

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PATTAYA

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My evaluation of the Consultation on World Evangelization (COWE), sponsored by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, June 16-27, 1980. It is slightly revised from the oral presentation given at the Eighth annual meeting of the American Society of Missiology, August 22-24, 1980.

### Introduction

Three times in the past 15 years evangelicals have met at the international level for full-scale discussions of evangelism and world mission – Berlin in 1966, Lausanne in 1974, and Pattaya, Thailand in 1980. The fact that the Pattaya meeting followed the World Council of Churches' Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in Melbourne by a mere three weeks makes for an unusually stimulating juxtaposition of issues, theologies and strategies. Or so I found, having been privileged to attend both gatherings.

Few happenings in life are as rewarding as a major international get-together. Pattaya was no exception. Often, though, after involvement in such an outstanding event, we plunge back into everyday routine so quickly that we have little time to reflect on its meaning and impact. I am thankful for this opportunity to share my thoughts and interact with you at this annual meeting of the American Society of Missiology.

### The Setting

Pattaya is a luxurious resort area located 120 miles south of Bangkok. Many participants were embarrassed by a venue where a night's lodging costs more than a waiter or room maid earns in a month. COWE leaders, sensitive to the incongruity, justified their selection in terms of bargain rates obtained for superb facilities. Adequate facilities for a large assembly are admittedly difficult to come by; reasonable prices are even more difficult to procure. Still, one is left wondering whether economics should have been the deciding factor for, in this instance at least, the medium conveyed a disconcerting message. In a poverty-stricken world, must evangelicals go first class?

COWE director David Howard and his dedicated, efficient international staff took full advantage of the convention facilities. The consultation was organized well, ran smoothly, and almost manage to keep up with the inexhaustible demand for paperwork that characterizes these international encounters. The only major criticism I heard – but heard repeatedly – came from members of the press,

some of whom objected strenuously to the tight policy on news releases and the infrequency of press conferences.

Approximately 900 were at COWE. Of these, 650 were participants, half of whom were selected by a central committee with a view to ensuring geographical and denominational balance. (A large number, in contrast with Melbourne, were related to parachurch agencies) The remainder of the voting participants were nominated from among members of the many study groups active in the months and weeks prior to COWE. I noted from the list of registrants that about 45% were Third World and 55% were Western (including Eastern Europeans). Probably the balance of *voting* participants favored the Third World. I found no participants from the People's Republic of China or from the Soviet Union.

A fair number of younger people participated and made significant contributions to the miniconsultations which were a major part of the gathering. Women too were visible and active. Yet in a "reflection" circulated during the consultation it was noted that while 72% of all evangelicals engaged in cross-cultural evangelization are women, "only 9% of COWE's invited participants...only three of the fifty members of LCWE...only one of the 34 members of LCWE's working groups...none of the nine subcommission chairpersons...none of the plenary speakers at COWE...none of the Bible study leaders...none of the seen regional group chairpersons are women."

With this in mind, the women proposed a plan to help LCWE involve more women in the future. The plan included a call from LCWE to churches, mission societies, seminaries and study centers to design new models that reflect the need for women's involvement in ministry, and to facilitate this. There is some evidence that the LCWE leadership took this reflection seriously.

### The Program

The COWE program was well designed: plenary sessions morning and evening (Bible expositions and topical messages respectively), with subplenary sessions and miniconsultations occupying the core of the day. Provision was made for ad hoc regional and interest group meetings. Midway through the consultation a free day was inserted for rest, recreation and sightseeing. This was followed by a whole day of prayer for world evangelization in general and people groups in particular. The consultation concluded with a service of Holy Communion led by Thai churchmen.

There was a balanced mix of Western and Third World speakers throughout.

Simultaneously with COWE, the Thailand Church Growth Committee sponsored two conferences for Thai pastors and other Christian workers at a modest Baptist camp near Pattaya. A total of 500 local ministers, lay persons and missionaries attended. Speakers were drawn from COWE. Each day 50 Thai pastors joined the international consultation. All this contributed to a sense of unity and identification with our national hosts, as did the special attention given to the local refugee situation.

The themes of the morning Bible expositions were The God Who Speaks, The Word He Has Spoken, The People to Whom He Speaks, and The People Through Whom He Speaks. Evening sessions were topical and dealt with the place of the Bible, communication, the local church, resources, and unity in world evangelization. Overall, these expositions and presentations were rather disappointing.

A post-consultation critique made by LCWE members indicated that most participants saw the speakers as competent and reliable, but also dull and too often long-winded. The presentations themselves were biblical but predictable. Participants complained that the papers did not break new ground. Many felt the lack of stimulating new dimensions in mission and evangelism. The most appreciated speaker was the ever-popular John Stott of England. Yet many wished there had been more preaching. The only full-time evangelist on the plenary program was Leighton Ford. Neither Billy Graham nor Latin evangelist Luis Palau, both scheduled speakers, were able to be present.

If the plenary sessions failed to measure up to expectations, this was not the case with the miniconsultations. These were the heart of the program and occupied most the participants' time and attention, particularly during the first week. Each of the 17 miniconsultations concentrated on a people group. Ranging in number from a dozen to more than one hundred participants, they included Reaching the following:

- Nominal Christians (Protestants)
- Nominal Christians (Orthodox)
- Nominal Christians (Roman Catholic)
- Traditional Religionists (Africa)
- Traditional Religionists (Asia)
- Traditional Religionists (Latin America)
- Jews
- Buddhists
- Mystics and Cultists

Chinese  
Marxists  
City Dwellers (Large Cities)  
City Dwellers (the Urban Poor)  
Hindus  
Muslims  
Secularists  
Refugees

During the 18 months prior to COWE several hundred study groups around the world had focused on the various people groups. This work, which fed into the COWE mini-consultations, was coordinated by a network of international coordinators under the supervision of John Stott.

Toward the conclusion of the consultation participants approved a working paper on cooperation, key elements of which were incorporated into The Thailand Statement, the main document which emerged from COWE. Of course, plenary addresses and papers will be published in a compendium and the findings of each miniconsultations will appear in the continuing series of Lausanne Occasional Papers.

#### EVALUATING PATTAYA

Any conference should be evaluated first on its own terms. The stated purposes of COWE were 1) to seek fresh vision and power for the task Christ has given to his church until he comes; 2) to assess the state of world evangelization, its progress and hindrances; 3) to complete an extended study program begun earlier on theological and strategic issues related to world evangelization and to share the results; 4) to develop specific evangelistic strategies related to different unreached peoples; and 5) to review the mandate of LCWE. The Thailand Statement reads:

We have considered before him and under his word the command of the Lord Jesus Christ to proclaim the gospel to all people on earth. We have become freshly burdened by the vast numbers who have never heard the good news of Christ and are lost without him.

It also includes a 12-point "Commitment to Christ" by which the participants pledged "to seek the power of the Spirit of Christ, that he may fill us and flow through us." Earlier the participants had agreed that "strategy and organization are not enough; we need to pray earnestly for the power of the Holy Spirit." Such statements are easier to make than to fulfill, to be sure, yet the full day set aside for

prayer during the consultation underscores COWE's seriousness in this regard.

Given COWE's understanding of evangelization, it can be fairly stated that the second, third and fourth objectives listed earlier were reasonably fulfilled, primarily within the context of the 17 miniconsultations. The fifth objective was clearly accomplished.

LCWE's Strategy Working Group argued that the most effective way to plan evangelistic strategies is to focus on one people at a time – a people being defined as a significantly large sociological grouping of individuals who perceive themselves as having a common affinity for one another. Thus the motto of COWE, *How Shall They Hear? Was interpreted as "How shall the peoples of the world hear?"* This approach was not without its problems. For example, the people approach was offered as an improvement over the traditional approach that focused on world regions or world religions, yet most of the miniconsultations at Pattaya were structured in terms of religious or ideological groupings.

One reason for this discrepancy is that in spite of the careful selection process, only a third of the total participants had been involved in the pre-COWE study groups. Most participants had not read the COWE preparatory manual, *That Everyone May Hear*, or the *Unreached Peoples* annuals. Thus the plenary strategy presentation on the first morning of the consultation caught participants by surprise.

Furthermore, the consultation did not wholeheartedly adopt the people approach because it aroused some vocal opposition. African participants feared it would encourage racism. Indians had similar reservations about the perpetuation of caste. Overall, while COWE gave significant international exposure to the people approach, the Thailand Statement, in describing the work of the miniconsultations, does not emphasize specific strategies so much as specific attitudes: love, humility, integrity, and reliance on spiritual power.

### Miniconsultations

The 17 miniconsultations in many respects constituted the heart of COWE. I attended the one on Reaching Hindus – the description of which may serve to illustrate some of the strengths and weaknesses of these working groups. The Reaching Hindus draft report begins with these observations:

We...are aware that the present planning and deploying of resources by our churches reflects the imbalance which we find in the secular world. IN the Indian subcontinent most

of the resources of [people] and finance are spent on the elite of the church population living in urban areas. However, 80% of the church's population are rural people...We therefore call upon churches worldwide interested in reaching Hindus to radically reorganize the use of their resources so as to serve the community which is basically rural. We call upon church leaders to be bold in their decisions regarding institutions and the training of pastors and evangelists so that the rural areas get the priority they rightly deserve...WE call upon the church worldwide, and especially the church in India, to mobilize intensive and believing pray for the reaching of the 600 million Hindus in this generation.

This is followed by a sketch of the Hindu religion, modern trends, and theological issues based on the presupposition that Jesus Christ can be made known to Hindus and become relevant within the context of traditional Hindu culture. Factors influencing Hindu evangelism – spirituality, community and poverty – are noted. Particular theological barriers are highlighted – the tendency to syncretism, the Hindu concept of sin, the doctrine of karma and the doctrine of salvation.

Various theological bridges – a theistic world view, respect for Scripture and the person of Christ – are explored. Other bridges – the understanding of history, spirituality, and incarnation – are approached more cautiously. Cultural issues – Christian practices which offend Hindus, various misunderstandings of Christianity, the matters of caste, superstition, decision making, status and property – are noted.

Methodological issues are not overlooked – failure to take seriously the Hindu world view, the context of the listener, the hearer's intellectual as well as emotional response to the gospel or the communication of the gospel through indigenous methods such as *bhajans*, drama, dialogue, discourse, Indian music and festival processions. Case studies illustrating a variety of successful evangelistic endeavors are presented, followed by practical recommendations for rural evangelism, social action, women's ministry, literature, radio, cooperation and prayer.

By focusing on rural evangelism, the members of this miniconsultations rendered valuable service, in my opinion. This group's emphasis on women's ministry, as well as its extensive list of suggestions for mobilizing the church worldwide in prayer for Hindu peoples, merit commendation also.

On the other hand, the section on evangelism and social actions strikes me as lamentably weak. I know for a fact that some very creative work is being done by

evangelicals in India to develop a holistic model of evangelism. I can only assume that the deficiency of this section reflects the time constraints under which participants labored.

#### CIRCLES OF INFLUENCE

The true impact of Pattaya will not be apparent for months or years to come. Since Pattaya did not happen in a vacuum, we must in fairness try to estimate its potential impact on mission in the '80s in terms of its own agenda. Yet we cannot ignore its obvious juxtaposition with Melbourne and the inevitable comparisons. Also Pattaya's significance, which can only be assessed tentatively this soon after the event, needs to be evaluated in terms of these questions: to whom, and with respect to what issues?

#### To Whom?

*LCWE itself.* As anticipated, participants in COWE gave the Lausanne Committee a resounding vote of confidence and renewed its mandate. One evangelical leader publicly indicated that this was probably the most important outcome of Pattaya. The participants declared in their final statement:

We believe that God has given a special role to the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization to act as a catalyst for world evangelization. WE desire therefore to give it a further mandate to stimulate evangelism throughout the world, on the basis of the Lausanne Covenant and in growing cooperation with others of like mind.

This vote of confidence was directed as much to the leaders of LCWE as to the committee itself. While the committee may expand somewhat and become more representative, control will remain firmly in the hands of those who have been directing it since 1974. Leighton Ford continues as chairperson. On the other hand, the power struggle that has persisted within LCWE since its inception (between adherents of narrower and broader view of evangelism, and between theologians and pragmatists) is likely to continue.

*The participants.* Nearly half of the voting participants were involved in study groups prior to COWE. It is hoped that more of these groups will continue their work after COWE and that perhaps Pattaya will have its greatest continuing impact on these groups and their members. Each miniconsultation is expected to produce a final report which will be edited and published as a Lausanne Occasional Paper.

These papers should influence missiologists and mission executives, participants and nonparticipants during the years ahead.

However, action is required, not just study. One complaint that emerged in the postconsultation evaluation was over the insufficient involvement of practitioners as against theorists and administrators. Denominational executives were present in force, but few pastors. Mission and parachurch leaders were abundant, but not many field missionaries. Academicians were visible and vocal, but lay people were relatively passive. Perhaps this is true of most international conclaves, yet it is likely to diminish the impact of Pattaya.

*The larger evangelical movement.* COWE was not only an evangelistic event but an ecumenical engagement. God's work moves forward as people work together. Pattaya provided the environment (as had Berlin and Lausanne before it) in which personal friendships were created and renewed, and bonds of trust solidified. The impact of international gatherings extends beyond their subject matter. COWE was a significant thrust toward evangelical unity and cooperation. If indeed a causal link exists between Christian unity and world evangelization (as implied in John 17:23), then COWE strengthened the linkage.

Throughout COWE a Commission on Cooperation in World Evangelization met regularly, coordinated by Bishop Jack Dain of Sydney. The commission was charged with evaluating the role of LCWE and making recommendations regarding its future. But its mandate extended further. It was asked to make suggestions regarding the relationship of LCWE to other world bodies, to explore church/parachurch and church/mission tensions, and to recommend better means of stewardship of resources, personnel and finances.

The commission's more relevant conclusions were incorporated into The Thailand Statement and constituted approximately 20% of its substance. The commission rightly declared that anything that would seriously weaken the selfhood and leadership of the local church in the missionary receiving area should be avoided. Consultation and cooperation between sending churches and national churches were urged in every area of activity: location of personal, deployment of resources, establishment of development projects, and the management of evangelistic crusades and conferences.

The commission also pleaded that emerging missions (especially Third World missions) not repeat the mistakes made by Western missions in the past. A final recommenda-

tion was that Christian colleges and seminaries provide mission courses integrated into their regular curriculum so that potential pastors might have an optimum understanding of mission, so that world evangelization will become a priority in their ministries.

*World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF).* In order to strengthen the visible unity of the global evangelical community, to reduce duplication of personnel and other resources, and to promote world evangelization more effectively, WEF had, prior to Pattaya, issued an invitation to the Lausanne Committee to become the evangelistic task force (or evangelism commission) of WEF. This invitation was discussed at COWE, first in committees working behind the scenes and later in public and plenary sessions.

COWE's Commission on Cooperation in World Evangelization in its report concluded that it would be "premature" for LCWE to enter into an organic relationship with WEF either as a task force or commission. Instead, it recommended that

a new Commission on Cooperation be established [within LCWE] to explore ways and means of active cooperation in evangelization with other world evangelical bodies, in particular the World evangelical Fellowship, with a view to manifesting wider evangelical unity.

WEF regards this conclusion as unsatisfactory. It merely formalizes existing informal relationships and indicates little forward progress in the relationship between the two bodies. In all likelihood WEF will be compelled now, after postponing the matter for six years, to form a separate Commission on Evangelism parallel to its other international commissions. This is something WEF leaders had hoped would be unnecessary.

The report further proposed that the Lausanne Theology and Education Group (LTEG) and the Strategy Working Group be disbanded, that in their place a new interdisciplinary LCWE task force be formed to combine theological and missiological insights in planning strategy, and that wherever possible the theological work previously undertaken by LTEG be united with WEF's Theological Commission, perhaps through a joint study group. WEF saw this proposal as a modest yet significant gesture of good will. It remains to be seen whether the LCWE executive will actually implement it.

*World Council of Churches.* At least 25 COWE participants, including three LCWE members, were present at Melbourne three weeks earlier. In spite of this, and the fact that many COWE participants are members of mainline

churches related to the WCC, there was little evidence of evangelical/ecumenical convergence at Pattaya. One attempt made early in the consultation to promote some degree of understanding between Melbourne and Pattaya backfired.

LCWE executive secretary Gottfried Osei-Mensah chaired a well-attended meeting at which Alan Cole of the Australian Church Missionary Society and I presented personal reflections on Melbourne. Emilio Castro, director of the World Council's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, responded. Then the chairperson invited submissions from the floor. The majority of these were hostile to the WCC in general and to Dr. Castro's comments in particular, though Castro himself is a passionate evangelist.

Later in the consultation, a group of Latin American evangelicals, representing about a third of the total Latin American contingent, caucused to propose a continent-wide evangelical association that would counter the Latin American Council of Churches (in formation). During the caucus Castro was attacked again. Although the proposed association did not materialize, ill feeling persisted.

It is clear, therefore, that while mutual appreciation at leadership levels between LCWE and the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism exists, many rank and file COWE participants remain suspicious of, and even hostile to, ecumenical understandings and practices of mission. I find this discouraging. At the same time, I confess I had a similar reaction at Melbourne. There Castro seemed eager to build bridges to Pattaya, but the WCC rank and file were unwilling to walk over them.

*Roman Catholics.* One miniconsultation focused on developing a strategy for reaching nominal Roman Catholic Christians. Prior to the consultation, study groups in 24 countries had wrestled with the problems inherent in such a strategy. At COWE, 52 persons participated in this miniconsultation. Because of polarizations that emerged before and during the consultation, group members were ultimately unable to produce a unified strategy.

In their preliminary report, however, they did identify certain essential components of any effective strategy which included the recognition that "the greatest barrier to evangelizing Roman Catholics is the evangelical." Evangelical divisiveness and party spirit, they said, affects both the dynamics and credibility of the Gospel. Guided Bible study was said to be the key to the Roman Catholic individual's conversion to Jesus Christ.

I found the recognition that God can be expected to work evangelically with the Roman Catholic church an

encouraging aspect of this miniconsultation's report. It must be acknowledged, though, that a vocal minority of those who participated in the consultation could not agree. Some Southern European evangelical leaders actually boycotted COWE because they believe LCWE is too soft on Roman Catholicism. Since similar attitudes exist toward Orthodox churches, the whole question of "proselytism" will remain on the missions agenda of the '80s.

## MAJOR ISSUES

### The Unreached

The 1974 Lausanne congress issued a summons: "Let the Earth Hear His Voice!" Pattaya raised the question: "How Shall They Hear?" Pattaya was a pragmatists' parley. On the opening night, Saphir Athyal, deputy chairman of LCWE, put it plainly. "We are not here to focus on issues; rather, we are met to study the peoples to be reached, and how to reach them."

The matter is not so simple, of course. Who the unreached are (or whether there even *are* significant numbers of unreached peoples in the modern world) is itself a matter of controversy, hence an issue. Certainly this was so at Melbourne. Similarly, the concept of strategic planning, with its contemporary overtones of technology and manipulation, is not universally accepted.

At Melbourne I was frustrated by what seemed to be the almost obstinate refusal on the part of prominent participants to take the matter of unreached peoples seriously. Various reasons were advanced. An Indian challenged me, "Unreached by whom? By God?" No, certainly not. God has not left himself without a witness (Acts 17, Romans 1). Nor can we believe that any people is totally beyond the influence of God's kingdom. Yet to deny that there are literally hundreds of millions of people who have never heard the good news of what God promises us in Jesus Christ is simply to refuse to face facts. Or so it seems to me.

Emilio Castro insists on the necessity of "naming the Name." In a Melbourne section meeting I made the observation that for every person in the world today who names the name of Christ, there are two who have never heard his name. To which a Swedish plenary speaker responded, "I doubt very seriously whether there is more than a small percentage of humankind that has never heard of Jesus." Yet the Section I report submitted at the Fifth General Assembly of the WCC in Nairobi in 1975 includes these words: "Because God loved the world so much, the church cannot neglect one single part of it, neither those who

have already heard the liberating Name, nor the *great majority* who have not yet heard of that Name!" [emphasis mine].

Aversion to statistics – fear that the quantifying of unreached peoples is somehow dehumanizing – was frequently voiced at Melbourne. But as Johanes Verkuyl points out, "When we want to think specifically about the unfinished task of world mission, then we must also pay attention to statistics.." I could not help noting at Melbourne an abundance of statistics relating to the very real and pressing issues of poverty, human rights, health and literacy. Why then should statistics related to people groups be regarded as illegitimate?

A fourth objection to the discussion of unreached peoples focuses on the implicit distinction between "us" (the already reached) and "them" (the still unreached). Many Melbourne participants felt that such a distinction is patronizing and pharisaical. Concentrating on the so-called unreached seems to ignore the fact that in many instances the reached are themselves grievously in need of the gospel.

How can churches who are not witnessing credibly to the kingdom in their own contexts presume to take the good news of the kingdom to other peoples? How can Christians allow themselves to be implicated in an international social order that condemns millions to poverty and degradation, and yet presume to function as ambassadors of reconciliation?

Now here is a criticism with substance. Failure to come to grips with the issue of credibility will inevitably nullify evangelism; inability to maintain authenticity will sabotage mission. There should be no argument on this. And there *is* a common style of evangelical witness today that mirrors the ethos of an affluent, aggressive, but pagan Madison Avenue. We have much to repent of. Our penitence must manifest itself in a thoroughgoing identification with the poor and oppressed of this world, participating in their struggles even when this means opposing the norms and practices of our own "Christian" societies.

But surely the reformation and renewal of Christian communities must not be carried out at the expense of those who have every right to hear what God has done in Christ. This line leads only to an unhealthy, fruitless narcissism. Stephen Neill has suggested that "the outcome of penitence ...is resolute, constructive and carefully considered action."

The action required cannot be limited to authentic witness only in those areas of the world where Christian churches *exist* (which I saw to be the main preoccupation at

Melbourne) but must also include the proclamation of the gospel in those areas of the world where the Church is *not yet*.

Here is the special significance of Pattaya. For ten days it kept before a large representative group of Christian leaders a world in which an estimated 16,750 people groups lie beyond the reach (proclamation *or* service) of any existing church – “hidden” peoples who will be evangelized only if cross-cultural missionaries are sent from one people to another. Thus The Thailand Statement reads:

We have become freshly burdened by the vast numbers who have never heard the good news of Christ and are lost without him. We have been made ashamed of our lack of vision and zeal, and of our failure to live out the gospel in its fullness, which has weakened our obedience and compromised our witness...Some two-thirds of the world's four and a half billion people have had no proper opportunity to receive Christ. Many are within easy reach of Christians...The great majority of people in the world, however, have no Christian neighbors to share Christ with them. They can therefore be reached only by cross-cultural messengers of the gospel. WE confidently expect that these will increasingly come from all countries, as the Christian mission becomes universalized, and we will work to keep this challenge before the churches.

Are there any signs of convergence between Melbourne and Pattaya on this particular issue? Or will the troublesome dichotomy of the past few decades continue? I must admit I sensed little convergence proceeding from the Melbourne meetings, and saw little evidence of convergence in the final section reports of Melbourne – only a few fleeting reference, many of them ambiguous. Yet Emilio Castro has acknowledged publicly that “the fact that so many poor people in the world do not have any access to this knowledge of God's grace manifested in Jesus Christ is a challenge to our Christian conscience.”

Private conversations, however, lead me to hope that within ecumenical circles, once Third World churches are assured that Western churches, having so long dominated mission agendas, are ready to respond to the agenda being proposed by Third World churches, then the latter will be prepared to take up the matter of world evangelization.

In any event, Pattaya has made clear that one very active sector of the global Christian community still understands modern mission in traditional terms. Regardless of what others do, evangelicals intend to keep the concept of unreached peoples alive during the '80s.

## Social Justice

Just as we might hope that Melbourne would take seriously the reality of unreached peoples, so we might expect Pattaya to consider earnestly the sociopolitical context of world evangelization, namely the appalling international social order and the consequent struggle of the vast majority of human beings for the basic necessities of life, including human dignity.

Our expectation is enhanced by the awareness that paragraph 5 of the Lausanne Covenant asserts that “we should share God’s concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of [people] from every kind of oppression.”

During COWE participants from five continents, all of them active in the World Evangelical Fellowship, which I have the honor of serving as general secretary, drew up a Statement of Concerns on the future of the Lausanne movement. This was circulated, eventually signed by a third of the participants, then presented to the executive committee of LCWE. In part it said:

During the six years since the Lausanne Congress convened, the “Lausanne Spirit” has stimulated world evangelization and devised useful tools for evangelization...It is a fact, nevertheless, that LCWE does not seem to have been seriously concerned with the social, political and economic issues in many parts of the world that are a great stumbling block to the proclamation of the gospel. This is clearly evident here at Pattaya during this Consultation on World Evangelization. We have a working group [mini-consultation] on “reaching Refugees,” but none on those that are largely responsible for the refugee situation around the world: politicians, armed forces, freedom fighters, national oligarchies, and the controllers of international economic power.

Since the world is made up of institutions and structures as well as [people] groups, the Lausanne Movement, if it is to make a lasting evangelistic impact in the six continents of the world, must make a special effort to help Christians, local churches, denominations and mission agencies identify not only people groups but also the social, economic and political institutions that determine their lives, and the structures behind them that hinder evangelism. We urge that LCWE be given a mandate to continue with its ministry and implement the following recommendations:

1. That LCWE reaffirm its commitment to all aspects of the Covenant and in particular provide new leadership to help evangelicals implement its call to social responsibility as well as evangelism.

2. That the LCWE encourage and promote the formation of study groups at all levels to deal with social, political and economic issues and provide specific guidance on how evangelicals can effectively apply the Lausanne Covenant's affirmation of "God's concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and liberation of [people] from every kind of oppression."

3. That within three years LCWE convene a World Congress on Evangelical Social Responsibility and its implications for evangelism.

4. That the LCWE give guidelines on how evangelicals who support oppression and discrimination (thus hindering evangelism) can be reached by the gospel and challenged to repent and uphold biblical truth, and how to give encouragement and support to Christians of all races in situations of oppression as they are seeing to be faithful to the gospel at great risk.

These concerns surfaced also in several of the 17 miniconsultations. The consultation on "Reaching Marxists," for example, noted that Christians have failed to take seriously the Marxist critique of the church. Participants acknowledged in their report that the church "has a culpable record of failure to identify with the social concerns of the poor and distressed or to establish any solidarity of interest, love or action with those who suffer under injustice, exploitation or selfishness. Indeed, such solidarity in action has been actively discouraged by large sections of the church, not least by missionary boards operating from First World countries."

As regards proclamation, practically every subgroup of this miniconsultation felt that evangelism to Marxists must be based on a holistic theology that takes the form of an explanation of God's redemption in its totality, utilizing the Marxist concept of alienation as a starting point.

It was the miniconsultation of "Reaching Inner City Dwellers (the Urban Poor)" however, that explored the relationship between social justice and evangelism in greatest depth. The draft report of this group contains a helpful explanation of the actual message content of "good news to the poor," something I did not hear at Melbourne:

The created structure intended for our wholeness has become distorted. Everything needs to be saved and restored. Out of right relationship with God, we are locked into a wrong relationship with each other, with creation, and within ourselves. Even in our inward being there are parts of ourselves that seem to be oppressed whereas other parts become falsely dominant. In the same way, both society and the universe have a structure which has become divided and dislocated. We with our inward distortion both

reinforce these outward false patterns and are reinforced by them. Into the prison of our distortion Jesus came as the free [person], the whole [person], the bearer of healing, living and proclaiming the Kingdom of God and inviting us to follow.

To set creation free from its bondage, Jesus took its condemnation upon himself in place of us, on the cross. He surrendered his wholeness that could not be broken, that each and all of us might be made whole. In him God came down into the depths to deliver us. He works from within, from the underside, to loosen and release us from the bind in which all are held. He restores all things to a right relationship with himself and brings us into his own structure of fulfillment. By his self-giving, his suffering and death, the Lord delivers our inward personal being from disintegration. He breaks down the barriers which divide up human society and opens the possibility of a "new 'person'," a new unity freed from the false relationships of the [humankind]. He is thus indeed "the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world"

This discussion of the message is followed by an extended discussion of evangelism per se. The report concludes with a section entitled, Towards a Strategy of Evangelization of the Urban Poor. The creation or renewal of communities in which Christians and share equally with others is suggested as the basic strategy toward the evangelization of the urban poor. Examples of such communities are drawn from Brazil, Hong Kong and Great Britain.

The concerns of the miniconsultations on Reaching Marxists and Reaching Inner City Dwellers quite clearly converge toward the concerns of Melbourne. But I saw only scattered evidence of these specific concerns in the draft reports of the other miniconsultations. Furthermore, these concerns surfaced only rarely in the morning Bible expositions and the evening plenary messages. The Thailand Statement says, "Although evangelism and social action are not identical, we gladly reaffirm our commitment to both, and we endorse the Lausanne Covenant in its entirety."

In spite of this welcome affirmation, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Pattaya did, in fact, retreat from the position advanced at Lausanne where it was affirmed that "The message of salvation implies also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression, and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist."

This will be evident from the following section on the nature of evangelism. It seems unlikely, therefore, that the

Lausanne Committee will be a major force in the 1980s for promoting a style of evangelism based on a holistic theology and a clear-sighted vision of the definitive contextual realities of this decade. Within evangelical circles we will have to look to groups other than LCWE for leadership along these lines.

This assessment is borne out by Peter Wagner, a leading figure at Pattaya. In a speech to the Association of Church Missions Committees soon after Pattaya, he said, "There is a significant group of evangelicals who are advocating not only 'holistic mission' but also 'holistic evangelism'...attempting to load the world evangelism with meanings it never has had. If they had prevailed, a new word would have to be invented. But COWE held the line at that point."

### Conclusion

While there are signs of convergence between Melbourne and Pattaya, the divergence is still real and considerable. I think it is imperative that both evangelicals and ecumenists work harder during the coming decade to demonstrate that commitment to a fully biblical missiology which they both profess.

