

## CROSS CULTURAL EVANGELIZATION FOREIGN MISSIONS REPORT

*Secretary Wilfred A. Bellamy*

The church in the Third World assumed high priority in all papers and the responses to them. The group was concerned for the primacy of the church and for another look at the relationship between church and mission. This latter point became by far the most significant issue to emerge during the six days of meetings scheduled.

The group grappled realistically with structures and strategy but came to no hard-and-fast conclusions. On the contrary it was clearly recognized that the initiative for evangelization in the Third World is being transferred to the church and that mission must now serve in a subordinate role, always providing that such a role does not usurp the sense of call and obedience of the missionary to his Lord.

It was noted that Western structures, rather than enhancing the church, tend to frustrate and stultify church activity. Missions must therefore take care, lest the structures which they employ be either knowingly or inadvertently passed along to the national church, thus creating an inappropriate structure for the indigeneous body. The church was also recognized as having the right to express its own needs, assume the authority in decision making which affects it, and to take or leave the assistance offered by the mission.

On the other hand, however, the group firmly confirmed the need for two specific bodies (church and mission) to be maintained in a relationship mutually acceptable to both parties. There was some disagreement at this point especially from Third World delegates who apparently desire a closer relationship than dichotomy offers. Much was heard concerning a preference for "merger," "marriage," or "integration."

The Congress note on the "equality of man" was not absent from the group. It was pointed out by several speakers that there is no real difference between missionary and national believer in terms of status and therefore no difference in status should exist. Rather missionary and national believer should work in close harmony with a determination and dedication to accomplish the task which our Lord gave to the church.

This naturally led to discussion concerning resources and their use. The group strongly expressed the view that church and mission should become involved in a pooling and distributive relationship which would centralize both funds and personnel, applying them to the task.

Concern was frequently expressed both from the platform and the floor that communication be improved between church and mission and vice versa. Again and again it becomes all too apparent that the church seldom understands the problems of the mission nor its resources. Nor does the church have a say in the deployment of missionaries in the ministry. On the other hand the mission seldom understands the inner dynamics of church government, seldom joins in membership in the church, and mistakes for slackness and inefficiency the patience and cau-

tion of national colleagues. There is a need for greater cooperation, openness and fellowship at a deeper level between missionary and national believer. This will build mutual confidence and trust, a much needed dimension in church-mission relationships.

Some practical ideas which came from the group include the formation of an Information Service which would make worldwide missionary news available, especially as it relates to Third World Missions. Their encouragement and stimulus received high priority from the group and it was felt that such a service would facilitate greater understanding between such agencies and also assist in sharing ideas and strategy.

In summary, therefore, the group concluded that before structures and strategy can assume a true significance for cross cultural evangelization, important though they are in themselves, deeper issues must first be dealt with — namely the question of church-mission relationships and a re-examination of their own scene by every mission and related churches. Thus it was felt that the task of evangelization would surge forward as differences which have militated against this are dealt with by both organizations, and a better expression of love and fellowship emerge within the total Body of Christ. When this is seen in tangible demonstration we believe that the earth will truly hear the voice of our Lord.