

# ***Lutheran Mission Matters***

Winner of  
Concordia Historical Institute's  
2017 Award of Commendation



Volume XXVI, No. 2 (Issue 53) November 2018

# “*Quo vadis*, Mission Agency?”

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**Abstract:** This paper seeks to define what a mission agency is and to analyze the role of mission agencies in the church of today. There is a greater emphasis on lay involvement in the church today, and many question whether mission agencies should still send ordained missionaries. Various trends in the church have a tremendous impact on the perception and role of mission agencies, both denominational and parachurch, such as a decline in finances, globalization, short-term missions, the church planting movement, and individualization. Yet the mission agency is just as necessary today as before, since the mission agency in essence is one of the hands of the church in motion. The *missio Dei* continues, and in each generation the church needs to seek prayerfully to adapt its mission agency accordingly.

## 1. What is a “mission agency”?

While the almighty God has no need of anyone to accomplish His will, in His quest of love to reconcile the world to Himself, He has graciously deigned to bind the action of His Spirit to the means of grace, through which He works to convict sinners and call them to faith in Christ. These means God has entrusted to the church. As the church strives to reach the lost, mission agencies are formed to mobilize the church for mission and direct it on its behalf. These mission agencies have taken on various forms and affiliations over time. Strictly speaking, a mission agency is an organization that facilitates mission sending, often to foreign or overseas destinations. It includes both mission boards and mission societies with varying degrees of affiliation to particular denominations. Some, like many representatives of the so-called “missional church,” insist that local congregations are the only valid mission agency.<sup>1</sup> Historically, however, there have been many alternatives. Ralph Winter, for his part, famously distinguished between modalities and sodalities:



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a modality is a structured fellowship in which there is no distinction of sex or age, while a sodality is a structured fellowship in which membership involves an adult second decision beyond modality membership, and is limited by either age or sex or marital status. In this use of these terms, both the denomination and the local congregation are modalities, while a mission agency or a local men’s club are sodalities.<sup>2</sup>

Ott et al., however, seem to operate with the definition of a mission agency as a specially-formed sending structure that is larger than a single congregation and can vary from voluntary, unaffiliated mission societies to strictly denominational mission boards.<sup>3</sup> In light of the literal meaning of the term “agency,” and over against the “missional church” emphasis, I follow Ott’s definition in this paper, and distinguish between mission boards and societies where necessary.

## 2. The Church as the Human Agency of Mission

### *The Priesthood of All Believers*

Regarding the role of the mission agency, perhaps the first and most basic question is: To whom has the triune God entrusted the task of mission? Mission firstly and fundamentally always remains God’s mission, in which He remains the divine author, actor, and completer. And Christ is the incarnation of God’s mission. Yet Baptism incorporates all believers into the body of Christ. Corporately, as they are united with Christ, they form the body of Christ while He is its head. They receive the Holy Spirit. They receive faith. And this faith confesses its Lord. Vicedom states that “through Baptism Christians receive the same witnessing role that was already given in primitive Christianity”—not that we are also eyewitnesses as the apostles were, but rather that we also witness “to what has been given to us in faith.”<sup>4</sup> By Baptism every Christian is called to the priesthood of all believers (1 Pt 2:4–10) and thus empowered by God for participation in the *missio Dei* in his or her context in the sense that as priests or members of the royal priesthood of believers, we Christians intercede for others around us in prayer and communicate the Gospel and the name of Christ to them. It is in this sense that Luther could speak of every Christian as being a missionary when in the company of unbelievers.<sup>5</sup>

Mission firstly and fundamentally always remains God’s mission, in which He remains the divine author, actor, and completer.

### *Everyone a Missionary?*

It might seem then that no mission agency is needed at all, since mission can be carried out by laypeople within their own particular context. Must we then conclude that every Christian is a missionary? Many today would affirm this position. One problem is that while all Christians are called to the priesthood of all believers, all Christians are also simultaneously sinners and therefore struggle with indolence, timidity, apathy, and a host of other inhibitors. Church historian Stephen Neill famously said, “If everything is mission, nothing is mission.”<sup>6</sup> We might paraphrase this as follows: If everyone is a missionary, no one is a missionary—at least in the sense that Christians might well assume that everything they do is mission—and, therefore, no organized mission is needed; or others will engage in mission on a programmatic basis, while nobody actually does so. This is particularly true for international mission. Experience teaches that it is far easier to speak about mission than to be engaged in it. Many never even get to speaking about it, while many who do never get beyond it.

It is important to see that even though Luther could speak of the individual Christian’s functioning as a missionary, when it came to the evangelical concept of mission, Luther did not think individualistically but rather corporately in terms of the church *in toto*, as Elert is quick to point out.

He shows how Löhe echoed Luther’s thoughts by describing mission as “nothing other than the one church of God in its movement—the realization of a universal catholic church.”<sup>7</sup>

Thus to bandy about the term “missional church” is somewhat analogous to raving about wet water. That is to say, when the church is church, when the church is ontologically authentic, when the church moves, then it *is* engaged in mission; and if it is not engaged in mission, then the church is not moving, thus inviting the question whether it still is church.

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In terms of the role of the mission agency, it follows that any mission agency that the church creates cannot exist for the purpose of taking care of the church’s mission in a way that exonerates the priesthood of this task or excludes it; rather, it must do so on behalf of the priesthood and in conjunction with it. We must maintain with Petri that “the church cannot do without the mission, that is, the mission activity of individuals, and the mission cannot do without the church.”<sup>8</sup> The history of the church is replete with examples of churches and congregations increasingly looking inward and focusing on internal struggles rather than looking outward for and at the lost and remaining engaged in active mission to them. There is a need for mission agencies that call the church to be church, and for the church to call the mission to work with and for the church.

### *The Goal of Missio Dei and the Esse of the Church*

The matter of goal raises a basic question that has fundamental significance for the function and authority of a mission agency, namely: What is the goal of mission? Different answers to this question will also invest and direct mission agencies correspondingly. Thus, Zinzendorf for instance believed that the goal of mission would be fulfilled when the heathens come to Jerusalem at the coming of Jesus; mission will therefore truly be possible only at the *parousia*, while in the meantime mission serves as a “preparatory work with the purpose of winning individuals who had been prepared by the Holy Ghost.”<sup>9</sup> Correspondingly, this view led Zinzendorf to emphasize individual conversions. Pietistic mission in general would later share this emphasis. It follows that these mission agencies were therefore not very concerned about the formal establishment of a church in the mission field. Zinzendorf “even forbade the Moravian missionaries to formally establish churches” and instructed them to form *ecclesiolae* instead.<sup>10</sup> This approach was also shared by many revivalist mission agencies in later centuries.

In stark contrast, the Roman Catholic Church “has long made *plantatio ecclesiae* (church planting) a central task of missions”<sup>11</sup>—partly because of its belief that salvation is certifiably only imparted to converts when they become members of the church under the papal vicar of Christ. There have been many critics of this approach, such as Johannes Hoekendijk who “energetically opposed ‘ecclesiocentric’ goals of mission such as church planting” because he believed that such thinking “revolves around an illegitimate center.”<sup>12</sup>

Schulz summarizes the Lutheran position when he states that the term *plantatio ecclesiae* is “theologically permissible only if the term implies the Church of ‘true believers’ and a ‘congregation of saints’ gathered around the ‘signs of the church,’ the preached and sacramental Word.”<sup>13</sup> Vicedom holds that “the preaching of the Gospel erects a barrier between men because all those who have come to faith are gathered into a special way of life—the congregation,” and that “a believer is enrolled in the church and through her gains a group of fellow believers who with him serve the same Lord. This oneness of the church is given through the one faith as well as through the one Baptism, through which the church on earth visibly takes on form.”<sup>14</sup> The *una sancta ecclesia* is constituted through Baptism and recognizably gathers where the Gospel is taught in its purity and the Sacraments are rightly administered.<sup>15</sup> This Gospel, we confess, is none other than justification by grace through faith in Christ; and in order to obtain this faith, the office of the ministry was instituted to teach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments, through which the Holy Spirit then works as through means. And no one should assume this office of publicly teaching in the Church or administering the Sacraments without being rightly called.<sup>16</sup>

The immediate goal of mission for the church therefore is the pure proclamation of the Word and the right administration of Baptism, along with the proclamation of the death of the returning Christ in the Lord's Supper in order to impart faith to the lost and thus gather them into congregations belonging to the *una sancta ecclesia*.

It is for this goal then that every mission agency needs to be structured, and from which it will derive its role.

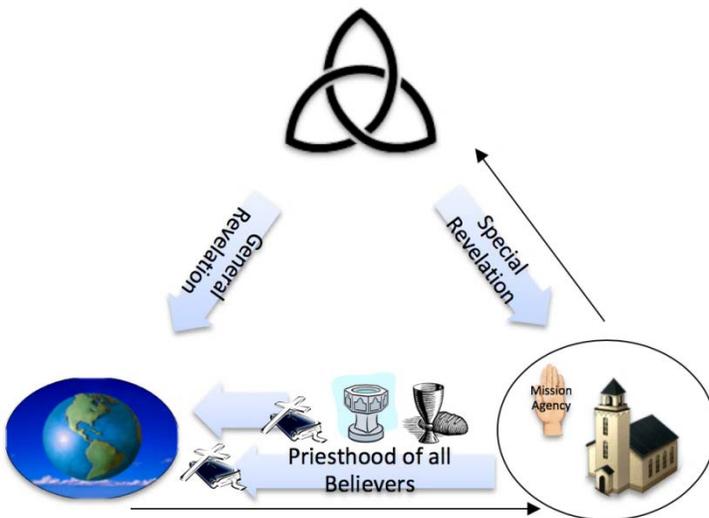
### *A Theology of Mission Agency?*

It might seem at first blush that there is a need for the church to formulate a "theology of mission agencies." However, Stephen Neill has warned of attempting to create such a theology, "because mission agencies are not a necessary part of the existence of the church. They perform a function of the church."<sup>17</sup> Neill is right. The theology behind mission agencies must be the theology of the Church. A proper ecclesiology enables us to distinguish between the *esse* and *bene esse* of mission agency and to identify relevant *adiaphora* in this regard. Neill's warning also clarifies the connection between mission agencies and denominations. Schulz explains that while "no mission would ever claim to further a particular denomination," nevertheless "the missionary also represents his own denomination."<sup>18</sup> This is true for every missionary. Since a missionary teaches and preaches the one Gospel of the one Christ, his doing so promotes the *una sancta ecclesia*, but his Gospel proclamation will be formed according to his own confession of it. Whether he intends to or not, if through his preaching the Holy Spirit produces faith, the new believers in whom the preaching will be produced and that young church which it forms will be shaped by the confession and practice of the missionary. For instance, even though Moravian missionaries were forbidden by Zinzendorf from establishing churches, in due course the work of Moravian missionaries inevitably resulted in the creation of Moravian churches.<sup>19</sup> It is ultimately impossible for mission agencies to be nondenominational; the churches that arise as a result of their mediate activities will tend inevitably to assume the confession to which the missionary subscribes, or which his agency affirms. It is for this reason that Lutheran mission has held to three principles: The Lutheran church can pursue only Lutheran mission; Lutheran mission work can only be pursued by the Lutheran church; and Lutheran mission work must lead to a Lutheran church.<sup>20</sup> Now in some contexts, it might not be feasible to establish a Lutheran church, at least *pro tem*, especially when restrictive policies on the part of the local government prohibit this (such as in mainland China). Nevertheless, such challenges do not invalidate the general principles to which Lutheran mission holds,

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since they are not substantively theological in nature but rather a matter of legislation or operational policy. The prayer and goal of the mission continues to be that such challenges may be overcome.

The point is that even if a mission agency is not officially affiliated with any particular denomination, in practice it cannot be free of a particular confession, since this is inherently impossible. At the very least, the mission will operate according to the beliefs and convictions of its most prominent leaders or backers, and so it serves the truth and promotes the integrity of the agency to clarify its position from the outset and to work toward fellowship according to it, which is ultimately beneficial both to the sending as well as the receiving church.



**Figure 1.**

It is the church that bears the responsibility for training its missionaries and for ordaining and calling them. It is also the church that must sustain and support its missionaries. Since the mission agency performs a function of the church, the extent to which it performs that function will depend on the extent that the church empowers it to do so. Since the general purpose of a mission agency is to facilitate the church’s sending, one would expect the mission agency also to encourage members of the church to make themselves available for a mission call and to mobilize and enable the congregations of the church to become active in both local and overseas mission.

### *The Structure of the Mission Agency*

The first intentional sending of missionaries in the New Testament on the part of the church occurred when the congregation of Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas to Cyprus under the direction of the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:1–3). Thus, we have a clear Scriptural precedent for a congregation acting as a mission agency. Going one step further, Winter sees a Scriptural precedent for a sodality in Paul’s missionary band.<sup>21</sup> While the latter point is certainly open to debate, it can be said that the New Testament does not mandate any particular structure for a mission agency. Following his overview of history, however, Wilhelm Maurer argues “that congregational mission was the more original and appropriate form.”<sup>22</sup> God has given the mission mandate to His Church. Whatever form the mission agency takes must therefore represent, aid, and facilitate the church’s participating in the *missio Dei*.

Over the course of history, the mission agency of the church has taken on various forms, ranging from the papal office to monastic structures, to kings and princes, to mission societies and denominational mission boards. It would seem that since the Reformation, the call for the establishment of mission societies has predominantly arisen in times when frustration over the perceived inactivity or incompetency of a church or denomination in mission endeavors has set in among one or more individuals. Examples include Lutheran lay nobleman Justinian von Welz, who, in 1664, castigated the orthodox Lutheran church of his time for its indifference and lukewarmness and called for the establishment of a “Jesus-Loving Society” to take up mission to the heathen;<sup>23</sup> and William Carey, who wrote in 1792 that “multitudes sit at ease and give themselves no concern about the far greater part of their fellow-sinners, who to this day, are lost in ignorance and idolatry”<sup>24</sup> and thus called for a mission society to be founded. A more recent example is James Tino, whose frustration arising from his perception of a decreased emphasis on sending career evangelistic missionaries in the LCMS six years ago prompted his founding of “Global Lutheran Outreach.”<sup>25</sup>

The call for the establishment of mission societies has predominantly arisen in times when frustration over the perceived inactivity or incompetency of a church or denomination in mission endeavors has set in.

Unfortunately, the stereotypical notion that denominational mission stagnates and declines over time has frequently been borne out by experience. For a recent example of this trend, which can be ascribed to a number of causes, one may refer to Kim Plummer Krull’s article documenting the decline in the number of LCMS career missionary families between 1970 and 2011 from 350 to 59, a decline of over 80%.<sup>26</sup> The current administration of the LCMS has gone to great lengths to reverse this

trend, which is eminently laudable; yet there can be no question that long-term financial sustainability will always prove a challenge, and thus the possibility always exists for numbers to decline again.

Many who are frustrated by the stagnation of denominational mission eventually abandon their efforts to foment constructive change within the church’s mission agency and instead call for the creation of parachurch mission societies. While this is understandable, it must also be acknowledged that mission societies that come into being in this way frequently operate as a double-edged sword; while they can provide opportunities for creative solutions to problems and avenues to promote mission, it can also be very difficult to integrate their work with the greater church, depending on the level of official sanction. Sometimes the situation can become downright messy, such as in the case of ordained LCMS pastor and science professor, Edward Arndt, who founded his own mission society to China in 1912 after his overtures to the LCMS to send missionaries to China went unheeded, allegedly due to a lack of funding. Only after founding it was Arndt installed as missionary at New Ulm. He raised funds for the society himself by selling sermons and tracts and requesting pledges. Only after five years was the society taken over by the LCMS.<sup>27</sup>

It behooves the church to take seriously the frustration of its members who are driven by the love of God through the means of grace to make themselves available for service in the *missio Dei*, yet find no outlet or avenue to pursue such service within their church body. This is especially true for those members who, like Arndt, see no alternative but to resort to founding new mission societies in order to facilitate mission, not for doctrinal reasons or a break in fellowship, but because they perceive the church’s own mission agency to be inefficient, inept, or self-absorbed. I do not mean that the church is a democracy and that

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every member is free to do his or her own thing even against the wishes of the church. On the contrary, one of the church’s main tasks is to call, ordain, and send capable and suitable administrators of the means of grace into the world. This necessarily entails a vetting process according to Scriptural guidelines that will result in some being declared unfit or unsuited for a call to mission, or perhaps in a difference in discernment concerning the need for mission in a particular area.

However, church leaders and mission leaders are not infallible. They are both saints and sinners. This truism implies that the church must maintain a willingness to

examine itself, and, if appropriate, to repent of its mismanagement of funds, of its unwillingness to heed the call to mission, or of its preoccupation with itself, whichever is applicable. It is to the credit of the early twentieth-century LCMS that she recognized the validity of Arndt's appeals and took on the work of the China Mission Society. In light of the growing divide between the startling decline of the number of career missionaries documented in Krull's article and the increase in mission opportunities made possible by globalization and partnerships with sister churches around the world, the time is ripe for churches around the world prayerfully to evaluate their participation in the *missio Dei*, to repent when convicted by the Law, and to strive to find creative solutions to increase mission activity and particularly the sending of long-term career missionaries into a world that is no less in need of that mission today than it was in 1912.

It is evident from what has been argued that Lutherans work with a mission agency that shares the Lutheran confession, endorses its ecclesiology, and facilitates the sending of Lutheran missionaries on behalf of the Lutheran church. Any society or board that is created or adopted for this purpose would have to meet these criteria, no matter what particular shape it took; and it would need to marshal the forces and rest upon the support of all the congregations belonging to that particular church body, both doctrinal and financial/material.

### *Ordained or Lay?*

The Church is found wherever the Gospel is taught in its purity and the Sacraments are rightly administered. Edmund Schlink points out that defining the Church according to these *notae ecclesiae* means that the presence of the Church is not expressly tied to the presence of the clergy in AC VII, but that the connection to the office of the ministry is given in AC V, XIV, and XXVIII, which precludes any possibility of severing this proclamation and administration from the office. Not explicitly mentioning the office in AC VII serves to emphasize God's action by means of the Gospel and demonstrates that the office consists of service to the Gospel.<sup>28</sup>

In addition, it is instructive that both commonly cited Scriptural passages that speak *expressis verbis* of mission in the New Testament, John 20:19–23 and Matthew 28:18–20, as well as Romans 10:17, which speaks of unbelievers coming to faith in Christ as *Kyrios*, refer to activities pertaining to the office of the ministry—the sending of preachers, the public teaching of the Word, its proclamation, Baptism, and the exercising of the Office of the Keys.

Lutherans value tremendously the priesthood of all believers and the ability of the laity to witness to Christ and give a defense of their faith in their vocation. Globalization tends to mobilize lay involvement, and there have been many instances in the history of mission when laity have played a vital role in the spread of the

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Gospel. But the office of the ministry holds a special place in the *missio Dei* for the Lutheran church, which it maintains even in the face of considerable pressure by postmodern Protestantism that sees all Christians as “disciplers” with equal authority. There is a continued need in our time for the right and necessary calling (and the right and necessary sending, which amounts to the same thing<sup>29</sup>) of faithful clergymen to deliver the gifts of God, since they alone under normal circumstances are vested by the church and its Lord with the authority publicly to administer the means of grace. This need exists because laity are not rightly called to proclaim the Gospel in an official capacity in the sense of holding divine services, preaching, etc. For this reason, the emphasis of any proper mission agency should primarily be the sending of ordained men on behalf of the church to administer the means of grace, since it is in the administration of the means of grace that certainty in the work of the Holy Spirit is found.

Together with them, however, such a mission agency sends willing and able laypeople to support or advance the work of the missionaries, that is, laypeople who are gifted in areas such as introducing people to the Gospel in a personal capacity or in those areas that will be ancillary to the mission, such as works of mercy, creating and maintaining missionary structures, or fostering the communal life of the church.

### 3. The Impact of Individualization

The rise of postmodernism brings with it a distrust of institutions. Along with a perception of an overly costly bureaucratic structure of church leadership that consumes a significant portion of any contributions, it is highly likely that this contributes to the significant decrease in unrestricted giving that the LCMS and other mainline denominations have been experiencing since 2001.<sup>30</sup> The attendant decrease in restricted giving since 2007 is probably attributable at least in part to ongoing global economic challenges. Krull attributes the steep decline in career missionaries since 1971, amongst other factors, to the decrease in giving and the dramatic increase in costs of sending especially career missionaries overseas.<sup>31</sup>

However, it is not as if the involvement of congregations in mission has necessarily decreased over the same period. Rather, the focus for mission has changed. When it comes to mission, congregations are increasingly doing their own thing. Many insist on what they call a “hands-on” approach. They want to “see where their money goes.” This approach does seem to enable many congregations to become involved in both national and international mission, which is commendable. The unfortunate byproduct, however, is an uncoordinated effort on the mission field by the church as a whole. The focus tends to shift to manageable short-term missions rather than sustained long-term work by career missionaries. For example, without going into specifics, it has happened that one well-intentioned congregation gave magnanimous financial support directly to indigent congregations in a different

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country—but with no regard for the local context there or for fellowship ties with other church bodies in that country. The result was that considerable financial support was given to congregations that preached a gospel contrary to that of the unsupported and envious confessional Lutheran sister church right next door. At other times, a synod’s mission agency might have been carefully proceeding with a long-term plan in a given area, only to have individual congregations become involved in the same area with misdirected short-term aid, ultimately resulting in long-term chaos.

It is a simple truth in our globalized world that when mission efforts are not coordinated, then mission initiatives, while well-intended, can quickly result in counter-productive strategies and damage to the church worldwide. Short-term mission trips are often touted to yield more spiritual growth to the givers than to the takers. Is this necessarily Scriptural or good? “In what ways has the short-term mission movement seriously taken culture into account? The tsunami of over one and a half million Americans annually traveling internationally in the name of Christ has staggering implications.”<sup>32</sup> Are individual congregations willing to think those through?

The upshot of individualization, amongst other factors, is that many a synod’s mission agency sends out fewer missionaries, and those that are sent are frequently forced by necessity to raise their own funds. This practice puts tremendous pressure on the missionaries and can hamper their work significantly. It should give us pause to think when Paul writes to Timothy, his young co-worker *in mission*, that “*the laborer deserves his wages*” (1 Tim 5:18, emphasis added). Is it not an *Armutszeugnis* for the church if its missionaries need to resort to leaving the mission field for months at a time every year or two in order to massage relationships with supporting congregations at home and continually find new sources of income? Is it legitimate for the church to bow to pragmatism and individualism? It is true that in light of the decrease in unrestricted giving to churches as a whole, not many alternatives present themselves other than to have the missionaries go around extending glad hands. But has the church truly considered the spiritual impact of this model? At the very least, missionaries in the field will be far more concerned with their finances than pastors at home, which might well serve as a deterrent to capable and gifted clergy who might otherwise have been willing to be sent to plant churches. In addition, missionaries inevitably compete with one another for support from donor congregations, since the pool of potential donors is limited. In order to maintain interest and support for their work, they need to become ever more creative so as to describe the need in ever more appealing terms in order to “touch the hearts”

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of the members, as many are wont to say. It remains an unspoken truth that the missionaries who will most probably be successful in this paradigm are the ones whose current projects offer the most emotional appeal or the greatest potential for tangible improvement, who possess the greatest personal charisma (which is not necessarily synonymous with representing the greatest need or being faithful to their calling) and who have the best contacts within the church, both individual (in terms of synodical hierarchy or rich donors) and corporate (rich congregations). But potential downsides may well be that more deserving missionaries or projects run out of funds, or that the church bows to the short attention spans of donors and becomes less willing to commit to long-term projects, which will have a dramatic impact on the kind of mission carried out and, consequently, on the reputation of the church involved. Consequently, often the result of congregations’ wanting to do more individually is that less is achieved overall.

### Quo vadis, *Mission Agency?*

It would seem that the denominational mission agency of today still frequently operates with the tried and trusty paradigm of the late nineteenth century, yet without the means and support of the denominational church of the twentieth century. Perhaps the time has come for the church to reexamine and recreate the structure and the role of the mission agency. While the individual efforts of congregations are laudable, there is tremendous value in harnessing and coordinating mission efforts so that the church “keeps the main thing the main thing”—reaching the lost and shepherding those won—without continually committing the same errors and relearning the same lessons.

Conversations that I have had with individual Christians seem to indicate that, on a philanthropic level, members are most likely financially to support those organizations that are seen to work for a noble cause *and* whose transparent finances show that they siphon off little or nothing in order to support their own structure, such as the American Red Cross or The Salvation Army. The reason cited is that the givers feel that contributing to such causes is most effective and rewarding because the maximum amount of money arrives at the intended destination. Perhaps similar guarantees can be given by a church’s mission agency to individual congregations or donors by streamlining the agency, using dedicated funds from districts or synod to support a minimal staff, and providing detailed feedback to congregations and individual members as to what was done with their gifts, especially by making use of media such as video recordings or photos and social media clearly to communicate how the money is being put to work.

In addition, the mission agency could take on more of a facilitating role. If congregations want a hands-on approach, perhaps the mission agency could provide information on a number of mission projects or possibilities from which

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congregations could prayerfully select to support fully or in partnership with other sister congregations, thus facilitating a greater sense of ownership. This approach in turn could strengthen ties between the congregations. Opportunities could be given for laypeople from the supporting congregations to travel to the mission field for hands-on involvement.

A mission agency could also take on a greater role in facilitating the fundraising *on behalf of* missionaries. A stellar example of this seems to be the work of Gary Thies at Mission Central.<sup>33</sup> The national agency could coordinate with districts, so that districts or even circuits jointly support individual missionaries. In this way, missionaries would find their support in a geographically central location, thereby cutting travel costs and time needed for fundraising, which in turn would mean less need for missionaries to repeat their presentations.

A mission agency cannot afford to work paternalistically any longer. This is a time of strengthening ties with partner churches around the world. If a church body respects and values a sister church elsewhere in the world, then she will be willing to work not only with her, but also send missionaries to work under her supervision. Too often, partner churches work right alongside one another, and yet the laity and sometimes even the clergy of both churches have little or no knowledge about this. Increasing awareness and then raising support will prove beneficial to both church bodies. A greater cooperation is possible with partner churches and will strengthen the work of the *missio Dei*.

Finally, theological education is an area in which a great impact can be made over time, despite relatively few career missionaries. By sending more qualified missionaries to seminaries of sister churches, by enabling more local students to attend seminary, even if only in the form of repeated short-term intensive courses, and by a church's directing greater support to its own seminaries and attracting students from elsewhere, it is possible to educate and influence whole generations of new pastors and career missionaries all over the world, who can then have a profound impact on their own culture and disseminate over a lifetime what they have received. Direct cooperation with seminaries and sending missionaries as educators is an area in which the mission agency of today can play a decisive role. True, theological education often has little emotional appeal because it is seen as ordinary, rather than extraordinary, and because it calls for long-term commitment without many immediately recognizable or tangible results. However, at the same time, capable communication experts can augment efforts by committed

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church leaders in this regard, particularly when the long-term benefits of this approach are emphasized.

When the means of grace are employed faithfully and Law and Gospel are distinguished rightly, there is no need to plead for the church to be or become “missional.” On the contrary, when the church is church, then it is missional by virtue of the fact that the church moves, that it is not static. The kingdom of God is inherently dynamic as Christ’s reconciliation of the world to Himself in the cross is proclaimed and imparted to all who believe and are baptized. It is time, therefore, as it always is, for the church to be church, and thus move—by the grace of God.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Craig Ott, Stephen J. Strauss, and Timothy C. Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 202.
- <sup>2</sup> Ralph D. Winter and R. Pierce Beaver, *The Warp and the Woof: Organizing for Mission* (South Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1970), 52–62.
- <sup>3</sup> Ott et al., *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 201–216.
- <sup>4</sup> Georg Vicedom, *The Mission of God*, trans. Gilbert A. Thiele and Dennis Hilgendorf (St. Louis, MO: CPH, 1965), 135.
- <sup>5</sup> Werner Elert, *Theologie und Weltanschauung des Luthertums hauptsächlich im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert, Morphologie des Luthertums*, vol. 1 (München: C. H. Beck’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1931), 339.
- <sup>6</sup> Cited in Ott et al., *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 200.
- <sup>7</sup> Elert, *Morphologie des Luthertums*, vol. 1, 340.
- <sup>8</sup> Ludwig Adolf Petri, *Die Mission und die Kirche: Schreiben an einen Freund*, (Hahn’sche Hofbuchhandlung: Hannover, 1841), 27.
- <sup>9</sup> Vicedom, *The Mission of God*, 38.
- <sup>10</sup> Ott et al., *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 108.
- <sup>11</sup> Ott et al., *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 113.
- <sup>12</sup> Ott et al., *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 129.
- <sup>13</sup> Klaus Detlev Schulz, *Mission from the Cross* (St. Louis, MO: CPH, 2009), 205, footnote 17.
- <sup>14</sup> Vicedom, *The Mission of God*, 124–125.
- <sup>15</sup> Augsburg Confession VII in *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. R. Kolb, T. J. Wengert, C. P. Arand (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000).
- <sup>16</sup> AC IV, V, and XIV.
- <sup>17</sup> Cited in Ott et al., *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 210.
- <sup>18</sup> Schulz, *Mission from the Cross*, 221–222.
- <sup>19</sup> Such as the Moravian Church in South Africa. C.f. Joachim Schubert, “The Moravian Mission and the Moravian Church in Southern Africa,” German South African Research Page, [http://www.safrika.org/morav\\_en.html](http://www.safrika.org/morav_en.html) (accessed July 5, 2018).
- <sup>20</sup> Articulated by Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf, as cited in Schulz, *Mission from the Cross*, 222.
- <sup>21</sup> Ralph D. Winter, “The Two Structures of God’s Redemptive Mission” in *Missiology: An International Review* 2, no. 1 (1974): 122–123.
- <sup>22</sup> Cited in Schulz, *Mission from the Cross*, 219.
- <sup>23</sup> James A. Scherer, *Justinian Welz: Essays by an Early Prophet of Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), 15–16.

- <sup>24</sup> William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians, to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*, (Leicester: Ann Ireland, 1792), 8, <http://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/enquiry/anenquiry.pdf> (accessed July 5, 2018).
- <sup>25</sup> Personal correspondence with Dr. James Tino dated October 29, 2012; also see Global Lutheran Outreach, “Global Lutheran Outreach (GLO)—from everywhere to everywhere!” <https://globallutheranoutreach.com> (accessed July 5, 2018).
- <sup>26</sup> Kim Plummer Krull, “Mission Heritage Sets Stage for Global Reach,” *The Lutheran Witness* (May 2011): 7.
- <sup>27</sup> Concordia Historical Institute, *Edward L. Arndt (1864–1929) Papers, 1864–1995*, <http://www.lutheranhistory.org/collections/fa/m-0005.htm> (accessed July 5, 2018).
- <sup>28</sup> Edmund Schlink, *Theologie der lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften*, 3rd ed. (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1948), 275–276.
- <sup>29</sup> Elert, *Morphologie des Luthertums*, Vol. 1, 349.
- <sup>30</sup> Jerald C. Wulf, “The Lord Gives. Christians Manage,” *The Lutheran Witness* (May 2011): 12.
- <sup>31</sup> Krull, “Mission Heritage Sets Stage for Global Reach,” 8.
- <sup>32</sup> Ott et al., *Encountering Theology of Mission*, 126.
- <sup>33</sup> Mission Central, “Mission Central: Not normal,” <https://missioncentral.us> (accessed July 5, 2018).