

## THE DIMENSIONS OF WORLD EVANGELIZATION

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### Introduction

The task of this Issue Strategy Paper is to depict, in bold outline the main dimensions of world evangelism and the major issues confronting it, and to suggest strategies called for by these epoch-making times. I speak of three divine, four human, and three methodological dimensions.

By *evangelism*, I mean proclaiming Jesus Christ as God and Savior and persuading men to become his disciples and responsible members of his church. This distinguishes evangelism from philanthropy, from "everything God wants done," and from bringing about desirable changes in the structures of society. Those are good things to do, but are not evangelism. Evangelism is the duty and privilege of all Christians, whether baptized yesterday or long ago. Churches organized in Bangladesh in 1973 should engage in evangelism just as fervently as those organized in Norway a thousand years ago.

By *world evangelism*, I mean that carried on across linguistic, cultural, and geographic boundaries. Huge numbers of men and women will never be reached by Christian neighbors. They have no Christian neighbors. They seldom if ever see Christians. They often live in other countries and speak other languages. They consider themselves different and live behind cultural walls which shut them off from ordinary evangelism. World evangelism stressing cooperating strategies toward reaching all men for Christ, presents Christ Jesus to these teeming multitudes. World evangelism, also, is the duty and privilege of all Christians from every land, every language, and every culture, and prepares the way for our Lord's triumphant return.

Facing the enormous range and complexity of world evangelism and world mission, I confine myself to main aspects and bare outlines. Even some of these, I leave to later papers.

I shall stress *new* dimensions for we live in a new world. Eurican<sup>1</sup> empires have collapsed and the vehicle they provided evangelism lies on the scrap heap. Numerous, though often small, Christian denominations are found all across Latfricasia<sup>2</sup>. Large numbers of travelers tour all nations for study, business, or just to see the country. Tremendous differences in productivity, knowledge, wealth, and resources divide the nations into haves and have-nots. This Congress must think in *new* dimensions.

### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>*Eurica*. Europe and North America.

<sup>2</sup>*Latfricasia*. Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

Readers will kindly forgive the inconvenience caused by these contractions. Where it is necessary, as in this paper, to repeatedly refer to all these geographic areas, much time is saved by the contractions. They will commend themselves to you.

I shall also stress *continuing* dimensions, for biblical truth applies everywhere, human nature remains the same, and man's alienation from God continues unabated. Since two billion, rapidly becoming three billion, do not know Jesus Christ, world evangelism must continue. Churches and Christians are not free to divert to other causes the sacred resources gathered to make Christ known, loved, and obeyed everywhere. Christians minister to men's needs — and men have no greater needs than to be reconciled to their Father and to walk in the Light. Lausanne must think in *continuing* dimensions.

Before the Congress, participants will receive a definitive account of hundreds of populations of the world unreached or alienated from the Gospel. Readers will therefore be vividly aware of them. The main dimensions of world evangelism I present will be best seen if the unreached peoples are held sharply in mind. Evangelism concerns *people* — men and women, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, students and laborers, farmers and mechanics, striving, thinking, fighting, sinning, dreaming, bleeding and dying *people*. Generalizations and numbers (shorthand symbols) help us see the multitudes on whom Christ looked with compassion.

### PART I: Divine Dimensions

#### *Divine dimension — God's will and world evangelization*

The most important dimension of world evangelism is God's will: Christ's act on Calvary, his Resurrection, the sanctifying sending Holy Spirit and the authoritative infallible Bible. I heartily endorse what Dr. Stott has so well said. I need say no more, except perhaps at three points which bear especially upon world evangelism.

a. Nothing affects world evangelism more than what the Bible teaches concerning the possibility of salvation of men through their adherence to various ideologies and religions. Today it has become popular in some sections of the church to affirm that men can be saved through sincere adherence to the best they know. God is savingly at work, we are told, in the whole range of human experience. All Christians have to do is to dialogue with men of other religions and move amiably forward in joint search for God. All such argument, biblical evangelism holds, is erroneous. The only salvation of which the apostles speak is that which comes through faith in Jesus Christ. To our own children, and to those of our Jewish, Buddhist, Marxist, Hindu, Muslim and Secularist friends alike, we declare that there is "no other Name." Christ alone is the Door. He alone is the Truth. He alone has Life. As ambassadors appointed by Christ, we beseech them all (our children and theirs) to be reconciled to God and become active members of the Body of Christ.

b. Similarly, while the scriptures of men and the writings of their philosophers and teachers certainly contain many good things, we hold that the Bible alone, relating all that can be known about the earthly life of Jesus Christ, is the inspired Word of God. It alone is a sufficient rule of faith and practice. It is the standard, the perfect yardstick, by which all other writings about salvation and morals are to be judged.

As world evangelism proceeds in charity toward all men, truth compels Christians to be clear on this point.

c. Because of the tremendous drive to replace evangelism with social action pressing toward righteousness, mercy and peace, Lausanne must speak clearly on social action. There *is*, indeed, a crying need in the world for brotherhood, righteousness, and peace. Christians are doing much to bring these about, and *will do more*. Make no mistake about that. But horizontal reconciliation of man with man is not vertical reconciliation of man with God. Social action is good; but it must neither be called evangelism nor substituted for it. The *temporal* welfare of mankind demands clarity at these points. We must not deny to men, struggling to build a righteous, peaceful society, the most potent element in that struggle, namely multitudes of Christian cells (churches) where men meet around the Bible to seek the will of God and to open themselves to his righteousness and his power. The *eternal* welfare of men also demands clarity. We must not deceive men by giving them "the bread which perishes" in place of the Bread of Heaven.

*Divine dimension 2 — God accepts world cultures*

A pernicious notion that world evangelism is a concealed form of Eurican imperialism and will destroy the beautiful cultures of Asia, Africa, and Latin America has recently been retarding world evangelism. The idea is false and must be cleared out of the way. It is not in harmony with the revealed will of God. World evangelism has nothing to do with Eurican imperialism, past or present. This Congress does not believe that Eurican culture is God's chosen culture. English, German, and French, though useful on occasion, are not God's only languages. He is fluent in thousands! Eurican culture is not God's model for all the world. Indeed, myriads of Eurican Christians work constantly to make their cultures more biblical. They teach that many aspects of Eurican cultures are highly displeasing to God and must be eliminated.

According to the Bible, God has no favorites among cultures. He accepts them all. We read in Rev. 21:26: "The wealth and splendor of the nations shall be brought into the Holy City."

The kings of earth bring in all their splendor, in stream the beautiful cultures of mankind. Hour after hour, day after day, the glories of the nations march in.

But there is one condition. The inspired writer continues in verse 27, "But nothing unclean shall enter." No oppression, no injustice, no pornography, no idolatry, no corruption, no lust, no drunkenness, no lies, no racial arrogance. The cultures of the earth, purged of the sins, weaknesses, and uglinesses which now afflict all of them, redeemed and made more beautiful by the blood of the Lamb, will troop in to the New Jerusalem, and *the Lord God will accept all of them* as part of the brilliance and the glory of the Holy City. And they shall dwell forever before his face.

That city is nothing that man can make. Its maker and builder is God. But, till the Lord's return, Christians set their faces toward that city, which shines with the glory of God. As they press on toward the radiance of perfect goodness, justice, and love, Christians strive to make their camp grounds conform to the heavenly pattern. Since in

the New Jerusalem, God will accept all the glories of the redeemed nations, surely in the visible church, God does now accept the myriad cultures of redeemed mankind, each so well adapted to the circumstances under which he has appointed it to live.

The cultures as they stand are incredibly varied and rich. Yet every one is a mixture of good and bad components. As the adherents of each culture become Christians, the vast majority of its component parts will be little affected — Chinese will continue eating with chopsticks and Russians with forks. But components which work against human welfare and are contrary to God's revealed will, will be either modified or eliminated.

Evangelism redeems each culture whose adherents believe the Gospel, and *makes each more beautiful while it remains itself*. Evangelization is the greatest benefit possible to confer on any culture. Far from destroying it, evangelization brings out its latent goodnesses, which Christianity, the world religion, rapidly disseminates to all men. Witness the worldwide use — in hundreds of languages — of Negro spirituals, and the remarkable popularity of Indian ashrams.

*Divine dimension 3: God creates a great new resource for world evangelism*

In view of the two billion who have yet to hear of the Savior, and of the strange sickness which currently afflicts Christian mission, God has created a great new resource for world evangelism.

Everyone knows of the hundreds of *Eurican* missionary societies, but few know that God has raised up two hundred missionary societies in *Latfricasia*. The 200 Latfricasian missionary sending agencies and their 3,400 missionaries, reported in 1972, are only a part of the whole. Furthermore, if God has done this in the grey dawn, what will he not do as the sun rises higher in the heavens? As dedicated Christians of Eurica begin cooperating with Latfricasians in global propagation of the Gospel, very great disciplings are sure to happen.

Three main results of this great new resource stand out. *First, the numbers out there, evangelizing across cultural and linguistic barriers, have been materially augmented*. They are about to be increased still more. In Japan, a movement is afoot to send out 1,000 Japanese missionaries. In Korea, two seminaries are establishing specialized schools to prepare Korean evangelists to spread the Gospel outside Korea. It is well within the range of possibility that Korea should by 1984 send 2,000 missionaries abroad.

To date, many Latfricasian missionaries evangelize *within* their countries but in tribes and languages other than their own. Many go to other countries one by one and fit into Christian institutions there. This is a wise first step. But the evangelist is a *herald to those who have not heard*. He is not a fraternal worker to existing churches. His primary function is not to demonstrate brotherhood, but to reconcile unbelievers to God in the Church of Jesus Christ. So we may confidently expect that as numbers of Latfricasian missionaries increase, their evangelistic function will be emphasized.

*The second main result of the great new resource is that it separates world evangelism from Eurican dominance*. Part of the strange sickness which has afflicted world evangelism is that evangelism has appeared

to be "Euricans spreading their religion." "Evangelism" and "missionary" appeared synonymous with "Eurican imperialism." No one wanted this. It was not true. But nevertheless this was — in some places more than others — a common impression. Naturally, nationalist Christians exclaimed, "Let us have no more religious imperialism." Some even believed that the word "missionary" was too mixed up with Eurican bossiness to be useful again.

The rise of Latfricasian missionary societies counters all this. Latfricasian missionary societies (multiplying year by year, sending out thousands of missionaries, creating missionary training institutions, praying for their evangelists overseas, developing theologies which require world evangelism) are acting as if Eurican dominance did not exist. *God* is speaking directly to them and they — like Barnabas and Saul — are going, "sent out by *the Holy Spirit*." *God* is pouring out his Spirit on his people in all nations. World evangelism is being seen again as simple obedience to the divine call, as *God's* great answer to desperate human need.

*The third result of Latfricasian missionary societies is that by them world evangelism has been separated from the dominance of Latfricasian churches. Let me speak plainly. Most "missionary" gatherings of the last fifty years have been attended by national leaders who represented the church, not the mission. Their concerns were the concerns of their national churches, not primarily of world evangelism. Thus the missionary movement, with the best intentions in the world, has been giving places of great power to good Christians who were not primarily interested in world evangelism. They were churchmen, principals of Christian colleges, heads of seminaries, prominent lawyers, government officials, and the like. Quite naturally they saw the needs of their churches more vividly than the needs of the unconverted. They correctly dominated Latfricasian churches. They unfortunately also dominated world evangelism in Latfricasian lands — and have retarded it.*

As Latfricasian missionary societies are founded and multiply, it is going to become more and more possible for Euricans engaged in world evangelism to work with *Latfricasians to whom God has given the same obedience*. Evangelistic resources will be expended by persons *passionately interested in evangelism*. World evangelism is going to be freed from the dominance of good Christians, to whom *God* has given other obediences. The surge of power thus released will build a world evangelism commensurate with today's spiritual need and opportunity.

In addition to these three results, a fascinating *possibility* opens before us here at Lausanne — that part of the evangelistic power of Eurica be given to Latfricasian missionary societies engaged in conversion evangelism outside their own culture areas. Latfricasia is rich in man power. Its churches are culturally close to the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, but do not have the large resources needed to transport their evangelists across the oceans. Some cooperative arrangement with Eurican missionary societies would seem to be mutually profitable. (The largest part of Eurican missionary resources will, of course, continue to be spent in sending Eurica's own sons and daughters to areas where the Christ of Calvary is neither known nor loved. Evangelism to be valid must be the testimony of a church's own

life blood, the witness of its own sons and daughters. But cooperation in great commission missions should be mutually fulfilling to Eurican and Latfricasian missionary societies.)

## PART II: Human Dimensions

### *Human dimension 1 — The two billion with no knowledge of Christ*

The huge numbers of the unevangelized constitute a most important human dimension of world evangelism.

More than two-thirds of mankind has yet to hear of Jesus Christ. C. Peter Wagner calls this two-thirds the "Fourth World." A small part of the Fourth World is in Switzerland, Europe, and North America, where maybe ninety million have never really heard the words "Jesus Christ," and consequently have never thought of accepting him as Savior and Lord. The overwhelming majority of the Fourth World, however, lives in Latfricasia. The missionary movement of the last two hundred years has established many churches there, but in most Latfricasian countries, all of the baptized put together (real Christians and nominal) are only a tiny minority of the total population. Often only one in a hundred is a Christian. Often less than one in a thousand is.

Furthermore, while the Gospel has been widely proclaimed, it has *not* been widely received. A few units of population have become heavily Christian. Most have not become heavily Christian. Most have not become Christian at all. As a result, congregations in each geographical unit of Latfricasia are usually made up of Christians predominately of one or two tribes, castes, or levels of economic or educational advancement. For example, in South India, where there are hundreds of castes, most Christians come from five castes only — Nadar, Pariah, Mala, Madiga, and Syrian. In Bolivia, most evangelical Christians come from *one* ethnic unit — the Aymara people. In Fiji, 98 per cent of the church comes from the aboriginal tribes and less than two per cent from the 200,000 East Indian immigrants. Endless other examples could be given.

These "pockets" of Christians have the same difficulty evangelizing outside their linguistic and ethnic boundaries as black Baptists would have in Lausanne evangelizing white Marxists. Outside their own ethnic units, the evangelizing power of churches is usually small.

Let us think of the little clusters of churches in most Latfricasian countries as existing on ethnic islands, surrounded by oceans of men and women who have never heard of Jesus Christ, never seen a Bible and never talked to a Christian. This is the brutal fact confronting world evangelism. This is the basic evangelistic problem faced by the World Church.

The policy advocated by some — that each cluster of congregations evangelize where it is, and the World Church de-emphasize sending evangelists from one land to another — is no solution. If carried out, it would deny the Gospel to huge populations, growing hungrier every year. That way lies disobedience and spiritual death.

The right way is for the whole church in the whole world to undertake the whole task as commanded by the Lord himself. The Christians on the islands will do their part in the evangelization of the oceans, but

the tremendous reaches of humanity (which the islands are not evangelizing) *must be evangelized*. God will send in obedient servants from India, Africa, Korea, Nagaland, Mexico, United States, Brazil, Norway, and Scotland, in short, from every section of Eurica and Latfricasia. The Christians on the islands will welcome them as comrades in the urgent task of carrying the bread of life to the hungry multitudes.

Two billion of our brothers and sisters are living and dying with no allegiance to, and usually no knowledge of, the Savior of the world who "offered for all time one sacrifice for sins and took his seat at the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12). The church must not betray the two billion. This Congress on Evangelism has no more important duty than to gaze on the plight of these multitudes, pour out before God earnest prayer for their salvation, and call on churches and missionary societies to launch programs of world evangelism of a magnitude commensurate with the herculean task. This is the first human dimension of World Evangelism.

#### *Human dimension 2 — The magnificent and intricate mosaic of mankind*

Mankind does not exist as one homogeneous whole, through which the Christian faith can readily run, given only the desire of existing Christians to evangelize. On the contrary, mankind exists as an incredibly intricate mosaic. Men are divided into thousands of linguistic divisions — if dialects are added, then tens of thousands! Ethnic units (racial blocks, castes, tribes, clans, extended families) are exceedingly numerous and divide all populations into segments psychologically closed to the rest of the world. Consider, for example, the exclusiveness of orthodox Jews, Chinese merchants, Masai tribesmen, or the landed aristocracy of Colombia. Let us now sub-divide each linguistic and ethnic unit into social and economic segments — rich and poor orthodox Jews, educated and illiterate Masai tribesmen, Brahmans who own factories and those who own nothing! We now begin to see the extensiveness and complexity of the magnificent mosaic which is the second human dimension of world evangelism. It is this mosaic which Christ commands us to evangelize. World evangelism, if it is to measure up to today's task and opportunity, means precisely kinds of communication of the Gospel which will carry across the hard little walls which so effectively separate each piece of the mosaic from the next.

The Christian faith — once in and abundant — flows well within each piece of the mosaic, but tends to stop at linguistic and ethnic barriers. Most existing congregations are shut up to one language, one ethnic unit, and frequently to one social or economic class. Since men like to become Christians without crossing barriers, the first task among the two billion is an evangelism designed to multiply churches in each new piece of the magnificent mosaic. Only after numerous indigenous churches exist in each piece, has spontaneous evangelism much chance of succeeding.

Tremendously important parts of the mosaic are the cities, growing greater each day. Cities exist in all lands, and to date have proved somewhat resistant to the Christian message. Urban churches are

growing more by influx of rural Christians than by conversion of the city masses. World evangelism must reverse this and start multitudes of thriving congregations in the great commercial, manufacturing, educational, and communication centers of the modern world.

Adaptation of Christianity to the culture of each piece of the mosaic is crucially important. Tens of thousands of adaptations must be made. Christianity must be freed from the tyranny of Eurican patterns of worship and of church. It must also be freed from the tyranny of Latfricarian patterns. For example, Christianity in India is not likely to flow into the middle castes until it shakes itself free from the tyranny both of Eurican patterns and of Indian patterns developed while it grew strong among the lowest of the hundreds of castes. Evangelical Christianity in Mexico is not likely to thrive among the Maya Indians as long as it approaches them in the patterns of the Spanish-speaking evangelical churches.

Thus, the goal of world evangelism is not merely "a church of Jesus Christ" in every nation. To state the task that way is to misunderstand it. The true goal is to multiply, *in every piece of the magnificent mosaic, truly Christian churches which fit that piece*, are closely adapted to its culture, and recognized by its non-Christians as "our kind of show." Doing *that* is the second human dimension of world evangelism.

#### *Human dimension 3 — Unprecedented receptivity*

The third broad stroke in the human picture of world evangelism is today's unprecedented receptivity to the Christian religion. Consider a few facts.

Taiwan in 1946 had only 33,000 Christians. Twenty-five years later, in 1971, it had 650,000. Perhaps 50,000 of these were Christians who in 1948 came over with Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek from the mainland; but the vast majority were converts won in Taiwan. In these twenty-five years, the church in Taiwan *multiplied twenty times*.

In India, in the newly created States of Meghalaya and Nagaland, Christians are now either in the majority or soon will be.

In 1952, Africa south of the Sahara had, I calculated, 20 million Christians. In 1968, sixteen years later, a second careful calculation showed 50 million. In less than twenty years, the Christian population had increased by 30 million. Nothing like it has been seen in Christian history. The church continues to grow apace. Dr. Barrett, the Anglican authority, has made a careful demographic forecast that if present trends continue, there will be 357 million Christians in Africa by the year 2000. I have no reason to doubt his estimate; but if it is only half right, there will still be 180 million Christians in Africa *twenty-six years from now*.

I could easily mention Korea, Indonesia, Brazil, Chile, and a dozen other lands where notable ingathering is going on.

How does it happen that so many Christians in high places have failed to see this unprecedented receptivity? The wave of pessimism which swept over the churches following World War II triggered a hasty — and unsound — reinterpretation of Christian objectives and an accompanying withdrawal from world evangelism. In the climate thus

created, the tremendous receptivity of many of the world's populations was obscured and — by a few die-hards — is still denied. But like Mt. Everest, unprecedented receptivity is *there* and constitutes a major dimension of world evangelism.

Pessimists can, of course, rivet their gaze on resistant areas, of which there are still many. But provedly responsive populations are so huge that we are not yet adequately harvesting *them*. We can almost thank God that the resistant fields have *not* yet ripened! The resistant peoples of the world — make no mistake — must also hear the Gospel. The Bible straightly charges us to preach to all the world — and that means resistant as well as receptive. We should obey that command. But we should also answer all Macedonian calls and baptize all the responsive, so that none holds out his hands in vain, begging for the Gospel.

This Congress must beware of pessimistic generalizations to the effect that evangelism is *passé*, missionaries are not wanted, modern man demands bread not God, and a pluralistic world simply cannot conceive of one way to God and one revelation of his will. Some of these gloomy generalizations are the fruit of the Eurican guilt complex. Some Europeans' good news consists in beating their breasts and proclaiming their guilt! Other pessimism is caused by decades of defeat in resistant populations and is set forth as universal truth concerning world evangelism. Much negativism is the outcome of eroded faith, non-biblical presuppositions, and heretical opinions, phrased in seemingly objective judgments about "the modern mind" and "current trends." This Congress must reject sub-Christian philosophies and theologies masquerading as scientific assessment of the situation.

The facts support a far different assessment — unprecedented receptivity! Facts call for evangelism on a greater scale. Churches from more nations than ever before must thrust out more ambassadors of Christ. Latfricasian churches are beginning to send significant numbers. They must be helped to send still more and guided so that their missionaries and evangelists take advantage of two hundred years' experience when Euricans had to initiate world evangelization alone. Eurica also must increase the quantity and improve the quality of her sendings. The church in all six continents must surge forward in evangelism.

Receptivity is a human dimension. It consists of responsive persons. But it is also a divine dimension, God has spoken to these multitudes. The Holy Spirit has turned them receptive. They hear the voice of the Great Shepherd and seek to follow him. Christ's church in all six continents must look to her Master and follow his lead in proclaiming the Good News of salvation and incorporating believers in multiplying thousands of Christian cells, churches of Christ, congregations of the redeemed.

#### *Human dimension 4 — The suddenly important masses*

World evangelism must evangelize the masses.

The day of the common man has dawned. An irreversible tide is sweeping the voiceless multitudes to positions of tremendous power.

Illiterate peasants, country serfs, factory laborers, poverty-stricken miners, cannon fodder, the poor, the hewers of wood and drawers of water have been given the vote in nation after nation. They are the court of last appeal. This is the fruit partly of Christian conviction and partly of western democracy, fertilized of late by Russian and Chinese Communism.

There have always been enormous numbers of common people; but today they have become aware of their importance, and their *power*. They are demanding equal pay, equal educational opportunity, equal leisure — in short, social justice. The roar of their demands testifies eloquently to the titanic force of the revolutionary dynamic. Monseigneur Cardijn, founder of the Young Christian Workers, recently wrote: "These proletarian masses, which today are powerless, will tomorrow become the arbiters of order, progress and peace. Only the blind are unaware of this. No technological power can prevent these populations from deciding tomorrow the future of the world" (Retif: 1962: 154).

Awakening multitudes are often basically receptive to the Gospel. In the past, despite the fact that Eurican missionaries and Latfricasian ministers, being educated middle class people, have usually approached the middle classes first, the huge majority of those accepting Jesus Christ and becoming Christians have been common people. Currently also tremendous growth of Pentecostal and other churches is taking place among the masses. The masses have a built-in receptivity to the Good News. Oppressed and ground down, they, like ancient Israel, are "looking for a Savior." Their ears are attune to him who cries, "Come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden." For the foreseeable future, the masses will continue receptive.

Furthermore, the Christian church has good news for the awakening masses — that God the Father Almighty is just and intends to have a just world. The revolutionary impact of this simple statement should be grasped. It affirms that the very structure of the universe favors the common man. It proclaims that God intends an order of society in which each man can and will receive justice. This meets the deepest needs of the proletariat. Contrary to paternalistic thinking, the greatest need of the masses is neither aid nor kindness. Their greatest need is neither handouts nor social action; but a religion which gives them bedrock on which to stand as they battle for justice.

The highly valuable gifts of the Christian religion are: God the Father Almighty who hates injustice, God the Son who died for each man of the masses, and the Bible which demands justice for the common man. The Christian religion endows every human being with infinite value. "Making people Christian," along with other things, means giving them a world view and a Bible which irresistibly, though often slowly, create equality of opportunity and undergird all strivings against entrenched privilege. With *this* wealth in hand, the masses can conquer secondary poverties.

Evangelistic policies should be determined not on the aristocratic feudal social orders which dominated the world a few years ago; but on the forms which society is taking and is going to take. In the new

social orders being born today, the common man is going to play a determining role. Hence the common man must be *effectively evangelized now*. This is the fourth human dimension in world evangelism.

### PART III: METHODOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS

#### *Methodological dimension 1 — Kinds of evangelism*

The kinds of evangelism needed today have been used through the centuries; but seeing them as different kinds, giving them different names, and planning for adequate amounts of each is a new dimension of world evangelism.

Let us, following Dr. Ralph Winter, distinguish three kinds of evangelism — E-1, E-2, and E-3.

E-1 evangelizes people in one's own language and culture.

E-2 evangelizes people of a similar language and culture.

E-3 evangelizes people of radically different languages and cultures.

These distinctions will help us understand world evangelism.

Most local evangelism which Christians and churches do in their own neighborhoods, is E-1, many "home missionaries" are carrying out E-1. When the early Christians fled from Jerusalem, they "went about preaching the Gospel." Since they "spoke the word to none but Jews" they were engaged in E-1 evangelism. E-1 is excellent for reaching one's own people, but stops at cultural and linguistic barriers. It does not reach "the Gentiles." We must recruit and train millions of E-1s — unpaid volunteer evangelists. They play a most important role. However, in today's bewildering pluralism, with thousands of languages, cultures, classes, occupations, economic levels, and residential groupings, E-1 has serious limitations. It seldom carries the Gospel from one piece of the mosaic into the next.

E-2 is needed. E-2 resolutely evangelizes men of other but similar cultures and languages. For example, were the Lutheran Church of Germany to multiply churches among Greek immigrants working in German factories it would be carrying out E-2 evangelism. The Karen churches of South Burma sent E-2s to evangelize the Kachins of North Burma. Since Spanish culture and language are similar to the British, British Christians send E-2 missionaries to evangelize Spanish speakers of Bolivia. Tremendous multiplication of E-2 evangelism is urgent.

E-3 evangelism seeks out men of radically different cultures and languages. St. Paul was an E-1 and an E-2 missionary in Mediterranean lands, but had he gone to the Chinese, the Bantus, or the philosophers of India he would have been doing E-3 evangelism. Huge blocks of humanity lie beyond the reach of E-1 and E-2 evangelism. Only evangelists who learn a radically different language and a radically different culture can communicate Christ to awaiting hundreds of millions.

For example, while in Europe out of every thousand citizens, at least 900 have been baptized, in China out of every thousand, less than one has been. Obviously, if the evangelization of China is left to this one man (i.e., to E-1 and E-2 evangelism) the vast majority of the 800 million Chinese will never even hear the name of Jesus. Multitudes of E-3s are essential. They go to other countries and evangelize men of other languages, religions, and cultures, who do not yet know the Savior.

Tremendous need for E-3 evangelism surges round us at Lausanne.

That in the foreseeable future, E-1 can reach most people in most nations is an irresponsible daydream. Only the deliberate, costly sending of E-2 and E-3 evangelists across cultural, linguistic, and national frontiers can possibly accomplish world evangelization.

Professor Jack Shepherd has recently defined "a missionary" as a Christian of any culture or nation who is *sent, across cultural and linguistic frontiers, to win men to Christ and incorporate them in Christian churches*. Missionaries are carrying out E-2 and E-3 evangelism. That is their basic function.

In this paper, to mean men and women engaged in Evangelism 2 and 3, I shall use the words "Missionary," "Evangelist 2," and "Evangelist 3" interchangeably.

Distinguishing three kinds of evangelism is essential to clear thinking. Each variety is needed — E-1, E-2 and E-3 — *and in great quantity*. To think solely in terms of E-1 is to misunderstand evangelism, to doom millions to live without Christ, and to condemn to failure societies pressing on to justice and brotherhood. To think in terms of three varieties, however, is to understand global evangelism and to take a long step toward meeting basic human needs and liberating societies.

#### *Methodological dimension 2 — modes of church growth*

In answering our basic question, "What does carrying out the great commission mean today?", we must consider modes of church growth. Evangelism is not shouting "the right words" whether anything happens or not. Evangelism always longs for the salvation of those who hear. Evangelism proclaims Jesus Christ as God and Savior and persuades men to become his disciples and responsible members of his church. Evangelism prays for church growth. Lausanne must therefore consider the *modes of church growth* being blessed of God to the salvation of millions. These constitute the normal outcomes of evangelism.

The first mode of growth is "*one-by-one-against-the-family*." In this, converts come to Christ one by one, regardless of what other members of their families do. Often the family tries to prevent the person becoming a Christian. When he accepts Christ he does so alone, against the family. On new ground, lone persons are often the first fruit of evangelism. This form of growth has taken place across all lands of earth. God uses it to begin the process, but he blesses other modes to better and greater growth.

The second mode of church growth is *the family movement to Christ*. In this, several members of a family accept the Lord at the same time. The New Testament tells of many family conversions. "He and his household" accepted the Lord, is frequently recorded. "One by one against the family" should normally progress to where decisions are being made family by family. The church grows better when this happens.

The third mode of church growth is *the people movement to Christ*. In this, chains of families, all within the same segment of populations (the same caste, tribe, or culture unit) become Christians. "A people movement results from the joint decision of a number of individuals — whether five or five hundred — all from the same people, which enables them to become Christian without social dislocation, while remaining

in full contact with their non-Christian relatives, thus enabling other groups of families across the years, after suitable instruction to come to similar decisions and form Christian churches made up exclusively of members of that people" (p. 297, *Understanding Church Growth*).

The great advances of the Christian religion on new ground have come very largely by people movements. These are today bringing multitudes to Christian faith in all the continents. Tomorrow, the great surges of church growth are likely to come from people movements of which there are many different varieties. *World evangelism should constantly be praying for and planning for family movements and people movements to Christ.*

The fourth mode of church growth being blessed of God is the multiplication in cities and villages of *house churches*. Tens of thousands can now be established. Evangelism will be more effective as it finds ways to organize converts into small congregations in homes.

As the Gospel is proclaimed on new ground, much seed-sowing evangelism is in order. Nevertheless we must constantly aim at church growth and seek modes of evangelism God has blessed to the multiplication of churches.

Measurement of outcomes also is essential. The shepherd must count his sheep to know that one is lost. Measurement must, of course, be undertaken with due sensitivity to imponderable values. Yet churches consist of countable members and there is nothing particularly spiritual in not counting them. All worthwhile enterprises set goals and estimate advance by degrees of achievement. The men who set up this Congress knew exactly how many hotel rooms and how many seats they would require. Measurement is essential. Recently the cause of world evangelism has been materially advanced by Dr. Vergil Gerber's delightfully clear procedures for helping pastors and church leaders measure their evangelistic effectiveness. His *Manual for Evangelism/Church Growth* should be widely used in all countries. It is already available in fourteen languages. *Methodological dimension 3 — Multiplying evangelists*

Global evangelism in the modern world means multiplying evangelists — E-1s, E-2s, and E-3s. *Multiplying E-1s* means promoting spontaneous evangelism, mobilizing churches for outreach, and equipping lay Christians with spiritual gifts sufficient to multiply churches in their own cultures. Significant extension in each piece of the mosaic where the church is now strong has become abundantly possible today and must be pressed.

*Multiplying E-2s and E-3s* means creating specialized messengers — apostles equipped to operate across linguistic and cultural barriers, who will face the unprecedented receptivity of many pieces of the magnificent mosaic.

God is calling for thousands of Latfricasian and Eurican evangelists. The hugely responsive pieces of the mosaic can be disciplined only as churches from every land send their best sons to carry the Gospel across cultural frontiers. The task is international in scope. "Sending churches" are now everywhere. Christ calls messengers across culture barriers to hundreds of thousands of villages, towns and cities where tremendous numbers have not heard the Gospel. He says, "Find and feed my sheep."

Large numbers are needed — it makes no difference whether these are called E-2 and E-3 evangelists or missionaries, or are Euricans

or Latfricasians! The day is too urgent to quibble over words.

Wisdom is demanded in their deployment. Their recruitment and support are challenging enterprises. Instructing sending churches in every nation in missionary duties and privileges should become at once an important function of every theological training school and denominational headquarters.

These multiplied thousands of evangelists should maintain the servant image and, in Pauline fashion, soon turn the direction of new churches over to new Christians. The cultural integrity of each cluster of churches must be preserved and each, as soon as it is formed, encouraged to join in the evangelism of the "yet-to-believe."

Multiplying evangelists is a costly dimension. Lausanne must resist the shoddy idea that world evangelism can be achieved cheaply without sending missionaries. Sacrifice is demanded. Life must be poured out. But if that is done, never in the history of the world have the prospects been brighter for the Water of Life flowing freely to thirsty men. Let there be no failure of nerve, no faltering of faith. These are years when, with John on Patmos, we must see "every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea crying, 'Praise and honor and glory and power to him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb for ever and ever.'"

## CONCLUSION

In the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians in chapter one we read, "For the preaching of the Cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. . . . For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to the Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

World evangelism goes forward, not in the power of men, but in the power of God; not in the wisdom of men, but in the wisdom of God, not by philosophy but by the Cross of Christ. This is the ultimate dimension of world evangelism.

Tremendous forces are arrayed against world evangelism; but in the sign of the Cross, the mission of healing and redeeming sinful, alienated men and their societies will overcome all adversaries. The Cross is the dynamic of renewal and revival and awakening within the church. The Cross is also the dynamic of evangelization across cultural barriers outside the church. Evangelism continues till there is a cell of committed Christians in every community in every city and every countryside throughout the whole wide world. This will prepare the way for our Lord's triumphant return.