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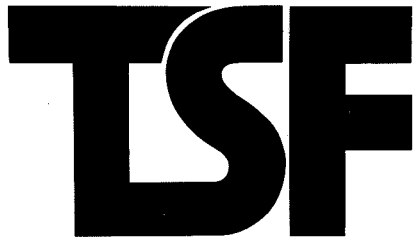
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# BULLETIN

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- Hornus, J.-M. *It Is Not Lawful For Me To Fight: Early Christian Attitudes Toward War, Violence, and the State*. Scottsdale: Herald, 1980 [French 1960]. [Review by J. Ferguson, *Heythrop Journal* 23 (1982), 85–86.] A major presentation of the data by a pacifist who self-consciously is critiquing Harnack—as well as everybody else.
- McSorley, R. *New Testament Basis of Peacemaking*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Peace Studies, Georgetown University, 1979. Popular level.
- Moffatt, J. "War," *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church* 2 (ed. J. Hastings; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1918), 646–73. A famous NT scholar. This is the most hawkish of any of articles, as Moffatt presents the view that Christian entry into military service was quite unproblematic.
- Mott, S. C. "Pacifism? Come Now!" *The Other Side* 13:2 (July 1977), 74–69. *The Other Side* is responsible for the title. Mott's argument is that pacifists are reading the data too simplistically. A very basic-level starter article that presents the complexities of the issue.
- O'Rourke, J. J. "The Military in the NT," *CBQ* 32 (1970), 227–36. Harnack dealt with Jesus' relations to soldiers. O'Rourke deals with these texts.
- Ruyter, K. W. "Pacifism and Military Service in the Early Church," *Cross Currents* 23 (1982), 54–70. One of more current attempts to assess the complexity of the evidence.
- Ryan, E. A. "The Rejection of Military Service by the Early Christians," *ThSt* 13 (1952), 1–32. One of more current attempts to assess the complexity of the evidence.
- Swartley, W. M. *Slavery Sabbath War and Women*. Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1983. Limited to NT, takes these themes and shows how pro- & anti-people have used the same biblical passages, and what hermeneutical presuppositions are involved. Swartley tries to develop an appropriate hermeneutical stance.
- Swift, L. J. *The Early Fathers on War and Military Service. Message of the Fathers of the Church*, 19. Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1983. Helgeland and Swift are the two most significant contemporary scholars who are not self-consciously working out of the pacifist religious tradition. Neither are popular writers. Extremely valuable, now one of starting points for serious reflection. It is a translation of primary sources in English, approximately 100 passages from early church documents, organized primarily chronologically that have any bearing on the question of church participation in war or military service. Brief commentary on every single passage, showing very balanced judgment. This is the first and only collection giving all these passages in translation with commentary. Shows that it is very hard to prove that the church had an articulated position from which it fell.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "St. Ambrose on Violence and War," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 101 (1970), 533–43. This entry is very specialized, dealing with the late St. Ambrose material.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "War and the Christian Conscience I: The Early Years," *ANRW II*, 23.1 (1979), 835–68. This is broader than Helgeland, who is only dealing with the army question. Foundational, absolutely essential survey.
- Zampaglione, G. *The Idea of Peace in Antiquity*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1973. Contains much valuable information on problem. An interesting source because Zampaglione is trying to talk about attitudes toward war outside the church.

## A New Mission Agency in the United Methodist Church

By James Pyke

A significant and controversial event took place on November 2, 1983, in the life of the United Methodist Church. On that day in St. Louis, thirty-four ministers and lay persons unanimously voted to create an alternate mission sending agency. They represented some twenty conferences and all five jurisdictions of the Church.

The assembled ministers needed only a minimum amount of time to arrive at their decision. A paper by Dr. Gerald H. Anderson, a leading mission theologian of the Church, was ready; some vigorous opinions were voiced; but there was no doubt in anyone's mind that the need for the new agency was crucial. The discussion centered around the structure of the new organization, the possible reactions from the establishment of the Church and the immediate steps that had to be taken to bring the agency into being. As the news of the meeting spread across the Church, the foremost question in everyone's mind was: Why do we need a second mission agency?

The short answer to that question is that a growing number of persons, particularly the evangelically-minded, were becoming increasingly frustrated with the philosophy and the policies of the official mission agency of the denomination, the General Board of Global Ministries. A brief historical sketch will illustrate the problem.

### New Direction

The stated purpose of Mission as set forth in the Discipline of the Church (which is normative for theology and polity) is: "The World Division exists to confess Jesus Christ as divine Lord and Savior to all people in every place, testifying to His redemptive and liberating power, and calling all people to Christian obedience and discipleship."<sup>1</sup> In contrast to this, there began to emerge in the late sixties and early seventies what came to be known as "Liberation Theology." Springing from Latin American roots, it emphasized the socio-political aspects of the Gospel. This perspective, reinforced by the strongly perceived nationalism of the Third World churches,

captured the attention of mission executives of most of the mainline churches. For example, in an article that appeared in the house organ of the GBGM<sup>2</sup> of the United Methodist Church, written by Dr. Tracey K. Jones, the General Secretary of the Board, made the following points: no longer should the Christian mission emphasize Jesus as Savior, or men and women as either "saved" or "lost," but rather Christ as Lord over all men and that all men are to become a "new humanity" in Jesus Christ. The arena of missionary activity should be the liberating of persons from degradation, war and hunger and empowerment of the weak and disinherited.

Those in the Church who adhered more closely to the classical Wesleyan tradition began to fear that a new concept of mission was taking shape, what they started to refer to as "Missions without Salvation." To them it appeared that this "new look" in missions was going to vitiate the very basis of the Gospel as they found it in the Scriptures. They discerned that under the new rubric, mission was to proceed from God's sovereign activity in the world rather than from Christ's Great Commission. The goal seemed to be a this-worldly one of perfect peace and prosperity for mankind. The "new look" meant participating with God in His intervention in world events to overcome evil institutions. To the evangelicals, this meant that the Church was no closer to God than the world, and that the frontier between the Church and the world, between the "saved" and the "lost" had been erased. In this view God no longer held out a universal call to mankind to cross the frontier between death and life. This, according to the opposition, was a "beautiful but unBiblical" idea, for it allowed no understanding of God's gracious provision of salvation and man's response to it. They say the new concept was making Christ Lord only without first being Savior. He was a "Man for Others," the Lord of history with His Incarnation nothing more than His presence within that history.

To Methodists of a more orthodox persuasion, this new trend seemed to be leading the mission of the Church to a place where

there would be no longer any relevance in proclaiming the Gospel to non-Christians. If mission is seen as participation in God's mission proclaimed as His active engagement in history, specifically in the revolutionary movements of our time, then the Church should be engaged in these movements. If God is operating in industrial relationships, economic development, the rejection of political domination and the promotion of human dignity, then mission is identified with social change. The world, not the Word of God, would be determining the agenda of mission. The axiom emerging seemed to be, "Revolution equals liberation equals salvation" (quite unacceptable to the evangelicals). From their reading of Scripture, they say the degradation of society exists not primarily in externals but in the will of man. The real problem of man's sin was in his ability to take any structure, however good and ideal, and twist it into an instrument of evil.

### **New Policy**

In a policy statement put out by the Committee on Missionary Personnel of the Board in November of 1972 it was stated that in view of the global situation the church's mission could no longer be primarily concerned with individual salvation and the world beyond, but with participation in the liberation and development of peoples. The entire statement, having to do with the selection and training of missionary candidates and the implementation of personnel policy, was couched in terms of liberation as God's activity in history and mission as the redress of inequities in society and the amelioration of the existing conditions of poverty, cruelty and injustice.

The evangelical response to this statement was to explicitly disagree with the relegation of individual salvation to the dustbin of mission. To them it was precisely where all Christian mission should begin, though it should not end there. To start anywhere else was to misunderstand the Gospel as reconciliation of man to God. True liberation, in their view, was based squarely in the redemptive Gospel of Christ and a life-changing encounter with Him, which should then be followed by all possible efforts to uplift the conditions of human existence. In other words Christ is Savior first and only in that context can He become truly Lord. It is "witness" and then "service" that draws people to the Person of Christ and builds the lasting Kingdom. The two cannot be separated, nor should they be indefinitely reversed.

### **Evangelical Missions Council**

Because the trend seemed to show no signs of slowing down or halting, a large group of United Methodist Evangelicals in February of 1974 met in Dallas, Texas, to found the "Evangelical Missions Council" with the purpose of giving voice to their concerns and thereby hoping to open a dialogue with the GBGM. They were alarmed not only by the change in philosophy of the Board, but by the fact that United Methodist world mission was going down by about one million dollars and one hundred missionaries annually. They believed that the Board had departed from the stated "Aims of Mission" set forth in the Discipline. They were distressed by the setting aside of the purpose to "evoke in all people the personal response of repentance and faith through which by God's grace, they may find newness of life."<sup>3</sup>

As evidence of their concern they noted a list of "Items of Major Import to the Board of Global Ministries." Under this title items such as the following were highlighted:

- The need for political campaign reform
- A call for withdrawal of Texaco and Standard Oil of California from Angola and Namibia
- Continued aid to Indochina and drought-stricken West Africa
- The necessity for tight federal regulation of strip-mining
- Support of the Equal Rights Amendment
- Aid to refugees from the Chilean government
- Watergate and a call for Nixon's impeachment
- American Indians and Wounded Knee.<sup>4</sup>

To the persons at the Dallas meeting, the fact that there were no items of evangelistic import in the list was explainable only by the judgment that the philosophy of the Board had radically altered. Indeed it was referred to as being indistinguishable from the "Board of Social Concerns." During the years following the creation of the

Evangelical Missions Council considerable correspondence, dialogue and face-to-face conversations were carried on between leaders of the opposing groups. In all the meetings and conversations, however, the Evangelicals did not feel any real concern on the part of the Board for their point-of-view and discerned no change at all in the direction that it was taking.

In a promotional booklet, "Why Global?" put out by the Board in early 1975 there appeared the following sentences: "The focus (of mission) is shifting away from confrontation between Christian and non-Christian, and toward cooperation between Christians and persons of other living faiths. In the new historical situation (mission) means putting our witness in the context of our work together in common human concerns."<sup>5</sup>

In responding to this position an editorial, in the Good News magazine commented that "conversion to Jesus Christ is noticeable by its absence. In its place missions becomes dialogue and human betterment. . . . Many Evangelicals believe that the philosophy of syncretism and universalism expressed so clearly in 'Why Global' spells the death of missions."<sup>6</sup> It must be assumed that many traditionally-minded United Methodists reading that editorial would have nodded vigorous agreement.

### **Continuing Divergence**

To see how little the philosophy of the GBGM was affected by the concerns of the Evangelicals ten years after the World Outlook article one needs only to turn to a statement of the World Division Criteria Committee. The normative declaration is: "All commitments, actions and decisions, of the World Division will be examined in the light of a fundamental commitment to advocacy and support of the empowerment of the poor and oppressed."<sup>7</sup> In a seven-point outline of how this commitment was to be contextually worked out, from theological declaration to funding, from program to missionary personnel, the "poor and oppressed" are specifically referred to.

Evangelicals, believing that the main task of the Church should be cooperation with God in His purpose to reconcile the world to Himself, were convinced that the Methodist denomination as represented by its boards and agencies was not fulfilling that purpose. For some years voices had been raised in favor of an alternate mission sending agency. When the continuing dialogue with the GBGM was not producing any results, these views began to be more and more heeded. The aspects of the Board policies that concerned the Evangelicals seemed to be growing steadily worse rather than better.

As evidence of this, it was pointed out that the missionary force of the Methodist Church was continuing to decline with the likelihood of reaching 300 by 1985, which was the Board's own prediction. Increasingly, United Methodists of whatever age who felt the call of God on their lives for missionary service were having to find other avenues of service, primarily with non-denominational boards such as Wycliffe Bible Translators, OMS International, World Gospel Mission and many others. Millions of dollars once available for Methodist missions had been and were now being channeled beyond denominational boundaries. In effect the GBGM by their policies were forcing many local voices had been raised in favor of an alternate mission sending agency. When the continuing dialogue with the GBGM was not producing any results, these views began to be more and more heeded. In fact, the aspects of the Board policies that concerned the Evangelicals seemed to be growing steadily worse rather than better.

### **Awareness of Continuing Need**

Furthermore, national leaders of the Church overseas had been and were making repeated requests for missionary helpers. In response, a number of churches and some Conferences were entering into agreements with overseas churches and sending their own missionaries. In the face of this situation Evangelicals felt that there should more properly be some legitimate organization withing their own denomination under which volunteers could go and requests from national churches met.

Evangelicals and others were also acutely aware that there are large segments of the world's population, an estimated three billion persons including almost 17,000 people-groups, where there is no Methodist presence, nor indeed any indigenous church whatever.

Even where there is a national church, in most instances it is neither strong nor mature enough to evangelize the vast numbers of their own peoples who have no knowledge of the Christian Gospel. They are concerned also that missionary outreach needs to employ the new technologies, such as radio and TV, available in our day for the spread of the Gospel.

### Decision Point

Finally after almost fifteen years had passed since the first alarm signal had gone up and the gap between the two sides had increasingly widened, those in the classical Wesleyan tradition came to the point of decision. Both sides recognized that the problem was one of theology, and theologies do not change easily. The opposition claims that the Board staffers have redefined the central theological terms and given them new meaning. If salvation is deliverance from all forms of oppression instead of from sin, social betterment instead of reconciliation to God through the atonement of Christ, then dialogue becomes, like ships passing in the night. Hence, for the Evangelicals an alternate (or at least a supplemental mission agency) becomes a necessity. A contributing factor and perhaps the final catalyst was the election in September, 1983, of Peggy Billings to head the World Division of the Board; she was a person long associated with controversial social action. The opposition has pointed out that as one of several precedents this same situation arose in the Anglican Church almost two centuries ago; an alternate agency was formed<sup>8</sup> and the two have co-existed throughout these many years.

Thus it was that on November 28, 1983, the St. Louis meeting created a "supplemental mission agency." Dr. Anderson, Director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center, in an address to a group of Dallas-area pastors meeting the previous week, had indicated that he had decided to go public after eight years of painful but loyal silence. The reasons he gave for his decision were similar to those of many others in the Evangelical community: The Board's theological imprecision, the imbalance of its policies and the fact that it had been unresponsive to the pluralism of United Methodism. The convenor of the founding meeting was Dr. L. D. Thomas, pastor of the First United Methodist Church of Tulsa, Oklahoma, who was elected chairman of a steering committee, to work out the details of the new organization.

### Establishment Reaction

Predictably the reaction from the establishment of the Church was adverse. The President of the Board of Global Ministries, Bishop Jesse R. DeWitt of Chicago labelled the new Society a violation of church rules and a discredit to the entire system. The fear was that the new agency would "further erode established patterns of giving . . . and was a threat to the administrative order of the whole church." Another bishop, Edsel A. Establishment of the Michigan area, stated that in his opinion, the action was "not only misleading and untimely but illegal, particularly because 'United Methodist' is in the name."<sup>9</sup> Only the General Conference, it was pointed out, had the authority to establish a general program agency.

All the bishops of the five regional jurisdiction expressed concern about the founding of the Society, but some also voiced strong dissatisfaction with the policies and philosophy of the GBGM, citing the long-term "unresponsiveness" of that body to the concerns of the Church at large. A statement issued by the bishops of the South Central jurisdiction called attention to "prolonged efforts by various United Methodists to secure serious consideration of a more representative mission program." They urged the GBGM to take steps to re-evaluate its mission philosophy in light of what "honest critics" are saying. The new Society, they stated, "reflects the deep and longstanding concern of many United Methodist people about the philosophy, policy and program and some of the personnel of the GBFM, some of which concerns we ourselves share."<sup>10</sup> They went on to say that they were of the opinion that the present crisis was very serious, that it represented a far wider base of concern than any one segment of the Church's membership, and that it should be addressed with integrity by the Board before critical deterioration of denominational support should occur. At a December

29th meeting of the Steering committee, the Rev. H. T. Maclin, who was a regional staff representative of the Board, was elected as Executive Director of the new Society. He had served as a missionary in Africa and Asia and had been with the Board since 1953. The name for the new agency adopted at the meeting is: "The Mission Society for United Methodists." Rev. Maclin indicated that he had left the Board for three primary reasons: Complaints from national leaders that the Board was not sending the number or kind of missionaries they wanted, the constant frustration of many United Methodists who feel that the Board was not sensitive to their views, and that in Anglicanism the two mission agencies had added vigor and zeal to their mission effort and had not in any way diminished the Christian witness.

The 1984 General Conference, marking the Bicentennial of American Methodism, was held in Baltimore, in May, and there had been considerable speculation about how it would deal with the new Mission Society. A week before the Conference began, the Council of Bishops adopted a long report on the relationship of the United Methodist Church with the World and National Councils of Churches. At one point in the report the bishops observed that the staff of the General Board of Global Ministries had a "reluctance to be genuinely open to the consideration of other or additional perspectives. As a result, something of a 'siege' mentality was evident, namely that the Board (believes it is) correct in its position and is prepared to utilize what resources may be necessary to defend the core and perimeters of that position."<sup>11</sup>

In his Episcopal Address on the first day of General Conference, Bishop William Cannon of North Carolina, representing his fellow bishops, stated, "We support the Board of Global Ministries as the sole agency of missionaries and disapprove the organization of another sending agency in competition with it. However, in fairness to the concerns of those who feel the necessity for a second agency, we urge that measures be taken to assure our people that evangelization and evangelism are a vital part of the philosophy and practice of mission by the Board."<sup>12</sup>

In the Conference itself the legislative committee on Global Ministries dealt specifically with a petition from a local church in New York state requesting that the General Conference recognize the new mission society as an alternative mission-sending agency. There was an overflow crowd to hear the committee debate the matter. In his statement before the committee Rev. Maclin emphasized that his body did not ask for official recognition and might, in fact, prefer not to have it should it be extended.<sup>13</sup> In the end the committee voted overwhelmingly to support the Board and disapprove of another sending-agency, which action was confirmed by the Conference in plenary session.

Notwithstanding, Rev. Maclin, in a private conversation, with this writer indicated that he was frequently stopped in the halls and corridors of the Conference by delegates and Bishops alike who affirmed the establishment of the new Society and encouraged him and the Society to "keep the pressure on" the Board! In fact, he said he was "overwhelmed" with the amount of verbal support he was given, to the point where he stated that he felt that the new Society had been given "defacto recognition." In any event, "The Mission Society for United Methodists" is fact of life and is likely to remain so.

<sup>1</sup> *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 1980*, The United Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, 1980, p. 496.

<sup>2</sup> "World Outlook," April, 1969.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in "Opening Statement," p. 6, Evangelical Missions Council founding meeting, February 6, 1974.

<sup>4</sup> World Division Newsletter, Number 30.

<sup>5</sup> "Why Global," p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> "Good News" magazine, Spring, 1975, p. 48.

<sup>7</sup> September 20-21, 1979.

<sup>8</sup> "The Church Missionary Society," 1799.

<sup>9</sup> "The United Methodist Reporter," Baltimore Conference edition, "The Circuit Rider," January 27, 1984.

<sup>10</sup> "The Circuit Rider," January 27, 1984.

<sup>11</sup> "Good News," Forum for Scriptural Christianity, Inc., Wilmore, KY, May/June 1984, p. 39.

<sup>12</sup> "The Circuit Rider," Baltimore Conference edition of "The United Methodist Reporter," May, 1984, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* May, 11, 1984, p. 2.