

## Articles

# Response to “A Theological Statement for Mission in the 21st Century”

**Robert Newton**

**Abstract:** In this article, Newton reviews “A Theological Statement for Mission in the 21st Century,” written by President Matthew Harrison at the request of the LCMS at its 2013 Synodical Convention. Newton affirms the Christ-centered foundation laid down by the “Statement” noting the solid Biblical and Confessional theology upon which sound Lutheran missiology must build. He raises the concern that the “Statement” seems informed more by certain issues of LCMS doctrine and practice than by theological and practical issues particular to the global missionary enterprise. That limits its value for charting the course for LCMS missions at home and abroad.

“According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 3:10–11).

The LCMS in its 2013 Convention passed a resolution with overwhelming majority calling for the development of a “Theological Statement for Mission for the 21st Century” with the intention that all of the members of the Synod engage in an “in-depth study of the mission of Christ’s church,” the ultimate hope being for all LCMS Lutherans to “develop a clearer understanding of their involvement in God’s mission and be moved to participate in it with greater joy and fervor.”<sup>1</sup> While the resolution tasked the Offices of National and International Mission with their respective boards to develop the statement, President Harrison must be commended for taking the lead in this endeavor. His personal leadership punctuates the significance and priority that Christ’s mission to “seek and to save the lost” holds for the Missouri Synod.

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“A Theological Statement for Mission for the 21st Century” (“Statement”) formally appeared in the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Lutheran Mission*, alongside several papers and responses from The Summit on Lutheran Mission held last November in San Antonio, Texas. The journal’s publication evangelically prods and encourages scholarly conversation focused on Lutheran mission with a view toward biblically and confessionally sound missionary theory and action. President Harrison notes that the desire behind the publishing of the journal is “to highlight and expound good examples of Lutheran missiology and to raise the height and breadth of discussion on mission so that every member of the Missouri Synod prays for the mission of the church, engages in it him/herself and supports it each according to their vocation.”<sup>2</sup> It’s in this spirit that I accepted the request to write a response to President Harrison’s “statement” for *Missio Apostolica*.

I am pleased to see the development of two different journals emerging from the ranks of the LCMS dedicated to the scholarly and practical dimensions of sound Lutheran missiology.<sup>3</sup> The LCMS has a unique and essential contribution to make to the church’s conversation regarding the Mission of God. However, until about 25 years ago,<sup>4</sup> our voice was fairly quiet in the scholarly circles of American missiology, leaving its development for the most part to mission thinkers from Reformed and Evangelical traditions.

Lutherans, however, have much to contribute to the conversation both to ourselves as we, the LCMS, continue to grow in understanding our particular role in the global mission movement, and to the other churches involved in Christ’s mission around the world. Our confessional moorings promote a Christocentric orientation to theology. This orientation is essential for missiology just as it is for the other arenas of theology and practice. Consider the theology of worship. Lutherans speak from the vantage point of God’s serving us, His baptized, with His gifts. His gracious presence in Christ forms our theology of worship and shapes our response to Him in worship. Our sacrifice of prayer and praise is built solely upon the great “Therefore” of God’s mercies (Rom 12). Justification by grace through faith alone orients, defines, and teaches us what true worship is and forms the profound interplay between Divine Service and Christian sacrifice. The Lutheran understanding and teaching regarding divine worship reflects our confessional theology, a standing unique within the Christian church.

Unfortunately, when we think missiologically, we have tended to fall in line with the theological orientation of Christian churches that think of missions more as the human service of Christians (in response to the Gospel) than as the Divine Service of Christ. How do we bring to the conversation of missionary outreach the same insistence of Christ alone, grace alone, faith alone that we have come to understand of worship?

In no way does Lutheran missiology intend to discount the human element in the *Missio Dei*. The Lord Jesus extends His Kingdom throughout the world through the

ministry of His Body, the Church. And the Church is a very flesh and blood reality. What Lutheran missiology intends to do is build sound mission theory and practice, norming it by its foundation, Jesus Christ. *“Let each one take care how he builds upon it. For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ”* (1 Cor 3:10–11). President Harrison attempts to do that in his theological statement for mission. He roots his “Statement” deeply in the theology of our Lutheran confession, manifest in at least three significant ways: (1) conformity with the structure and content of the Augsburg Confession; (2) focus on the Word and Sacraments as God’s missionary means; and (3) the preeminence of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ throughout.

### **Confessional Conformity**

The Statement so closely follows the confessional pattern laid out in “Part I” (The Chief Articles of Faith and Doctrine) of the Augsburg Confession (especially Articles I–XIV), that it might be considered a “missional reflection,”—a “What does this mean missionally?”—on the Augustana. It affirms the fact that the Augsburg Confession intentionally speaks missiologically, that is, it is ordered deliberately to present a clear, succinct account of the Gospel and, therefore, the *Missio Dei* as taught in Holy Scripture. Like the Lutheran Reformers, President Harrison anchors missions to the person and work of the Triune God, especially His gracious will for all people. He proceeds with the necessity of God’s mission—the helpless condition of natural man, “blind, dead and an enemy of God,”<sup>5</sup> who without God’s gracious intervention is eternally damned (AC II). He immediately follows with God’s missionary action through the sending of His Son, whose once-for-all “offering . . . for the sins of the world”<sup>6</sup> reconciled all creation to Himself (AC III), and procured a right standing (justification) before God for everyone who has faith (AC IV). President Harrison stamps in bold relief, “Christ Himself is the content of the Gospel,”<sup>7</sup> the confession of faith that may never be assumed, especially in light of the myriad notions of Christian mission and definitions of gospel advanced in the last century.<sup>8</sup>

The Gospel is defined by Christ’s person, words and works, and it transcends time and space. Just as “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow,” so the Gospel is the unique once-for-all offering of Christ, the God-man, for the sins of the world (Heb. 10:10). “The blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). “The work is finished and completed. Christ has acquired and won the treasure for us by His sufferings, death, and resurrection” (LC III 38). The communication of the Gospel may vary culture to culture, but the fundamental definition of the Gospel as justification is timeless because it is biblical (Rom. 3:21–26; 4:5).<sup>9</sup>

God personally communicates His Gospel, through His Spirit, who by that Gospel works faith in the hearts of people where and when it pleases Him (AC V). It is His ministry of Word and Sacrament that builds His Church and marks its true identity for itself and the world (AC VII). “That is why the Church is not recognized by individual faith or works, which may be invented or contrived, but by these external marks, ‘the pure teaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments in harmony with the gospel of Christ’ (AP VII and VIII).”<sup>10</sup>

### **Focus on Word and Sacrament**

With equal clarity President Harrison holds up the proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments as God’s means of bringing this message of salvation in Christ to the world and His promise that He will bless it.

The Word of God—read, spoken, proclaimed—will not return to God empty but will accomplish His purpose (Is. 55:10–11) and will bring people to faith in Christ “where and when it pleases God in those who hear the gospel” (AC V). That is why the Church is not recognized by individual faith or works, which may be invented or contrived, but by these external marks, “the pure teaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments in harmony with the gospel of Christ” (AP VII and VIII).<sup>11</sup>

Over and over again, he holds up the centrality of God’s means of grace in His mission which drives home the truth that they alone lay the foundation (Christ) upon which the Church stands and that they alone define the fundamental task of Christ’s Church on earth. Lutheran missiology allows no ambiguity in this matter. Dr. Robert Preus in his essay, “The Confessions and the Mission of the Church,” makes the case,

The clear implication of what we have said is that the work of the church is the work of the Spirit; and anything which is not clearly the Spirit’s work is not the work of the church. Luther likens the church to “the mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God.” This is the work of the church. But Luther goes on immediately to say, “The Holy Spirit reveals and preaches that Word, and by it He illumines and kindles hearts so that they grasp and accept it, cling to it, and persevere in it” (LC II, 42; Ap. IV, 132). Needless to say the preaching of Christ is fundamental to the Spirit’s (and church’s) activity (ibid. 45; FC, SD 56). Luther is most explicit on this point: that the church as community, as fellowship, is both the creation of the Spirit and His locus for activity, and that His activity in and through the church is the only activity worthy of the church.<sup>12</sup>

Quoting Luther’s emphasis on the enduring work of the Spirit through His church<sup>13</sup> Preus goes on to ask,

How far are we to press this statement of Luther's? Not a word about social action here, building hospitals, schools, etc., etc. Is such action, then, not the work of the Spirit, and therefore of the church, for Luther? It would appear not, in the present context.<sup>14</sup>

Particularly helpful is the Statement's emphasis upon the missional character of God's Word and Sacraments. Under the section entitled, "Word of God" President Harrison reminds us that "The Triune God is a speaking God." He communicates personally with His world for the purpose of restoring all things to the loving relationship with Him (2 Cor 5:18–21).

By His spoken Word, the Father brought creation into existence (Gen. 1:1–2; Ps. 33:6; John 1:1–3). Christ who is the eternal Logos speaks His words, which are "spirit and life" (John 6:63). . . . The Holy Spirit breathed out by Jesus to His apostles on Easter evening (see John 20:22) and inspired them to put His Word into writing "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31). It is through the prophetic and apostolic witness to Christ delivered to us in the Holy Scriptures—the Spirit-inspired and inerrant Word of God—that we have access to Jesus and life with Him (see 2 Tim. 3:15 and 2 Pet. 1:16–21).<sup>15</sup>

The Statement affirms that Lutheran missions values the languages and cultures of all peoples,<sup>16</sup> a reflection of God's own love for every family on earth. At the same time, it recognizes the confessional truth that "we cannot by our own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ our Lord or come to Him." Our Lord, however, longs to have us. Thus the Holy Spirit enters our culturally defined worlds, graciously calling each of us to faith through His Saving Word spoken in the language of our hearts. "We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God" (Acts 2). Furthermore, this point acknowledges that God not only calls people to Himself from every tribe and nation, but enlists them as full members of His priesthood. As His priests they possess His Gospel treasures and are equipped by His Spirit to be His church, His missionary community in that place and beyond. As St. Paul reminded the Corinthian Christians, "For all things are yours" (2 Cor 3:21).

The missionary nature of the Word is further evidenced by its effectiveness, that is, its power to effect God's purposes, giving life to the dead and calling into existence the things that do not exist. "Preaching is never merely descriptive but always a kerygmatic, efficacious proclamation that delivers condemnation to secure sinners and consolation to those broken by their sin."<sup>17</sup>

He likewise points us to the missiological intention of the Sacraments, that is, God proclaims through the media of Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar His explicit and personal promise that He has called us to Himself and that we belong to Him forever (Jn 10:27–29).

Baptism is the Triune God’s gift whereby He demonstrates His mercy by bestowing on us a new birth (see John 3:3–6; 1 Pet. 1:3–5; Titus 3:4–7). Baptized into His own name (Matt. 28:18–20), we have God’s own pledge and witness that we belong to Him through the forgiveness of sins (see Acts 2:38–39) and are heirs according to the promise (Rom. 6:1–11; Gal. 3:26–29; Col. 2:12–14).<sup>18</sup>

And again,

Luther underscores the forgiveness of sins in the Small Catechism as he engages in a threefold repetition of the words “given for you” and “shed for the forgiveness of sins.” These words show us that the Sacrament of the Altar is the testament of God’s sure mercy for sinners.<sup>19</sup>

President Harrison underscores the fact that the sacraments are God’s gracious action toward us. God comes near to each of us to speak His personal word of unconditional mercy and grace as He washes us with water and His Word (Ti 3:5) and feeds us with His own Body and Blood (Lk 22:19, 20). His word speaks faith into our hearts so that we may truly believe and confess, “He died for my sins and rose again for my justification” and by that faith be saved (Rom 10:8–11). The “for me” assurance of faith is the intention of God’s Mission. “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? (Rom 10) This “for me” intention is essential to Lutheran missiology. Dr. Preus notes,

Werner Elert speaks often of the notion of “Heilsegoismus,” the personal concern for one’s salvation, which is typified by the “for me” in Luther’s works and in our Confessions. This notion, so often cast into the teeth of Lutheranism, is of the very essence of the evangelical faith, according to Elert. For it is a result of the soteriological burden of Lutheranism, a burden made clear in our Confessions with their stress upon the centrality of the Gospel in the church’s theology and worship and life (Ap. IV, 3 10). Structurally the Augsburg Confession is built around Articles III and IV on Christology and justification through faith. The same is true of the Smalcald Articles. . . . The soteriological concern dominates and pervades our Lutheran Confessions. . . . Thus, we see our Symbols as an act of confession carrying out the mission of the church to proclaim the Gospel.<sup>20</sup>

At the same time, the Statement reminds us that God’s “for me” intention of His Word and Sacraments always bears His “for all” intention as well. The Holy Spirit draws each of us through these means into His Holy Church, the communion of saints, “a company of priests, a priesthood.”<sup>21</sup> God established His holy priesthood within the arena of “all the peoples of the earth,” built on His Divine premise, “for all the earth is mine” (Ex 19:5). Thus, President Harrison recalls C. F. W. Walther’s

reminder that “through Holy Baptism we have all joined the mission society which God Himself has established,”<sup>22</sup> and St. Paul’s assertion that by our participation in the Lord’s Supper “[we] proclaim (καταγγέλλω) the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor 11:26).

### **Preeminence of the Gospel**

The Statement reflects its Lutheran moorings in the fact that the Gospel in the “strict sense” (FC SD V, 21)<sup>23</sup> permeates the whole. Following the Confessors intent, the Statement sets forth the Gospel, even when discussing secondary concerns. The Gospel remains the foundation upon which every word and activity of church or individual Christian is built. It seems at times that works of “mercy” and “life together” are given equal footing with the “witness” of the Gospel (Articles 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12). Such commingling may suggest to the reader that other activities, worthy as they are in themselves, have been added to the “sola” of the Gospel, thus confusing the clear purpose of Christ’s mission as taught in Scripture (Lk 24:44–45) and confessed by our fathers.<sup>24</sup> A careful reading of the Statement, however, would indicate President Harrison’s commitment to maintain the biblical and confessional priority of Gospel proclamation. In Article 11, “On being Lutheran today for the sake of *Witness, Mercy, Life Together*.” He states emphatically,

“The Gospel and Baptism must traverse the world,” said Luther. This is what Lutheran missions cares about—faithfully preaching repentance and faith in Jesus’ name, baptizing and teaching so that those who belong to Christ in every nation are built up in His Word and fed with His body and blood. Mission is, to use the words of Wilhelm Löhe, “the one church of God in motion,” calling, gathering and enlightening unbelievers through the pure teaching of the Gospel. This definition lies at the heart of what it means to be Lutheran in mission.<sup>25</sup>

Later, under “The Church as a community of Witness, Mercy, Life Together,” he affirms the fundamental nature of the Gospel “Witness” in which “mercy” and “life together” find their proper place.

Lutherans are glued to the scriptural truth that the Spirit works faith in the hearts of those who hear the Good News of Jesus crucified and risen when and where it pleases Him. Faith is not created by human enthusiasm, crusades for social justice or strategic planning. Faith comes through the word of the cross. That’s what Lutheran mission is given to proclaim. It is precisely in this Lutheran understanding of mission that mercy and life together converge.<sup>26</sup>

With this distinction in mind, the Statement mindfully lifts up of the role of “Mercy”—expressing Divine compassion for the needy within and without the household of faith—as it relates to Christ’s mission, a helpful contribution to

Lutheran missiology. “The Church can no more ignore the physical needs of people than Christ could have refused to perform healings or persons can be separated into body and soul in this life.”<sup>27</sup> While “mercy” ministry is prominent in previous mission statements of the LCMS,<sup>28</sup> President Harrison provides helpful biblical instruction. Of particular significance is the recognition that “mercy” is highly valued within the mission work of the church for its own sake, and not simply for the opportunity it might present to proclaim the Gospel.

We care for people in need, not with any ulterior motive, nor even in order to proclaim the Gospel. We proclaim the Gospel and care for the needy because that’s who Christ is, and that is who we are as the Church in this world (John 14; Acts 4:12).<sup>29</sup>

While the Priesthood of All Believers is not specifically treated in the Augsburg Confession,<sup>30</sup> it is a critical component of Lutheran mission, and happily we find it addressed in the Statement. Four points are particularly helpful: (1) We are “baptized members of Christ’s royal priesthood”<sup>31</sup> and as such share in His mission in the world. (2) We live out our priestly vocation in our congregations and in our homes, communities, and work places. (3) Our vocations serve as God appointed avenues for proclaiming the Gospel to those who are beyond earshot of the church and the means of grace offered there. (4) As Christ’s priests, the Word we speak is His saving Word, “the same Word we regularly hear in preaching and the same Word we read for ourselves in Holy Scripture, e.g., through personal and family devotions. The content of our witness is always Christ, crucified and raised from the dead for all.”<sup>32</sup>

## **Church and Missions**

Most helpful in the Statement is the essential link between church and mission. “Church and mission go together;” President Harrison writes, “you do not have one without the other.”<sup>33</sup> Referencing the work of Friedrich Willhelm Hopf,<sup>34</sup> he lifts up a key contribution of Lutheran missiology: Lutheran churches do Lutheran mission; Lutheran missions lead to Lutheran churches. That describes a cyclical movement of church and mission in the *Missio Dei*: Christ’s Church is the assembly of saints born of His Spirit through the Gospel. Having His Spirit, His saints proclaim (ἐκανγγέλλω) the excellencies of Him (His Gospel) who called them out of darkness into His fellowship of light. Wherever His Gospel is proclaimed He is present, calling and gathering His Church and the cycle repeats. One leads to the other and both are the personal activity of Christ (*Missio Dei*). Note how our Lutheran fathers confessed this dynamic.

So that we may obtain this faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and the

sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Spirit is given, who effects faith where and when it pleases God, in those who hear the Gospel (AC V).

This article is entitled “The Ministry in the Church” (Latin Text), and yet the article precedes the specific article, “Concerning the Church” (AC VII). It confesses that churches and missions form an unbreakable circle, each one leading to the other. Dr. Preus points out,

Notice the prominent place given this ministry by Melancthon. The article on this ministry of the Word follows directly upon his presentation of the work of Christ and justification by faith, and it precedes the articles on the new obedience and the church (Art. VI-VIII), for there can be no new obedience or church without this ministry.<sup>35</sup>

Dr. Preus’s insight is significant for the fact that neither church precedes mission, nor mission precedes church, but Christ’s salvific work precedes them both. David Bosch highlights this understanding in his survey of world missionary conferences starting with Edinburgh 1910. Speaking specifically about the church/mission model fleshed out at the missionary conference convened at Willingen 1952, he writes,

We should not subordinate mission to the church or the church to mission; both should rather be taken up into the *missio Dei*, which now became the overarching concept. The *missio Dei* institutes the *missiones ecclesiae*. The church changes from being the sender to being the one sent. (cf Günther 1970:105–114<sup>36</sup>). The new mood found expression in the opening words of the Statement received by the next assembly of the IMC, which met in Achimota, Ghana, in 1958: “The Christian world mission is Christ’s not ours”.<sup>37</sup>

In summary, the Statement drives home the fact that our Lutheran confession is essentially missiological and, therefore, essential for developing Lutheran missiology. It serves well as an apologetic for the fact that one cannot separate Lutheran mission from Lutheran confession without harming both.<sup>38</sup> The Statement affirms key missiological truths—drawn from the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions—that lay a firm foundation upon which to build sound missiological theory and practice, applicable to missiological contexts across time and culture. We have a doctrinally solid “statement of mission” that falls in line with Lutheran statements of mission written in previous centuries dating back to the Reformation. Indeed, “Lutheran mission is creedal and catholic.”<sup>39</sup>

## Missiological Concerns

With that in mind, it is also necessary to examine briefly where the Statement is less helpful. First, it formulates a theological statement of mission around the masthead under which the LCMS currently sails: “Witness, Mercy, and Life

Together.” This triad makes a helpful “mission statement,” succinctly naming important activities of the local church. However, it’s a tight squeeze for the *Missio Dei*, and the Statement suffers from its overuse. In certain critical points its insertion is problematic. It is difficult for me to understand exactly how Witness, Mercy, and Life Together “reflect God’s very being as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier” or how they “encompass His holy and gracious will for all in Christ Jesus.”<sup>40</sup> While important to stress the essentiality of these three elements in the character of Christ’s church on earth, the statement “where there is no witness, no mercy, and no life together in forgiveness and love, there is no Church, no faith in Christ”<sup>41</sup> comes dangerously close to ranking them among the marks of the church. We must be ever so careful not to determine the presence of Christ and His Church by what we see or don’t see, but only by what we believe regarding the promise that He and His own are present where the Gospel is purely preached and sacraments are administered according to the Gospel.

Furthermore, the phrase, “Witness, Mercy, Life Together,” confuses somewhat the clear focus of the *Missio Dei* as our Lord articulates it: “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things” (Lk 24:46-48). “Witness, Mercy, and Life Together” does not explicitly hold before the us the primary mission of Christ that He carries out unceasingly through His Church, namely the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins. Dr. Preus asserts regarding Lutheran mission,

The activity of the church is fellowship, sharing. This is the case whether the *communio sanctorum* of our Creed is taken as the fellowship of the saints, as Luther understood the phrase (*Gemeinde*, congregation, LC II, 47ff.), or as the fellowship in the sacraments. In this community or fellowship the prime activity centers in the obtaining of the forgiveness of sins (LC II, 55) through the means of Word and Sacraments. It consists also of sanctification which in this life is never complete (LC II, 67) and is wrought also through the Word of forgiveness. Such activity is brought about and made possible by the Spirit of God—this is His work (Amt und Werk)—who works in and through the church by means of the Word of the Gospel (LC II, 59).

The clear implication of what we have said is that the work of the church is the work of the Spirit; and anything which is not clearly the Spirit’s work is not the work of the church. Luther likens the church to “the mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God.” This is the work of the church.<sup>42</sup>

Of deeper concern, the Statement’s focus seems to be informed more by the theological and practical concerns of the LCMS as it strives to confess a clear, unadulterated Gospel than it does by the theological and practical concerns particular

to the global missionary enterprise. I am not suggesting even for a moment that striving for the true faith is not important to missions; it is in fact, essential. However, other theological and practical elements essential to sound missiology remain unaddressed in the statement. That limits its value for charting the course for LCMS missions at home and abroad.

To forge the essential link between Lutheran confession and Lutheran mission, President Harrison casts the statement in the church/mission mold of the sixteenth-century Reformation, where our fathers faithfully carried on the missional task in their “world.” That world, mind you, was completely dominated by the institutional church. Their Gospel witness, therefore, took place almost entirely in the church and to the “churched.” That is not to take anything away from our Confessions or the role they play in laying the foundation for all missionary activity. It simply recognizes that the Confessions were not intended to answer certain fundamental questions of missiology, particularly how the Gospel proceeds into the world beyond the boundaries of the church.

Elsewhere I have written about mission work in three contexts: (1) pre-churched, (2) churched, and (3) post-churched.<sup>43</sup> The term “church” in these three contexts refers to the presence and influence of the church institutionally in a given society.

We associate Pre-Churched ministry with mission work among people groups where the Gospel has not been proclaimed and, therefore, local churches have not been established. As the Gospel prospers among these people, churches are born and their influence in the society increases. That increase effects the shift from a Pre-Churched to a Churched context. Ministry in a Churched context resides primarily within and proceeds from local congregations. Furthermore, the larger society accords the church significant prestige, position, and influence in the community, including special privileges. Just as the waxing of the church’s influence signals the shift from a Pre-Churched to a Churched ministry context, its waning indicates the shift from a Churched to a Post-Churched context. As the church’s position and influence diminishes our society begins to reflect the cultural characteristics of a “Pre-Churched” world. We find ourselves no longer living and serving in a churched influenced society, but rather, in a full-fledged mission field.<sup>44</sup>

Of the three mission contexts, the Statement speaks primarily from and to the “churched” context where the church is present and maintains significant influence in the society. That is, the church controls the arena in which it carries out its witness. Pre-churched and Post-churched contexts, however, require the church to carry out its witness in arenas which it does not control.

How, then, do we faithfully proclaim the Gospel in places where our Lutheran church is not in control of the context, or where there is no church present in a particular people group, or where the church’s witness has been intentionally muted (which is a growing reality in twenty-first-century America)? The Statement does not take up these questions even though they are of great significance for Lutheran mission today.

The Statement is further shaped by the German mission leader and theologian, F. W. Hopf, mentioned earlier, whom President Harrison describes as “perhaps the most significant confessional Lutheran missiologist of the second half of the twentieth century.”<sup>45</sup> President Harrison notes that Hopf’s essay “The Lutheran Church Plants Lutheran Missions” “elaborates on the basic confessional principles of missiology, which were re-discovered in the confessional revival in Germany in the nineteenth century.”<sup>46</sup> At stake was the proclamation of the clear Gospel—the foundation of biblical and confessional missiology—which was being challenged by the formation of the Evangelical Church in Germany, a union church made up of Lutheran, Reformed, and Union churches.

The basic questions which have divided the Lutheran and Reformed churches since the Reformation, questions which go to the very heart of the gospel (eternal election, Baptism, Lord’s Supper, Christ’s divine and human natures, Law and Gospel), were deemed non-church dividing by the EKD (and the LWF soon after).<sup>47</sup>

These concerns are particularly significant to the LCMS as she proclaims the Gospel today, especially in the midst of the growing indifference to the truths of God’s Word, even among other Lutherans. They lie at the heart of why our Synod was formed. President Harrison rightly asserts that Lutheran confession cannot be separated from Lutheran mission; therefore, Lutheran churches can only do Lutheran missions, and Lutheran missions lead to Lutheran churches. What is not addressed, however, is the dynamic relationship between Lutheran churches and Lutheran missions, that is, what they hold in common, what distinguishes them, and how they order their specific work in the Kingdom.

### **What do Lutheran churches and Lutheran mission hold in common?**

The answer lies simply in the fact that they are each the discernible manifestations of Christ’s Church on earth. How is this true? Consider for a moment Hopf and what he means by the term “Lutheran church.” “Thus the Lutheran church, according to the way she understands herself, is nothing other than the one, holy church of Jesus Christ in that form of hers, in which she is clearly discernable [sic] for us on earth.”<sup>48</sup> The form(s) to which Hopf applies this understanding are churches (congregations) and church bodies.

“Lutheran churches” are for us congregations (*Gemeinden*) and church bodies who are ordered and are being governed in this sense, whose lives are exclusively oriented to the real marks of the true church of Jesus Christ. This we know: in, with, and under a poor earthly form of the church (*Kirchengestalt*), that is where this form is, and within its purview the one holy church is certainly to be found. For the body of Christ is to be found and grasped where the head of the body on earth lets himself be “found”: “in the Supper, Baptism, and the Word.”<sup>49</sup>

Key to this understanding is “where the head of the body on earth lets himself be ‘found’: ‘in the Supper, Baptism, and the Word.’” The Church is not defined by location but by the presence of Christ (who fills all things), in the proclamation of the Gospel and administering the Sacraments.

Our Lord Jesus is equally present and acting in the proclamation of the Gospel through His Church, both in its local and missional forms. His ministry is not bound exclusively to the local congregation or to the pastoral office, but is bound to His Word and Sacraments. Thus, our Lord carries out His mission through His Word in which He personally gathers with His Saints and personally scatters (*διασπείρω*) with His Saints in the world (Acts 8:1–4). Dr. Preus considers this a key element in Lutheran mission,

It is important to note the functional, non-institutional, nature of this ministry. Melancthon is simply speaking here, as elsewhere, of the preaching of the Gospel Word, or of the work of the Gospel Word. This fact is illustrated clearly in the Schwabach Articles VII as they speak on this point, “To obtain this faith, or to bestow it upon us men God has instituted the ministry or the oral word [Predigtamt oder mündlich Wort], namely, the Gospel through which He causes this faith and its power and use and fruit to be proclaimed, and through it as through means He gives us faith along with the Holy Spirit, as and where He wills. Apart from this there is neither means nor way, neither mode nor manner to receive faith. There can be no doubt that this article, like AC V, describes the work of the church, or more properly, God’s work through the church in causing His kingdom to come. This conforms to the Confessional notion that God is the author of baptism and of the Sacrament of the Altar. The church’s mission, or ministry, is God’s mission through the church.”<sup>50</sup>

It is not always clear in the “Statement” to what the word “church” or “Church” refers. For example, in article 5, “The Saving Word of God,” Church refers first to the “assembly of all believers in Christ . . . where the Word of God is found.”<sup>51</sup> In the same article it refers more specifically to the “assembly of believers” gathered around pulpit and altar.

Therefore, where the Word of God is found; where Holy Absolution is proclaimed (the specific announcement of the forgiveness of sins for the sake of Christ); where Holy Baptism is done in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; where Christ’s true body and blood are given by His Word of promise, there you will find the Church, the assembly of believers in Christ, and there you will find Christ Himself.<sup>52</sup>

Confessionally speaking, they are inseparable. That is, “the assembly of believers” identified in AC VII under the marks of the church—Word and Sacrament—will be found in the local congregation where the called pastor proclaims the Gospel and administers the Sacraments. That connection was proper to assume in the world of the Reformers. Every village had a church; every congregation had the right to call its pastor.<sup>53</sup>

However, Lutheran missions carried on outside of Christendom do not enjoy the presence of congregations in every village nor the gifts of ordained pastors proclaiming the Gospel from a myriad of pulpits and altars. Mission field is defined not by presence of churches, but by their absence. Nevertheless, Jesus is personally present where and when His Gospel is read and where His saints, filled with the Holy Spirit, speak. In fact, Jesus’ presence beyond the local congregation and the ministry of pastors is an essential component in the story of the expansion of the Church as St. Luke bears witness. And it still is today, especially in places where Christian assembly is forbidden or where there simply are no churches.

### **What distinguishes churches from missions if Christ’s Kingdom comes through both?**

Christ’s Church on earth is both an established church (local congregation) and a “sent” church (mission). While holding in common the Gospel and the ministry of proclaiming it to the ends of the earth, established church and sent church play distinct roles, working together under Christ in building His Church. Understanding the Church in its sent or mobile form and its relationship to Church in its established form is necessary for developing a sound Lutheran missiology.

The Church established (whether a single or a group of local congregations) is God’s instrument by which Jesus permanently dwells and serves in a community through His Word and Sacraments. The Church sent is God’s means by which Jesus preaches the Gospel “to the other towns as well” (Lk 4:43). Permanence requires fixed locations, structures, and roles. Sent requires mobility and, therefore, traveling light. Permanence requires maintaining boundaries (humanly speaking) in order to keep the Gospel pure and the sheep safe from the evil one. Expansion requires crossing boundaries in order to bring the pure Gospel to those sheep yet outside the Church. The Lord consolidates the Ministry of the Gospel in the Church established for the sake of permanence and good order; the Lord disperses the Ministry of the

Gospel in the Church sent for the sake of all those who have not heard. The Holy Spirit, attentive to both sets of priorities, raises up “overseers,” whom He tasks to care for Christ’s flock (local church) by faithfully proclaiming the Gospel and guarding it from those who would do it harm (Acts 20:28–31). He also raises up “missionaries” whom He sends beyond the boundary of the Church established in order to seek and save the lost (Acts 13:1–4, Rom 10:14–15).

The Church established focuses on building and maintaining a permanent home, to which we invite the outsider, the homeless (the lost), to find shelter for their battered souls and a permanent place in the community of faith. It has often been referred to in missiological literature as the “centripetal” dynamic of Christ’s Church. The Church sent focuses on leaving home, the centrifugal dynamic of Christ’s Church. “As the Father sent me” meant that our Lord left the “home,” where He dwelled with His Father in unapproachable light to tent among us in the shadow of death, to suffer and die in order to draw His sin-dark creation to Himself (Jn 12:32). He was sent by His Father into the world because the world was incapable of coming to Him. Likewise for us, “the sending of Jesus” implies leaving “home”—where we dwell among and enjoy the blessings of God’s people—to go where there is no church, to live as strangers and exiles (Heb 11).

The Lord of the Church designed churches and missions to work together, recognizing that each has an essential function to carry out in His Body on earth. However, because it is Christ’s Body on earth, made up of sinful saints, it is difficult to maintain the symbiotic balance between the two so vital to Kingdom work. In the zeal to reach the lost, the Church sent may be tempted to compromise the clear witness of the Gospel (including the ministry of the Law and the Gospel) or not to teach the “all things” that Jesus commanded. Likewise, in the zeal to keep the true faith, the Church established may be tempted to add to the “all things” of Christ, things it deems “essential” by standards of its tradition and conscience but in reality are nonessentials by standards of the Gospel, and then bind new churches and Christians to them as a requirement for life together. The sent Church may go about its work, ignoring the particular concerns and priorities of the established Church, thinking that they impede the progress of the Gospel. The established Church may look suspiciously at the concerns and priorities of the sent Church believing that they will lead to compromising the true faith. These attitudes tear at rather than build up the Body of Christ. Christ’s Church on earth is in daily need of repentance and the forgiveness of sins that Jesus offers. Here we rejoice in our Lord’s promise, “I will build my Church.”

## **How do we organize for the specific work of church and mission in the world?**

While central to the entire understanding and work of the *Missio Dei*, this question seems the least developed in the Statement. That deserves explanation. As

stated above, in order to unite Lutheran missions and its Confessions, President Harrison frames the conversation within the confessional construct of sixteenth-century Christendom. As such, it organizes God’s missionary activity primarily in and around the established church rather than in and around His primary arena of mission: unchurched or post-churched worlds. That can create missional “blinders” in two areas: (1) focused attention on the concerns, practices, and structures of the Western institutional church that can blind us to the concerns, practices, and structures critical to the emerging and partner churches and (2) focused attention on “local church” as God’s primary instrument for Gospel proclamation that can blind us to the missional structures specifically designed by the Lord for outreach to those beyond the “sphere of influence” of the church.

The Statement tends to address theological and practical concerns raised by established Lutheran churches more than concerns particular to mission outreach. Two items in particular stand out: the practice of closed Communion and the expectation that all Lutheran congregations will follow the Western liturgical tradition as the proper form for proclaiming the Gospel and administering the Sacraments. Regarding closed Communion, President Harrison writes,

Hence the practice of closed Communion is a necessary corollary of the doctrine of the Lord’s Supper. . . . Article VI of the Missouri Synod’s Constitution states as a condition of membership in the Synod, ‘Renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description.’ Article VI:b provides additional clarification by defining unionism and syncretism as ‘Taking part in the services and sacramental rites of heterodox congregations or of congregations of mixed confession.’ The practice of closed Communion then does not include receiving Communion at churches that hold heterodox positions.<sup>54</sup>

The question here is not over the appropriateness of closed Communion itself—it is a necessary aspect of confessing the true Gospel over against heterodox teaching regarding the Sacrament—but over its being a “necessary corollary” of the teaching of the Lord’s Supper in a mission setting where the issue is often not “heterodox confessions” of the Supper, but a nascent understanding of its substance, power, and purpose.

The same question may be raised regarding the exclusive use of the Western liturgical tradition. Here, President Harrison quotes Ludwig Adolph Petri, a nineteenth-century Lutheran pastor and missions leader who insisted that mission “must abstain from establishing confessions, accepting new customs in the divine service, uniting separated confessions and the like. As soon as mission begins to do something like that, it is manifestly in the wrong, for none of those tasks is charged or relegated to mission.”<sup>55</sup> Again, the issue is not the value of the Western liturgy or the appropriateness of connecting a young congregation with its Christian heritage. The concern is in tying the ministry of the Gospel and Sacraments to this specific

form without knowing the cultural and linguistic realities of the mission context and whether these forms communicate pure grace, legalistic ritual, or magic formulas.

Inserting these concerns into a “theological statement for mission” cannot help but nuance missionary priorities in favor of the established churches at the expense of those who have not yet heard or of young churches just emerging. How might such nuance affect our understanding of another key element in the Statement, the role of “evangelical visitation,” in mission? President Harrison lifts up the apostolic practice of visiting the young churches in every city where they preached the Gospel during their first missionary journey (Acts 15:36). Likewise, he extols the Reformers for their visitation of Lutheran parishes in Germany in the early days of the Reformation. While not newly planted churches, they were new to the Gospel and, like the churches planted by the apostles, were wrestling with issues of doctrine and practice, trying to discern what was in accord with the pure Gospel and what was not. These two examples illustrate the need for and value of evangelical visitation. We do well to follow them. At the same time, a few cautions are in order. First, it’s important to note a significant difference between the visitations carried out by the Apostles and the Reformers and the visitations we, the members of the LCMS, might make with our partner churches around the world. Paul and Barnabas enjoyed “visitation rights” by virtue of their office as the Apostles who planted those churches. Likewise, Luther and Melancthon enjoyed “visitation rights” by virtue of their official appointment by the ecclesiastical authorities to conduct evangelical visits. The LCMS enjoys neither in relationship to its partner churches. Our relationship with partner churches is not authoritative, in which case evangelical visitations will be valuable only insofar as they are mutual.

A second caution, and one of greater concern, is the ever-present danger that visitations from older churches to younger may focus on the concerns of the long-standing established churches more than on the needs of the new believers. We referred to the very helpful example in the New Testament of evangelical visitations by the Apostles. We also have the example of hurtful visitations by well-meaning Christians who were compelled to require young churches to conform to ecclesiastical practices that they believed were essential components of the true faith (Gal 2; Acts 15).

Focused attention on the concerns of the established churches in the West will also nuance the helpful intention of building capacity. “Lutheran missions seeks to build capacity in the newly planted churches so that, in the unity of faith and confession, these younger churches may mature and live as true partners together with us in *Witness, Mercy, Life Together*.”<sup>56</sup> Who determines what capacity looks like and in what areas it is lacking? What criteria are used to determine need? How do we avoid creating harmful dependencies when “capacity” seems to be measured by us in the LCMS and our partner churches with a Western yardstick? Too often the development of ecclesiastical government (the building of a national church), social

service programs, and theological education programs introduced by Western churches—with the good intention of building capacity—have proved to interfere with the God-given “capacities” of Word and Sacrament and the Holy Spirit working through them?<sup>57</sup> Finally, how does the building of capacity become a two-way street? Lutheran churches in the West would do well to hear the thoughtful reflection of the Reverend Randall Golter, executive director of the LCMS Office of International Mission:

Even as we attempt to be careful, faithful, yet frugally liberal with His resources, the present reality is that we may need church partners more than they need us, not fiscally, of course, but for strength to be and act as His church in mission. They may need to pray us through these coming times even as He works His mission here and through the partner churches globally.<sup>58</sup>

As regards “missional structures,” the Statement *seems* to orient around the premise that God’s primary instrument for missionary outreach is the local church. I say that cautiously in that President Harrison recognizes in his article 12 on the Church the reality that God’s mission—the proclamation of the Gospel—may precede the local congregation, “Evangelism becomes the Church’s mission when its goal is gaining souls for the local community of believers and planting the church as a witnessing, merciful community of believers,”<sup>59</sup> and, again, “In the church created by mission, which has at its heart the preaching of the Gospel, those brought to faith ‘devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers’ (Acts 2:42).”<sup>60</sup>

At the same time, President Harrison primarily locates Christ’s missionary proclamation within the pastoral office, which assumes the local congregation.

In order to carry on Christ’s witness into the world, the Church is entrusted with training, teaching and making pastors through theological education. This witness will accompany the Church’s corporate work of mercy (the mercy is Christ’s) and will dominate the Church’s life together. “Where Christ is not preached, there is no Holy Spirit who creates, calls, and gathers the Christian Church, without which no one comes to Christ the Lord” (LC II, 45).<sup>61</sup>

He identifies a number of venues for Gospel proclamation: “proclamation by called preachers within the community of believers, the proclamation of evangelists to those outside the Church and the witness of every Christian in the context of his or her vocations in life.”<sup>62</sup> These activities, however, occur primarily within the purview of the local congregation with the exception, perhaps, of the work of an evangelist. Even there, however, President Harrison does not consider the work of an evangelist as a distinct office in the Church, equal to the office of pastor but as an

office under, or auxiliary, to the pastoral office,<sup>63</sup> which the LCMS teaches is located in and by the call of a congregation.

In a companion essay—“Ecclesiology, Mission and Partner Relations: What it Means that Lutheran Mission Plants Lutheran Churches”<sup>64</sup>—Dr. Albert Collver explicitly places missional proclamation in the arena of the local church. He defines the arena of Gospel proclamation with the assessment criterion, “Does the church have altars and pulpits from which the Gospel is proclaimed?”<sup>65</sup> He elaborates,

The first assessment examines if a church has enough pastors to provide for the altars and pulpits in the church. The proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the administration of the Sacraments are at the heart of salvation and the heart of the Church. . . . The first dimension of this assessment is to explore whether or not the church has enough men available to preach. It evaluates if the church is using missionaries or pastors from other church bodies to serve at their pulpits and altars. It next evaluates if there are enough pastors to provide pastoral care in a responsible manner. For instance, if a congregation or preaching station only receives Communion once every six weeks because there are not enough pastors available to provide it, this would be reflected in the assessment.<sup>66</sup>

Setting aside for a moment the question one might raise both biblically and confessionally, whether “Altar and Pulpit” is equivalent to Word and Sacrament,<sup>67</sup> Dr. Collver demonstrates the point that, following the mission paradigm of Lutheran church in the sixteenth century, we tend to identify the mission of Christ with the work of the local congregation. What would a Lutheran statement look like if it was framed by a mission paradigm of a different century, say that of the New Testament?

The New Testament mission paradigm unitizes both established (altar and pulpit) and mobile structures for proclaiming the Gospel. In fact, a prominent element in Luke’s account of Christ’s mission is the power and mobility of the Word beyond the altars and pulpits of the church. In response to the disciples’ request that the Lord restore the Kingdom to Israel (with Jerusalem as its center), Jesus turned their attention to the ends of the earth. The altar and pulpit of the Temple in Jerusalem was no longer the “go-to” place for the nations (Acts 1:8). The Lord no longer bound His mission to place (Temple) or office (Levitical priesthood) but to Himself in His Word. That’s the very issue Stephen raised with the Sanhedrin of his day. The Jewish leaders virtually bound God (albeit God cannot be bound) and, therefore, His salvation to their pulpit and altar, the Temple. Stephen bound God’s dwelling and “Divine Service” to Christ alone: *Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up*. Where Jesus Christ is, there is the Temple of God and the arena of His Gospel proclamation. Stephen knew and confessed that our Lord ascended into Heaven and sat (stood) at the Right Hand of His Father. From that “place” He fills all things, and so He cannot be bound to any particular place. Stephen defended his confession by chronicling the great story of God’s salvation plan from Abraham

through Solomon. The theme throughout his eloquent defense was that God cannot (and will not) be bound to a temple made with human hands. Note Stephen’s highlights:

- God *appeared* to our father Abraham when he was in the land of the Chaldeans (note the connection with Babylon).
- God *was with* Joseph in Egypt (from where he saved the “world” and the chosen people of Israel).
- Moses *worshipped* the Lord on Holy Ground somewhere in the land of Midian. There God commissioned him to lead His people out of bondage. It’s there that God commissioned Israel to be priests for the nations (Ex 19).

Following the death of St. Stephan, the Holy Spirit scattered His Word through persecution (Acts 8; 11) and eventually sent His Word through more formal mission structures (Acts 13). Through these means, God planted churches (altars and pulpits) across the Roman Empire.

The New Testament model also depended on a variety of “offices” (Eph 4) within the one “Office of Preaching” (AC V), all serving their respective function in Christ’s mission. It does not appear that one “office” was auxiliary to another, but each operated symbiotically under the jurisdiction of the Holy Spirit. Prominent among these offices were “apostle” or missionary (Acts 13:1–4; Acts 14; Acts 16:7; 2 Cor 8:23) and “overseer” (Acts 20:28; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3; Ti 1). From the early church to the present, God’s mission has enjoyed the benefit of these two “offices” and has ordered them to work together for the proclamation of the Gospel.<sup>68</sup> How might this mission paradigm inform our Lutheran mission endeavors for today? How might this paradigm inform our mission priorities, especially the present LCMS initiative of Global Seminary Education?<sup>69</sup>

These questions, among others, are particularly significant in this twenty-first century of Christ’s mission, especially as we face the challenges of proclaiming the Gospel among pre-churched and post-churched populations. “A Theological Statement for Mission for the 21st Century” brings an important voice to the conversation by binding Lutheran mission with Lutheran confession. President Harrison concludes the “Statement” with an article entitled “Theology of the Cross,” the true center of our confession and mission in the world. To paraphrase his last sentence: The theology of the cross will forever be a litmus test of the genuineness of our Lutheran understanding and statement of mission for the twenty-first century. It is this, and only this, foundation upon which we must endeavor to build.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> RESOLUTION 1-03A, Study of the “Theological Statement of Mission for the 21st Century” in Convention Proceedings 2013, 65th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, St. Louis, Missouri, July 20–25, 2013.
- <sup>2</sup> Matthew C. Harrison, “Why a Lutheran Journal on Mission?”, *Journal of Lutheran Mission* 1, no. 1 (March 2014): 3.
- <sup>3</sup> *Journal of Lutheran Mission* (2014) and *Missio Apostolica* (1993)
- <sup>4</sup> Concordia Theological Seminary launched its Doctor of Missiology program, (later Ph.D. in Missiology), in the late 1980s. The Lutheran Society of Missiology began in the fall of 1991. Both endeavors were advanced by Dr. Eugene Bunkowske in order to promote missiological enquiry from a Lutheran perspective.
- <sup>5</sup> Harrison, “Why a Lutheran Journal on Mission?”, 60.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>8</sup> See Timothy Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- <sup>9</sup> Harrison, “Why a Lutheran Journal on Mission?”, 60.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>12</sup> Robert D. Preus, “The Confessions and Mission of the Church”, *The Springfielder* 39, no. 1 (June 1975): 21.
- <sup>13</sup> “This, then, is the article which must always remain in force. Creation is past and redemption is accomplished, but the Holy Spirit carries on his work unceasingly until the last day. For this purpose he has appointed a community on earth through which he speaks and does all his work. For he has not yet gathered together all his Christian people, nor has he completed the granting of forgiveness.” (LC II, 61–62)
- <sup>14</sup> Preus, “The Confessions and Mission of the Church,” 22.
- <sup>15</sup> Harrison, “Why a Lutheran Journal on Mission?”, 64.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>20</sup> Preus, “The Confessions and Mission of the Church,” 31.
- <sup>21</sup> Harrison, “Why a Lutheran Journal on Mission?”, 66.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.
- <sup>23</sup> Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, ed., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. Charles Arand, Eric Gritsch, Robert Kolb, William Russell, James Schaaf, Jane Strohl, Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 585.
- <sup>24</sup> See Preus, “The Confessions and Mission of the Church,” 21–22.
- <sup>25</sup> Harrison, “Why a Lutheran Journal on Mission?”, 63.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.
- <sup>28</sup> 1965 Mission Affirmations; the 1974 Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR), “THE MISSION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE WORLD”; CTCR’s 1991, “A Theological Statement of Mission”

<sup>29</sup> Harrison, “Why a Lutheran Journal on Mission?”, 62.

<sup>30</sup> A number of references, however, are made to a Christian’s “calling” in life and held up as “proper, true service of God” which include such things as true faith, prayer, vocation, and good works (see AC XXVI:10, XXVII:13, 49–50).

<sup>31</sup> Harrison, “Why a Lutheran Journal on Mission?”, 66.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>34</sup> Friedrich Willhelm Hopf. “The Lutheran Church Plants Lutheran Missions,” trans by Deaconess Rachel Mumme with Matthew C. Harrison, Unpublished. 2013.

<sup>35</sup> Preus, “The Confessions and Mission of the Church,” 22.

<sup>36</sup> Wolfgang Günther, *Von Edinburgh nach Mexico City: Die ekklesiologischen Bemühungen der Weltmissionskonferenzen (1910–1963)* (Stuttgart: Evang. Missionsverlag, 1970).

<sup>37</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 370.

<sup>38</sup> Harrison, “Why a Lutheran Journal on Mission?”, 64.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>42</sup> Preus, “The Confessions and Mission of the Church,” 21.

<sup>43</sup> Robert D. Newton, “Missionary Churches: Navigating in a Post-Church World,” in *The Lutheran Witness*, Vol.129. No.1: 6–11; “Facing Challenges of the Post-Christian World,” in *The Lutheran Layman*, November–December 2013:1–5. The term “Post-churched” or “Post-Christendom” should not be referenced as suggesting the decline or demise of Christ’s Church or the gracious reign of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth (Rev 5:10). It refers rather to a profound decrease of the institutional church’s influential role in society—the role upon which we Christians heavily depended in order to proclaim the Gospel.

<sup>44</sup> Robert D. Newton, “Facing Challenges of the Post-Christian World,” 3.

<sup>45</sup> Matthew C. Harrison, Foreword to “The Lutheran Church Plants Lutheran Missions” by Friedrich Willhelm Hopf, trans. Deaconess Rachel Mumme with Matthew C. Harrison Unpublished (2013), 1.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Hopf, “The Lutheran Church Plants Lutheran Missions,” 8.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>50</sup> Preus, “The Confessions and Mission of the Church,” 22–23.

<sup>51</sup> Harrison, “Why a Lutheran Journal on Mission?”, 61.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> See “That a Christian Assembly or Congregation has the Right and Power to Judge All Teaching and to Call, Appoint, and Dismiss Teachers, Established and Proven by Scripture,” *Luther’s Works, Vol. 39: Church and Ministry I*, eds. Eric W. Gritsch, Helmut Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 305–314.

<sup>54</sup> Harrison, “Why a Lutheran Journal on Mission?”, 66.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>57</sup> See James A. Bergquist and P. Kamar Manickam, *The Crisis of Dependency in Third World Ministries: A Critique of Inherited Missionary Forms in India* (Madras: The Christian Literature Society, 1974).

<sup>58</sup> Randall L. Golter, “What Will Happen to Missouri?” in *Journal of Lutheran Mission*, 1, no.1 (March 2014): 45.

<sup>59</sup> Harrison, “Why a Lutheran Journal on Mission?”, 64.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>64</sup> Albert B. Collver. “Ecclesiology, Mission and Partner Relations: What it Means that Lutheran Mission Plants Lutheran Churches” in *Journal of Lutheran Mission*, 1, no.1 (March 2014): 20–27. The Rev. Dr. Albert B. Collver serves as the LCMS director of Regional Operations for the Office of International Mission and as such the chief mission strategist for the LCMS world mission endeavor. His essay, then, provides the blueprint for how President Harrison’s “Statement” is practically applied in the various mission fields here and abroad.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> There is no suggestion of “Altar and Pulpit” in the proclamation of the Gospel by the scattered saints (Acts 8:1–4; 11:19–20) or in the ministry of St. Philip (Acts 8:26–40), to give just two examples from the Scriptures. Likewise, “Altar and Pulpit” are not the focus of Melancthon in his Article on the Ministry in the Church (AC V), but rather the work of the Spirit in Word and Sacrament (see Preus, “The Confessions and the Mission of the Church.” Word and Sacrament are the means by which God communicates His salvation; “Altar and Pulpit” is one (of more than one) location where the ministry of Word and Sacrament take place.

<sup>68</sup> See Ralph D. Winter, *The 25 Unbelievable Years 1945–1969* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1970).

<sup>69</sup> RESOLUTION 1-01A “To Highlight and Strengthen the Global Seminary Initiative” in Convention Proceedings 2013, 65th Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, St. Louis, Missouri, July 20–25, 2013.