

Your Kingdom Come

Mission Perspectives

Report on the World Conference
on Mission and Evangelism

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SECTION IV

*Christ—Crucified and Risen—Challenges Human Power***I. We stand accused**

1. We gathered at Melbourne in obedience to the crucified, risen and ascended Christ, and to examine our calling to be witnesses to him in all the world. It has once again been sharply brought home to us that the colonial expansion of the West is perceived by many "Third World" people as a barbarian invasion. Not all the wounds have healed.

The end of the colonial era has not, however, got rid of the fact of domination. One power has been removed and seven others have come in. Large parts of the developing world have become an arena and victims of a struggle between the super-powers, directly or through intermediaries. Some countries have suffered military occupation, political repression and ideological aggression. Others experience an onslaught from transnational companies who, with local elites, have established new centres of power that now encircle the globe. Patterns of technological and bureaucratic development produce benefits that accrue to everybody except the poor.

Since the CWME Bangkok Conference in 1973, conditions have deteriorated sharply.

The Asian experience was described in 1977 in the following terms:

The dominant reality of Asian suffering is that people are wasted: wasted by hunger, torture, deprivation of rights.

Wasted by economic exploitation, racial and ethnic discrimination, sexual suppression.

Wasted by loneliness, non-relation, non-community.

(Report of the Sixth Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia, June 1977.)

2. We in Melbourne have had to face the fact that the churches' complicity with the colonial powers, so frequently condemned in the past, has been carried over and continues to the present day. In the consumer societies now flourishing in the rich centres in many lands, good Christian people and others are now, with "cruel innocence", eating up the whole world. A vast fertility cult expects a wild, egotistical, statistical increase, demanding human sacrifice as the price of building and sustaining our industrial cities, in rich

and poor countries alike, for the economic benefit of a minority of individuals. The cries of the hungry are lost amongst the pleasures of the rich.

As representatives of the churches of all parts of the world, we stand accused by our own consciences in the presence of the crucified Christ, at our acquiescence in such suffering and our involvement in this shameful and continuing injustice. We accept this indictment not only as representatives of rich churches but also of poor. Just as the rich churches are being asked to share the pain of the oppressed, so the oppressed Christians stand alongside the accused and share that pain. For we remain brothers and sisters in Christ. This is an expression not only of the unity of the church and the solidarity of the people of God, but also of the pain of realization that we are all part of the oppressive world.

We intend that our repentance should lead, by the grace of our forgiving Lord, to amendment, and our intentions are set out in this report. Only as we stand together in this solidarity can we be liberated from being locked into the structures of power in our societies. How are we to understand these powers in the light of our prayer "Your kingdom come"?

II. The realities of power

3. The world as created by God is essentially good. The proclamation of God's reign is the announcement of a new order which challenges those powers and structures that have become demonic in a world corrupted by sin against God. The Old Testament traces the long story of the need to ensure that human power is subject to law and to constant scrutiny in the interest of right dealing. Jesus of Nazareth rejected coercive power as a way of changing the world. Rather, as signs of God's inbreaking reign, he had power to forgive sins, healing power and an authority over demonic, dehumanized powers. He taught and embodied a thorough-going love and a transcendent judgement which presented a radical challenge to the powers in his society. The religious, political and military powers contrived with the power of the Jerusalem crowd to put him to death by crucifixion. The eye of faith discerns in that cross the embodiment of a God who out-suffers, out-loves and out-lives the worst that powers do. In the decisive events which followed the crucifixion, something radically new happened which seems best described as a new creation. An altogether new quality of power appeared to be let loose among humankind. Those who responded, found that they shared in this power. The inexorable bondage of cause and effect appeared to be broken, and they experienced a liberation which enabled them to face their

persecutors without fear and to claim that the powers had been overthrown, disarmed, in a decisive way, even though the powers were somehow permitted to function in the meanwhile until the final consummation of history.

The early Christians used many analogies to describe what they had experienced and what they believed had happened. The most striking picture is that of a sacrificed lamb, slaughtered but yet living, sharing the throne, which symbolized the heart of all power and sovereignty, with the living God himself. The principle of self-sacrificing love is thus enthroned at the centre of the reality of the universe.

With this as our faith, what is our response to the shameful realities of our world? How must we confront the powers?

III. Our response

A. In relation to powers

4. The crucified Christ speaks directly to the central issues confronting humankind both in personal and political life. An example may help to explain this assertion. Our generation is earnestly searching for the answer to the question: what does it mean to be human today? How can we affirm our humanity and put an end to all that demeans and degrades humankind? My identity is my tribalism. I exist as part of my group. But my tribalism is not only the means by which I necessarily express my being, it is also the way—in the form of racism—in which I attempt to humiliate, to destroy your identity, your being. Only if I can, as it were, die to my tribalism (“letting it be taken up on to the cross”), can I affirm my tribal identity (“in Christ”) without demeaning you. In this way, the demonic power of racism can be broken both in individuals and in groups, as the crucified Christ confronts the powers.

5. But, of course, not everyone is willing to die to his identity in this way. Racism and other powers such as militarism, aggressive nationalism and super-power ambitions continue to exert a demonic influence with an immense power of evil. How are we to confront them?

So long as the churches use various kinds of power, they should avoid imitating the patterns of the powers they seek to challenge, or else they will become indistinguishable from them. In the light of the reign of God, the fundamental criterion for their use of power must be the good of the poor and their liberation from oppression. With this criterion, the churches may use their institutional power in any way possible, including through the systems of law or in spite of them. The churches will then run the risk of put-

ting their institutional life on the line. In doing this they are in constant danger of being used by the powers. This danger is not avoided by the churches avoiding involvement in the struggle. To stand aside is to be aligned with the oppressor.

Challenging the Powers

6. There are many different situations in which the churches are called to challenge the powers. In some situations the powers are clearly oppressive; other situations are “mixed”, that is to say that at some points the powers are seen to be acting in ways which affirm the humanity of the people; sometimes by the grace of God they positively embody higher levels of justice because of their responsiveness to the needs and rights of all citizens. The criterion for determining the relation to the powers is the extent to which God’s creative, liberating and serving power is evidenced in their actions, and the extent to which equality is established. We have shared experiences from churches that have found that siding with downtrodden or marginalized people and being sensitive to their needs means sharing in their suffering.

7. When the churches challenge the powers in the name of people who are being dehumanized, the credibility of the churches with the oppressed is put to the test. They lose their credibility if they are not consistent in their concern for the people in greatest need. In such situations the churches act as agents of renewal and they must be prepared to be minorities, but they can be creative minorities if they pick up issues which are vital for the community and thus motivate others to join in the struggle for the full humanity of all the people.

Another possibility for the churches to act as agents for transformation lies in their potential to influence attitudes and values and to raise consciousness. This demands in the individual churches envisioning alternatives in such matters as the handling of violence, the sharing of economic resources, the use of natural resources, the application of appropriate technologies and the different kinds of political organization at local, national and international levels. In particular we believe that a radical change is needed in the lifestyles of those who are not poor.

We have become aware that the powers of the world make themselves felt also in the life of the church. The tensions that are present in the community are also present in the church, and the churches must struggle with these tensions in their own lives as well as outside. This struggle can be spiritually exhausting and we have heard of Christians becoming “burnt out”. We acknowledge our need to engage more faithfully in profound wrestling in prayer as essential to our commitment. It becomes therefore a missionary

obligation for the churches to develop a dynamic spirituality including renewed resources for education and a supportive community.

We do not, of course, suggest that the church has any monopoly when powers are challenged. God has many ways of working out his purposes of mercy and judgement far beyond the borders of the visible church. His instruments often include the courageous witness of those who do not name his name, the actions of individuals and groups of other faiths and in secular bodies, with whom we can join in common action.

Experiencing the power of the Crucified Christ

8. By his resurrection the crucified Christ has changed the context of human life. We have shared many ways in which Christians have experienced and are experiencing this power of the crucified Christ, foremost in the sacraments of baptism, the Eucharist and the liturgical life of the church. The faithfulness of disciples in "small things" is honoured; but this does not exempt us from responding to the wider vision. The marks of the crucified Christ will determine the style of social action of the church and its members; these are unlikely to reflect "short-cut" methods; these marks are powerfully present in the suffering, imprisonment and martyrdom of Christians today. Those who are persecuted for their faith share too in this experience of their crucified Lord.

9. We rejoice that in certain revolutionary situations of our time the power of forgiveness is seeking to replace the power of vengeance. In other situations the experience of losing status has been the source of spiritual strength. Elsewhere, the churches, trusting in the power of Christ, have enabled ethnic minorities to recover their identity and to stand up against unjust government powers.

None of these situations has been permanently transformed; it therefore remains for all of us to persevere in the challenge of the powers. We cannot, however, overlook the fact that many Christians lack the experience of the power of the crucified Christ. Too easily we are overcome by grief, pain or fear, or a sense of outward oppression. This reminds us that we are never free from the need for renewal and the need to rediscover the strength that comes from challenging the powers.

Suffering and violence

10. We believe that the crucified Christ shares in the agony of the suffering of the world and that the risen Christ can bring about an inward transformation of suffering, so that it takes on a power, derived from the power of the cross. A new solidarity is generated among those who suffer together, and new resources are discovered.

As we think also of those Christians who are suffering because of their Christian faith under different political regimes, we strongly urge that human rights and religious freedom be respected in their case. We recognize with repentance that in the past and still today in other ways, we Christians have not respected religious liberty as an inalienable right of human beings.

11. The challenge of the powers and the suffering which results from it reveals the all-pervasive presence of violence. Violence is a fact of life whatever our situation may be. But it is a fact and not fate, and Christians must therefore resolutely resist the power of violence.

We are aware that Christians today choose different ways to resist violence. We wish to affirm the practice of non-violence as an inalienable part of the Christian obedience, and we call on the churches to provide support for all those who commit themselves to the life of non-violence. In certain cases redemptive and vicarious suffering such as that of our Lord may have to be chosen by his followers to counteract violence by suffering love—the way of the cross. Nevertheless there are situations in which Christians find their communities involved in violence and, in these circumstances, without identifying totally with any political movement, the churches should act out in concrete forms their solidarity with those Christians and others who become involved in counter-violence in order to free themselves from the unbearable violence of the oppressors. It is necessary for all to take into account that the global threat caused by increased militarism may in the years ahead give added importance to the option of non-violence.

The difference just described which separates Christians regarding the morality of violence is not a complementary harmony but an unresolved ecumenical debate, which this conference has not studied directly. The urgency of this debate is increased by political developments of recent years. We urge the WCC to give priority to direct study of this problem.

B. In relation to church structures

12. Our response to dehumanization and oppression cannot be, as it were, from an innocent church to a guilty world, for we know to our shame that power exercised within the church (in the empirical reality of its earthly form) can be abused. Judgement must begin at the household of God.

13. We have to discern how we may judge whether power is for or against God. What are the criteria by which we make that judgement?

a) Fundamentally we have to ask how the power is used. Is it used for self-aggrandisement and self-preservation of the community, institution or leader, or is it essentially selfless?

When we look at a community, for instance, do we see it as being primarily concerned with the needs of those who are poor and have no power—they may be inside or outside the community—or is it preoccupied with its own rights, privileges and future? We have to ask whether it belongs in sympathy and identification with the oppressed or whether it finds its home with the oppressors.

b) Turning to leadership, we must pose two questions. The first concerns motive, and asks whether the power is exercised as an expression of selfless love, which serves to release and encourage the gifts contained within the community on whose behalf the power is exercised for the fulfilment of its true purpose, or whether the leadership draws on these gifts for its own purpose. A church within which power is exercised in humility and love stands as a sign of the kingdom to the world.

c) But motive alone is an inadequate test. Those who use power are prone to self-deception about motives and the effectiveness of their methods. Churches and their leaders must seek the perceptions of the community on whether their power is helping to free the poor and oppressed. The exercise of leadership has an edifying purpose: it is to build up the body so that every member may attain to the fulness of the maturity of the stature of Christ, in order that they may realize their full humanity. This, it must be noted, does not imply the development of a new breed of successful super-persons with brilliant brains and exquisite physique. Full humanity has to be seen in the likeness of the self-giving love of the crucified Christ.

d) This leads us to a further criterion. Power which reflects the power of the Christ is a power that is exercised within the community of sharing, built on communion with the Triune God. It is a power that is shared, as life within the Trinity is shared.

The question we ask here is whether all persons, as children of God, participate in the agencies of power, or whether there are groups that are excluded, for example on the basis of sex, age, handicaps, economic circumstances, social marginalization. In asking that question it should be noted that we have to think not only of sharing in decisions, but of the exercise in common of all the gifts given within a community such as, for example, healing, teaching, organizing, caring.

Any use of power that suppresses the loving exercise of gifts is an abuse that ultimately leads to the dehumanizing of persons. The clericalization of the church and the resultant withdrawal of power from the laity is a blatant expression of the abuse of power. This problem is heightened by the fact that when church structures place power in the hands of a few or even one person, a pyramidal system is created with the inherent danger of the monopolization of that power.

The Spirit's empowerment is bestowed upon the whole people of God. Therefore structures and policies should provide equality of opportunity for women and men to exercise their gifts throughout the life and leadership of the new community in Christ. In this way the ecclesial community will be a witness of a new society in which power is shared and gifts recognized as complementary.

e) In this regard, we especially deplore the lack of power exercised by women in so many churches. The Bible teaches that women are created equally in God's image and are baptised equally into the one church of Christ in whom there is neither male or female.

f) To indicate one other criterion, the question has to be raised about the exercise of power through the dissemination of knowledge. An institution or leader exercises control over interpretation, release, and retention of knowledge. Consciously or unconsciously, the truth may be subtly distorted. Highly technical language not only excludes many from taking part in discussion of faith, but can also become an idol to be worshipped. We must ask whether what is being propagated or taught is open to the truth that is Christ, or is it instead closed idolatrously within itself as ideologies are closed.

As we have already noted, patterns of theology, too, can be evolved which are used as instruments of power and oppression, not least because such formulations cannot be used by oppressed people to express their understanding of God in Christ. The fact that different theological formulations are now being developed with accents on God's action in the liberation of the oppressed, of women, of black peoples—asks new and demanding questions of traditional theological expressions.

Money

14. The use of financial power has to be judged by these criteria. Where money comes from and how it is used within the church is an important aspect of the church's use of power. The source of money affects the ways in which it can be used. Some churches receive money from church taxes and/or from their governments. This may place limitations on its use and on the freedom of the church itself. The church can be used as a tool for political power. Voluntary contributions from some organizations and individual sources can also have a similar effect.

By what right do we assume that churches should accumulate funds to be invested? This question, we feel, requires a great deal more consideration than we have been able to give it. Even where this is accepted, the investment policy of the churches can reflect where they stand in relation to the oppressed. Where money for the work of the churches is received from rich churches

or organizations, a feeling of dependency can be created and the relationship between donor and recipient affected. Money must be considered as a tool of common sharing. The economically poor have a right to play an equal part in the common sharing of the resources of earth. Church money should be used to support the struggle of the poor to end the unjust society.

Community in Christ and church structures

15. In the New Testament the church is affirmed to be the Body of Christ, a community of believers which assumes institutional form within history. In the exercise of power to fulfil its mission, the church in its members has sometimes engaged in the subtle or obvious abuse of the authority granted to it by God. It may refuse to accept new forms of communal life and mission, especially if they directly challenge such abuses.

In these cases, the community-in-mission, for example, a "comunidad de base", becomes a victim of unyielding forms or structures rather than being served by them.

Such "comunidades de base", which have in the last twenty years developed in very large numbers, particularly in Latin America, alongside the institutional churches, present the ecclesiastical institution with a challenge, particularly in relation to the structures of power within the church as they now operate. Power structures in the church are often regarded as unchangeable because they are thought to be sacred. Instead of presenting an image of a serving, sharing community, the ecclesial institution can thus reflect the structures of domination and exploitation present in society. It may then take these and reinforce them by a process of sacralization. Where this occurs it has led to a distortion between the practice of the church and its real message as Good News to the oppressed. Nevertheless each new form can be tempted itself to become in some ways a new structure of oppression if it is not constantly open to the changing needs of its members.

16. Without attempting to build a new model, we can underline some of the key features which shape these "comunidades de base" and which confront the structures of the institutional church as it looks forward to its continuing task of mission and evangelism:

- the mission of the community in Christ is to prepare itself and all people for the coming reign of God by the proclamation of the Good News;
- the structures at the service of this community must be dynamic, flowing and flexible, allowing for the creativity of all members of the community and the emergence of all kinds of ministry;
- the ongoing process of formation has to be based on the daily living experience of the people for the full realization of their humanity;

- this necessarily requires that the church be politically and socially aware of the struggles of the oppressed and involved in them;
- consequently the Word of God must be read from the point of view of the oppressed.

Repentance and Restructuring in Mission

17. In the light of this we must affirm that the crucified Christ not only challenges the structures of society, but also the institutional churches' structures. An effective response to this challenge is crucial to the fulfilment of the mission entrusted to the church by the risen Christ. It calls for repentance and restructuring:

Churches are tempted to be self-centred and self-preserving, but are called to be serving and sharing. Churches are tempted to be self-perpetuating, but are called to be totally committed to the promises and demands of the kingdom of God. Churches which are tempted to continue as clerical and male-dominated are called to be living communities in which all members can exercise their gifts and share the responsibilities. Churches which tend to be decaying or moribund from stifling structures are called to be living communities in which all members can exercise their gifts and share the responsibilities. Churches are tempted to be exclusivist and privileged but are called to be servants of a Lord who is the crucified Christ who claimed no privilege for himself but suffered for all. Churches tend to reflect and reinforce the dominating, exploiting structures of society but are called to be bodies which are critical of the status quo. Churches are tempted to a partial obedience but are called to a total commitment to the Christ who, before he was raised, had first to be crucified.

18. It would seem to many of us that biblically, theologically and pastorally there is no reason why women should be excluded from any position in the churches. Those who affirm this feel bound to urge upon those churches which exclude the full participation of women in top leadership that ways be sought in which women can be increasingly involved in positions of full responsibility. We have to acknowledge, however, that sharp differences of opinion have been expressed on both sides of this issue, and that no consensus can be reached in our section. We urge that the mission of the church demands a sustained exploration of this unresolved ecumenical debate. A further issue concerns the pyramidal pattern of the structure of some churches. The teaching and example of Jesus on power and leadership is that these functions must be exercised in service. The churches are called to bear witness to this. Traditionally this has been seen as affecting the style with which power is exercised. Many of us feel bound to ask whether it should not also determine the structure of authority. We report that we were unable to

reach unanimity on this sensitive issue which raises difficult questions for all churches. But as the section was asked to examine church structures in the light of the crucified Christ, we cannot lightly pass over this question.

C. In relation to evangelism

19. Jesus charged his disciples with the mandate to announce his Gospel to the ends of the earth till his return at the end of time. "Go and make disciples of all nations teaching them to observe what I have commanded." It is important that the content and mode of evangelism be reviewed in our day in the light of the advance of biblical knowledge, of our own mistakes of the past, and the emergence of new forces and problems in the present. Jesus is the core of the Gospel. "Love one another as I have loved you" is the message of his life and "repent and believe the Good News" was his teaching. This demands a radical change of attitude on the part of all who respond.

Genuine evangelism therefore is the proclamation of Jesus as Saviour and Lord who gave his life for others and who wants us to do likewise, setting us free by declaring God's forgiveness. Evangelism is true and credible only when it is both word and deed; proclamation and witness. To say this is not to suggest that evangelism derives its power from the good deeds of Christians; our failures in obedience, however, can act as stumbling blocks.

In a world of large-scale robbery and genocide, Christian evangelism can be honest and authentic only if it stands clearly against these injustices which are diametrically opposed to the kingdom of God and looks for response in an act of faith which issues in commitment. Christian life cannot be generated, or communicated, by a compromising silence and inaction concerning the continuing exploitation of the majority of the human race by a privileged few. "You cannot love the God whom you do not see, if you do not love the neighbour whom you see" (I John 4:20). The neighbour today also is fallen among robbers as in the Gospel parable. Woe unto the evangelizer who proclaims the word but passes by this neighbour like the priest and the levite in Jesus' parable.

The unity and integrity of social action and evangelism has been suggested to us by the proposition that to issue a political challenge to the oppressor in the name of Christ may be the only authentic way of putting to him what it means to make Jesus Christ the commanding reality in his life. We thus affirm and seek to obey the mandate to bear witness among all nations to Jesus and him crucified. We reject as heretical any proclamation of a discarnate Christ, a caricatured Jesus, who is presented as not being intimately concerned with human life and relationships. Our evangelism must be set in the context of structures for global mission.

D. In the context of mission

20. In the course of our meetings, we have been led to study the significance of the crucifixion of Jesus outside the city wall. We see this as a sign, consistent with much else in his life, that he who is the centre is constantly in movement from the centre towards the periphery, towards those who are marginalized, victims of the demonic powers, political, economic, social, cultural and even—or especially—religious. If we take this model seriously, we find that we must be with Jesus at the periphery, on the margins of society, for his priorities were clear.

Mission and evangelism must be seen in the context of the crucified Christ's words to his own people: Luke 4:18-19:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, he has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

This mission and evangelism are concerned with the poor, blind, captive and oppressed and their condition which is brought on by unjust economic, political and religious structures. For many years, the churches have taken these needs seriously in their charitable work. Such charity is increasingly seen as one-sided if it implies a failure to tackle causes and structures.

21. Our study and prayer together on the theme "Christ—crucified and risen—challenges human power" has led us to see special significance in the role of the poor, the powerless and the oppressed. Might it not be that they have the clearest vision, the closest fellowship with the crucified Christ who suffers in them and with them? Might it not be that the poor and powerless have the most significant word for the rich and powerful: that Jesus must be sought on the periphery, and followed "outside the city"? That following him involves a commitment to the poor? Who but the church of the poor can preach with integrity to the poor of the world?

In these ways we see the "poor" churches of the world as the bearers of mission: world mission and evangelism may now be primarily in their hands. Perhaps they alone can waken the world to an awareness of the urgent call of Christ to costly and radical response. We commend these thoughts to the consideration of all who care about mission.

22. A second context of mission today is dominated by interconnected powers which form a vicious cycle.

- a) The power which shapes beliefs, attitudes, culture, theology, ideas and values.
- b) The organizational power, types and patterns of ministry; nature of leadership; bureaucracy; discipline; etc.

- c) The remunerative power: salaries and subsidies; resources for maintenance of institutions; scholarships and similar opportunities; investments; grants of various kinds; budget allocations.
- d) The punitive power—law and order: withholding or withdrawing of recognition; withdrawing of support; breaking of relationships and cutting off of finances.

These four powers and their interaction reflect the pattern of a vicious cycle, both within our societies and our churches. In this reality the church imitates the patterns of world power rather than the redeeming power of the crucified Christ.

This cycle needs to be broken if a new starting point of relationship in mission is to be established. The points at which it can and must be broken will depend upon each situation and context. Not only in the “dependent” parts of the world, but also the churches in the “dominant” parts of the world.

Once the cycle is broken a process of change is initiated which challenges all powers—this is true dying and rising in Christ.

Mission at the peripheries

23. The concept of mission being from “sending” to “receiving” countries has long been replaced by a mutuality in shared mission involving a two-way flow between the churches in the industrialized countries and the so-called Third World. We would like to point to the following:

The Christian community of the People’s Republic of China reminds us of the power of the crucified Christ to sustain faith and witness apart from the structures of power on which it had long been dependent. The Christian community has long shown the correlation between self-reliance and commitment to the national struggle of the people to achieve justice. As relations increase with other churches, it will be an advantage to all to learn from the experience of the church in China in wrestling with the issues of cultural identity and authentic faith.

24. We perceive a change in the direction of mission, arising from our understanding of the Christ who is the centre and who is always in movement towards the periphery. While not in any way denying the continuing significance and necessity of a mutuality between the churches in the northern and southern hemispheres, we believe that we can discern a development whereby mission in the eighties may increasingly take place within these zones. We feel there will be increasing traffic between the churches of Asia, Africa and Latin America among whose numbers both rich and poor are counted. This development, we expect, will take the form of ever stronger initiatives from the churches of the poor and oppressed at the peripheries. Similarly among the industrialized countries, a new reciprocity, particularly

one stemming from the marginalized groups, may lead to sharing at the peripheries of the richer societies. While resources may still flow from financially richer to poorer churches, and while it is not our intention to encourage isolationism, we feel that a benefit of this new reality could well be the loosening of the bond of domination and dependence that still so scandalously characterizes the relationship between many churches of the northern and southern hemispheres respectively. We must in any case work for a new world order, joining in a common confrontation with powers at the centre.

In this way we have recognized that the churches in each of the three “worlds” bear primary responsibility for mission and evangelism in their own countries and regions, that it is they who are called to assume a critical stance in the name of the crucified Christ in relation to their own structures and governments, and that it is they who exercise control over their own interest as well as over all the means used in the fulfilment of their missionary and evangelistic task.

25. Only thus can we be in solidarity with churches in other regions than our own, in the exercise of mission and the pursuit of justice legitimized as service of the crucified Christ, who challenges all human power. To build inter-church relations without challenging our own power structures, which dehumanize and betray the kingdom, is to build on sand.

We feel a sense of frustration, for much of this was clearly stated during the Salvation Today conference in Bangkok in 1973. But we confess that we have continued in our sin. We need to be converted both as individuals and church communities toward an action that reflects the crucified Christ in the way we use our power in mutual relationships among our institutions, church and secular, and especially in our relationships with the poor, alienated and oppressed.

We challenge our member churches to review their reflection and action in the light of the crucified Christ and his kingdom, facing the international economic system in our world today.

26. In light of the above reflections *we recommend* the following:

- a) Churches should engage in a constant dialogue among themselves and with others in order to understand and identify with those who are socio-economically alienated on grounds of race, ethnicity, sex, culture and religion.
- b) Western churches have billions invested in transnational corporations and commercial banks. These investments must be turned into a resource for the mission of Christ’s Church which is to stand alongside the poor and the powerless. This may mean disinvestment from such transnational corporations and banks. We commend in particular the decision of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches in

Kingston, Jamaica (1979), to reaffirm the Ecumenical Development Co-operative Society (EDCS) to make money available in soft loans to the poorest of the poor and their development projects. We recommend that the CWME urge its national members to support this new ecumenical channel for alternative investment.

- c) We further urge the encouragement and support of church organizations which are attempting to call transnational corporations and banks to a corporate responsibility by avoiding investing in countries which brutally oppress their people.
- d) We also urge that the Church support international bodies working for a new international economic order: United Nations, UNCTAD, etc., and the challenge to participate in a global tax.
- e) That the development programmes and sub-units of the World Council of Churches—CICARWS, CCPD, UIM-URM, ECLOF, Ecumenical Sharing of Resources, etc., be interpreted and supported on all levels of the member churches of the WCC.
- f) That CWME and national or regional councils of churches be called upon to take the initiative in challenging churches to implement better structures of co-operation in mission, helping them to come together for the study of new possibilities for sharing in decision-making, better approaches to mutual support, ecumenical exchange of personnel, and united witness in the light of this report. In particular they should give new consideration to the reasons that led to the proposal for a moratorium. Such reasons have lost nothing of their urgency since the Bangkok conference in 1973.
- g) That churches and organizations that receive economic assistance adapt their orientations and lifestyles to the poor whom they serve.

IV. "Do this..."

27. Central to the worshipping life of the community of the followers of the crucified Lord is the Eucharist. In our own ways we remember the Lord's death until he comes. Here at this banquet the mystery of the kingdom takes tangible form. In that act we are brought face to face with the servant nature of the community of the crucified—its need to be broken bread and poured-out wine. We are joined in faith with the multiplicity of Christian experience around the world, and rejoice in those saints of confessing churches whose witness is a sign of the kingdom today.

Jesus' command "do this..." impels us to be faithful to the truth we have already been given. We do not need more words, but the will and the courage

to act. We know that such action will lead us to conflict with the powers of this world along the way of the crucified.

28. In the midst of our conference we are aware that we live in a period when international tensions have once more become dangerously intensified, and when the fate of the world is again subjected to great-power rivalry. As we go from this conference we shall not rest silent in the face of the danger of a new world conflict. We shall not accept that the future of humanity should be determined by some of the "great", whatever may be their sense of responsibility. They are prisoners of the demonic game of competing for power. Controlled as they are by the uncertainty of maintaining themselves in power as precarious leaders, they are all the more prisoners of the incensed desire of the wealthy nations to maintain the national privileges of the rich and the powerful and to do this at any price, even the price of a possible nuclear apocalypse. As we go from here in the name of him who renounced everything for the love of all, we appeal to Christians throughout the world to open their eyes to the deadly consequences of the competition for wealth, and to raise a powerful voice for the defence of peace, remembering that peace can only be assured through a just distribution of the world's resources. National egotism is a sin whose wages can only be death, perhaps the death of the whole world. Our faith in the reign of Christ must always exclude the resigned acceptance of fatalism. Therefore we must reject and resist the counsel of despair which accepts the inevitability of war.

Christ is risen!

Come Lord Jesus.