaries devote endless courses, seminars and consultations on all of the above as well. Mission work, in other words, has become big business, and the bigger you are, the more specialized you have to be. Or at least that's the direction in which world mission work is going.

Our own synodical world mission program hasn't become so large that changes of this kind have affected us, perhaps, to the same extent as others. And yet in a world that is changing as rapidly as our own we can't remain immune. We, too, have experienced frequent changes in missionary personnel. Whether we like it that way or not is beside the point. It's a fact that needs to be reckoned with. It's also a fact that adds considerably to the expense of world mission work. Sending a family overseas and bringing them back to the U.S. again is a costly item.

We, too, will have to think more in terms of specialization, simply by, virtue of the fact that we're living in a more complex world as well as in a more sophisticated world. Means of communication, language techniques, transcultural studies, developments in the fields of education, evangelism, musicology, printing — all can be used in the interests of the spread of the gospel. Although it may not be possible to have specialists in all these areas, we ought to know as much about them as we can and use what we can in the work of seeking and finding that which is lost.

One recent development has been thrust upon us by changing world conditions. It is no longer possible because of governmental restrictions to send resident missionaries into certain countries where the Lord has given us opportunities to help carry on his work (Cameroon, India, Mexico). There are also confessional



churches in other countries that are in need of our help and where it may not be feasible or possible to send in a resident team (Nigeria, Sweden, Brazil). We have tried to keep in touch with these areas by means of visitations, sporadic seminars and the like. But if we really mean business in these countries we're going to have to do more, much more, than we are doing at the present time. The whole matter is now under study by our Synod's Board for World Missions. The first step planned is to request Synodical authorization to call a Director of Worker-Training to serve in conjunction with the Executive Secretary of the Board, so that our support of these places can be carried out more frequently and meaningfully, especially in the direction of training more qualified national workers in these fields.

Thus we see that to think in terms of "the end of the missionary" is for us not in the picture at all. Where we are already working we are still very much needed. Particularly in the areas of worker-training and in the development of printed materials for use as tools this need is more urgent than ever. But more than that, we need these fields to work in. We need to share. It is a part of our being as a church. A church without a mission program is a corpse. We also need some of their spontaneous insights. We need to know again what a "first love" is like. They can strengthen us as much as we can strengthen them.

And how can we ever forget the great need for the gospel still in the world today. Of the world's four billion residents about one billion are nominal Christians. What about the other three billion?

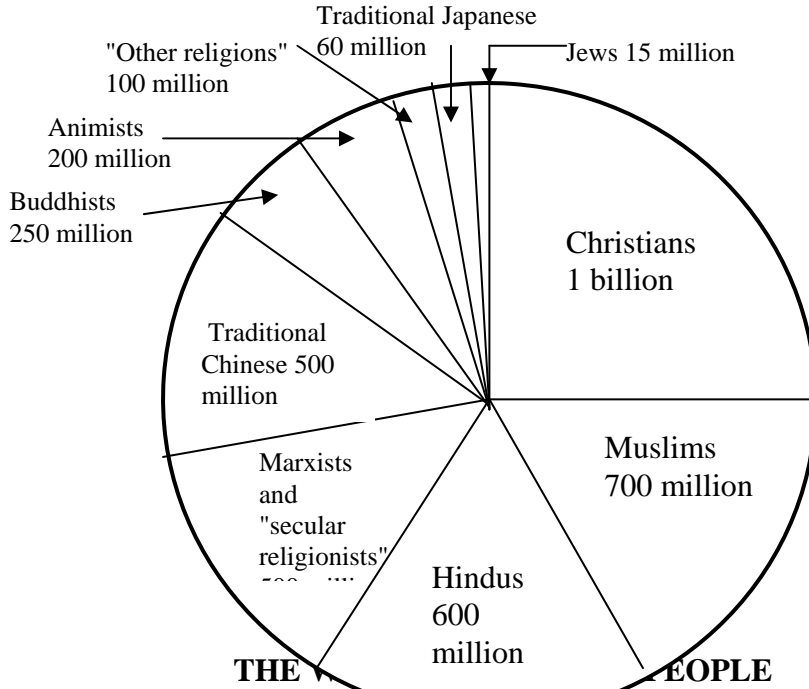
Jesus said: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Mt 24:14). The end of the missionary will coincide with the end of the world. And so as long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent Jesus. Night is coming, when no one can work. While Jesus is in the world, he is the light of the world (Jn 9:4-5). While we are in the world, we are the light of the world also, reflecting the light with which God has made his light shine in our hearts — to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ (2 Co 4:6).

### **THE MISSIONARY - CHAPTER ELEVEN - HIS END FOR DISCUSSION**

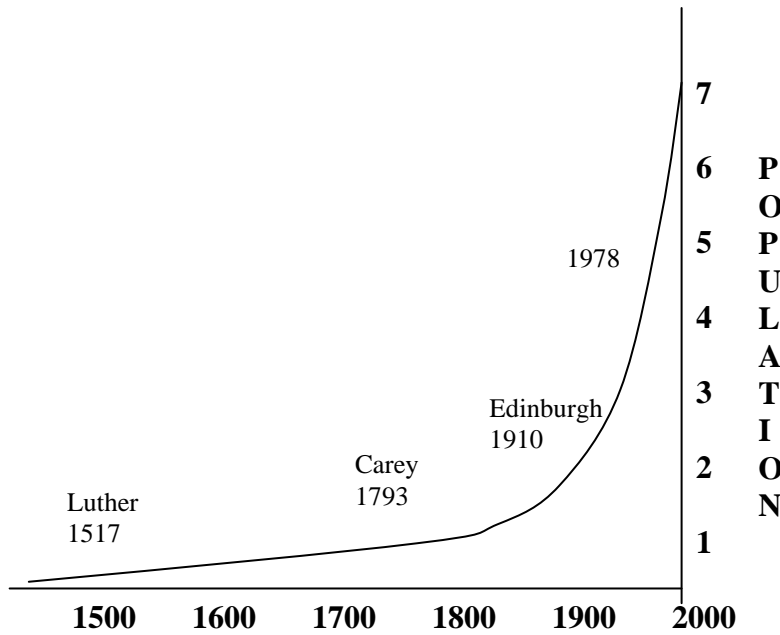
1. Define:
  - a. Paternalism
  - a. Imperialism
  - b. Colonialism
  - c. Neo-Colonialism
2. Why is it understandable that Third World countries have tried so hard to rid themselves of the above "isms"?
3. What has often happened as a result of trying to change things too quickly? Why?
4. How has a similar set of circumstances brought tension into the relationship between mission agencies and national churches?
5. What role do you expect that communism would play in this turn of events?
6. Some people claim that the independent churches (non-mission affiliated) are the only true "indigenous" churches in Third World countries.
  - a. What great danger lies within the independent church movement?
  - b. Why do thoughts like "total independence," "moratorium on all outside aid" etc. give a distorted view of the relationship which should exist in churches all over the world?
7. Do you think that the more recent trend toward "short-term" rather than "career" missionaries is good or bad? Explain.
8. What about the increased trend toward specialization in the role of missionaries?
9. Do you think it's important for our Synod to call a full-time "Director of Worker Training" to serve in conjunction with the Executive Secretary of the Board for World Missions?
10. Why will there never be a time here on earth when we can speak of "the end of the missionary"?

**THE WORLD: ITS RELIGIONS**

The graph below represents the population breakdown of various world religions.



This graph shows the population growth since the time of Luther in the 1500's to the present.



**THE GREAT NEED AND THE GREAT POTENTIAL  
HOW FAR ARE WE REACHING OUT?**

Country	Population	WELS Pastors and Missionaries
United States of America	220,000,000	995

<b>Other Countries and Territories</b>		
Antigua	78,400	2
Cameroon	810001000	0*
Canada	23,680,000	5
Colombia	25,640,000	5
Hong Kong	4,725,000	3
India	650,000,000	0*
Indonesia	151,000,000	3
Japan	115,850,000	7
Malawi	5,500,000	6
Mexico	69,380,000	2**
Nigeria	70,500,000	0*
Norway	4,080,000	0*
Puerto Rico	3,196,000	3
Sweden	8,320,000	0*
Taiwan	17,350,000	3
Zambia	5,650,000	9

Number of pastors and missionaries outside U.S.A.	48
Population of countries in some way served by WELS	1,382,949,400
Population of countries not in any way touched by the mission outreach of WLS	2,717,050,600

\*Countries to which occasional visits are made by WELS pastors or missionaries.

\*\*Missionaries for Mexico are resident in El Paso, Texas