

# Standing Commission on World Mission

October 3–5, 2001  
St. Margaret's Convent (Boston)

## Minutes (Revised)

The Standing Commission on World Mission met at St. Margaret's Convent in Boston for its second full meeting of the 2001–2003 biennium on October 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>, 2001.

**Present were:** Rev. Titus Presler (Chair), Mrs. Nancy Broadwell (Secretary/Treasurer), Rev'd Kate Cullinane (Vice Chair), Mr. Dennis Case, Ms. Diana Dillenberger-Frade, Mrs. Joan Hermon, Mr. Willis Jenkins, Rev'd Harold Lewis, Ms. Helena Mbele-Mbong, Rt. Rev'd Wilfredo Ramos-Orench, Rt. Rev'd Bill Skilton, and Ms. Carole Jan Lee, Executive Council Liaison, and Rev'd Juan Marquez, Partnerships Officer, AGR/DFMS, representing Rev'd Canon Patrick Mauney. Rt. Rev'd James Folts was unable to attend the meeting.

The Commission members convened on Wednesday evening and began by updates from each member present. All of Thursday and Friday morning were devoted to the Consultation on Race, Money and Power. This is covered in a separate section of the minutes. The Commission members reconvened at 1:30 PM on Friday to deal with the rest of the agenda.

### Report from Anglican and Global Relations

**Patrick Mauney** sent greetings but was unable to join us as he was attending the Centennial of the Episcopal Church in the Philippines. Juan Marquez, Partnerships Officer for Latin America, Caribbean and the Philippines, and Jane Butterfield, Mission Personnel Director, made the report for Anglican and Global Relations.

- **Juan Marquez** reported that the position of Officer for Africa has been restored and will soon be filled.

The covenant committees for Philippines, Mexico, IARCA and the Caribbean in Formation have all met this year. Juan is working to regularize the meetings so that such long periods of time do not elapse between meetings. Each covenant committee now reports to Executive Council and reports are to be forwarded to SCWM. Each covenant needs to be examined to be certain that the terms are being met and how best to deliver the promises. Budget items always require lengthy discussion.

There are five dioceses (Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras and Littoral) remaining in Province IX. The Anglican Communion no longer encourages extra-provincial status; therefore the dioceses of Cuba, Puerto Rico and Venezuela need to resolve their status as to metropolitan authority. Discussion with the dioceses in what was ARENSA (Colombia, Ecuador, Littoral and Venezuela) is more oriented to regional organization rather than provincial status.

A week-long conference sponsored by the Treasurer's Office of the Episcopal Church for treasurers, diocesan administrators, and bishops was held immediately preceding this meeting on the theme of mission. Included in this conference were representatives from UTO, ERD, Jubilee

ministries, and AGR. The dioceses invited were all those previously mentioned plus Belize, Haiti and Virgin Islands. The need to continue dialogue was recognized, and there are plans to continue this in the future. The Church Pension Fund is still the loose end in all the covenants, both those already autonomous and those in formation. Within the next month a plan between Mexico and the CPF should be in place that may serve as a model for others, but the CPF wishes to monitor the Mexico plan prior to beginning discussion with other provinces. The pension plans are seen as a justice issue.

- There was discussion as to how the SCWM might act to urge the CPF to act on this out of the abundance available.

The following resolution was approved by the SCWM to be sent to trustees of the CPF and to authorize Wilfredo Ramos-Orench to take the resolution to a meeting of the abundance committee of the CPF to which he has been invited.

**RESOLVED**, that the Standing Commission on World Mission endorses the concerns of the Covenant Committee for the Caribbean Region and requests the Trustees of the Church Pension Fund to give urgent consideration of the ways and means by which historic inconsistencies and injustices in the administration of pensions for clergy and lay employees both present and former of non-USA jurisdictions may be corrected.

In addition, the letter accompanying the resolution will invite a trustee and staff person from CPF to meet with the SCWM at our next meeting. (See Annex.)

Jane Butterfield distributed information on present appointed missionaries and volunteers for mission. Missionaries raise at least some of their own funds.

The question was raised as to the existence of and possibilities for south-to-north mission and the cost of supporting that kind of mission. EPGM is formulating guidelines as to how to do that. This will require adding the receiving of missionaries to the budget.

Willis Jenkins reported on the Young Adult Service Corps, which was funded by the budget adopted by the 2000 General Convention. There are at present six people out and two ready to go; one has come home. The fund-raising for these volunteers connects them with parishes and dioceses. The Mission Personnel Office has administrative duties; Willis does pastoral care and training with the volunteers before they go, during the time they are away and when they come home. Companion diocese relationships are fertile ground for recruiting for YASC.

## **Autonomy Affairs**

**Puerto Rico:** The diocese believes it has three choices: re-enter ECUSA; re-enter the Pension Fund; enter another pension fund. Some in Puerto Rico fear that once back in ECUSA they would never become autonomous again. It was felt that for SCWM to have a position we would have to meet with them. The Commission needs to await the decision of the diocese and examine this closely.

There was a brief discussion about the tendency of Anglicans to organize nationally: Should we? And should it be so definitive?

How will what happens in Puerto Rico affect the development of a Caribbean Province?

***Caribbean Consultation:*** Much of the lack of progress hinges on the Pension Fund. Haiti is continuing with the consultations, but wants to become a francophone province. It was suggested we wait to hear results of their next meeting in October. At the moment, support for the province seems to be: Dominican Republic: enthusiastic; Cuba: somewhat; Puerto Rico, ambivalent; Haiti: very ambivalent.

***IARCA:*** A new province, beginning to learn to live together. They need a stronger organizational structure and a sense of direction, and to build greater sharing and trust. Their next synod is in April 2002.

***Province IX:*** Discussion as to the role of SCWM in determining the future of Province IX. The 2000 General Convention directed SCWM and the Standing Commission on Structure to bring a proposal to the General Convention in 2003.

A request was made by Bp Julio Holguín of the Dominican Republic to Titus Presler that SCWM and Structure convene a gathering from Province IX to discuss this. Juan Marquez stated that the Province IX synod will meet in November 2002 and that it is imperative that the full participation of all dioceses involved be included in decision-making. Titus will contact the chair of the Structure Commission to determine how to proceed in this matter.

## **Vision Project**

The Vision Sub-committee suggests that after hearing the presenters and discussion during the consultation, reconciliation might need to be added as a topic.

The Vision Sub-committee had a reflection day with AGR on September 10. This included a description by the staff as to what they do and their joys and challenges. There is a lot of work to do with few resources. The only budget increases this triennium were for mission personnel. The staff is dealing with the daily things that must be done and needs a vision to know where they are going.

The committee has solicited contributions from missionaries, had a very fruitful session with EPGM, has looked at documents from ecumenical partners, will meet with the Seminary Consultation on Mission on October 6<sup>th</sup>, and has plans to meet with Episcopal Relief and Development and with the Lutherans. The committee requests feedback from other members of SCWM.

# Consultation on the Role of Race, Money and Power in the World Mission of the Episcopal Church

## Participants

In addition to the members of SCWM present, the following participated in the Consultation:

Presenters:

The Revd Canon Burgess Carr – *Race*  
Professor of Ecumenical Theology, Candler School of Theology, Emory University  
Distinguished Visiting Professor of Missiology, Interdenominational Theological  
Center

The Revd Dr Jonathan Bonk – *Money*  
Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, CT

The Revd Edmundo Desueza – *Power*  
Church of the Good Shepherd, Newberg, NY

Participants from mission agencies:

The Revd Jane Butterfield, Mission Personnel Director, DFMS

Sr Claire Marie, SSM, Member, Society of St Margaret, Boston

Mr Kevin L. Jacobson, Associate Director for Global Education Division for Global  
Mission, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Dr Bessie Lyman, Board Member, Episcopal Relief and Development

Sr Marjorie Raphael, Member, Society of St Margaret, New York

The Revd Tom Prichard, Executive Director, South American Missionary Society

Ms Judith L. Stuart, Certified Anti-Racism Trainer, DFMS

Ms Edwina Thomas, Executive Director, Sharing of Ministries Abroad USA

## Purpose of Consultation

The Standing Commission on World Mission has established as one of its goals for the 2001–2003 triennium the examination of the intersection of issues of race, money and power with the world mission of the Episcopal Church, both historically and in the present. The Commission plans to formulate a statement, with recommendations, that will appear in the Blue Book prepared for the 2003 General Convention. Such a statement could also be published for circulation in the church at large, especially to voluntary agencies, dioceses, networks and our Anglican and ecumenical partners.

## Introduction

Titus Presler provided the background to the Consultation. The purpose of this Consultation is to advise this Commission in the articulation of a statement to the next General Convention.

What is mission? How is it different from ministry? One definition is that “Mission is ministry that crosses boundaries.” Another is “Christian mission is the activity of being sent to bear witness.” Another is “Mission is ministry in the dimension of difference.”

Do the events of September 11 raise new issues or simply underscore issues that have been with us, but that we have been unwilling or not ready to face?

## **Session I: Mission and Race – Presenter: The Revd Canon Burgess Carr**

Canon Carr’s answer to the question raised by Titus Presler was that this is indeed an extraordinary time in the life of our nation and the world. Is globalization about the centering of power issues in one place or about God’s creation being brought together and pointed in a new direction?

The theme of Canon Carr’s presentation was from 2 Corinthians 5:16, which he broke into three dimensions: 1) Reconciliation with the universe, 2) Reconciliation with oneself, 3) Community and Bonding.

This passage points out that we are ambassadors for Christ and that we must be reconciled to God and to each other in order to bring about the reconciliation that will repair God’s creation. The crusaders saw themselves as carrying out God’s mission but not as ambassadors for Christ.

Paul wrote to a city at the center of commerce, where the rich were alienated from the poor, men from women and true believers from those who could express doubt. To this group Paul spoke of God in Christ reconciling the world. All religions should recognize that racism should have no place among people of faith. Canon Carr quoted a rabbi, who spoke at the National Cathedral, and said that Jews are taught that God formed Adam out of the dust from all over the world – yellow clay, white sand, black loam, red soil – to remind us that we are all of this earth, that we are all equals and no race can put itself above others. Paul’s theology says that we are not here alone, for each is a part of something bigger and more mysterious. It is our common journey and search rather than different answers that provide the basis for common ground. Racism is a sin, a matter of the heart. We diminish the sacredness of life when we deny because of race.

Evangelism of heathens was the mistaken foundation of mission in Africa; it was thought that Africa had no story to tell.

Where will mission take us? First there must be reconciliation with oneself. There must be awareness and acknowledgement of the alienation before there can be restoration of that which is broken. The existential rebalancing of self requires the undoing of mis-teachings and historical illusions. A quote from Wordsworth “To be mis-taught is worse than to be untaught”.

- What can Americans learn from South Africa?

South Africa is past the apartheid season; the people are involved in exorcising ghosts of the past where blacks lived in political exile and whites lived in psychological exile. One major difference is that in South Africa race is on the table; in America race is under the table.

South Africans chose to recognize truth as a prerequisite for reconciliation. The conflicting images in America are that too many white people refuse to recognize that much has not changed. The new civility wants to ignore race rather than deal with the moral imperatives acknowledgement would bring. If Americans refuse to see, then it is impossible to understand.

Humans have a natural urge for community and bonding. South Africa refers to this kind of community as **Ubuntu**. A **Xhose** proverb: People are people through other people. **Ubuntu** provides another perspective in the search for reconciliation. It provides an opportunity for forgiveness; it provides an alternative for vengeance. But this does not mean that the victim forgets. It means that without forgiveness reconciliation loses its depth and loses its daring. Reconciliation also must include reparation.

When playing a piano you have to touch both the white and black keys to make music.

Racism is inextricably fixed to the problems of poverty and the widening gulf between the haves and have-nots. Reconciliation in this context involves more than mere sentimental harmonizing of conflicting groups. It demands sacrifices. It calls for identification with the oppressed. It demands determination to break down the unjust patterns that pervade society, in order to restore the dignity and humanity of those who have been stripped of it. Changes in attitudes are important but must be accompanied by structural changes that create a system of justice in which human dignity and freedom can be assured.

The church must not just condemn. Christian discipleship involves more than standing aloof from the struggle that the God of History is waging to redeem his creation.

Racism is a global problem; white racism is not its only form. In every part of the world racism is linked with economic and political exploitation.

#### **The World Council of Churches' definition of racism:**

- By racism we mean ethnocentric pride in one's own racial group and preference for the distinguishing characteristics of that group; belief that these characteristics are fundamentally biological in nature and are thus transmitted to succeeding generations; strong negative feelings towards other groups who do not share these characteristics coupled with the thrust to discriminate against and exclude the out group from full participation in the life of the community.
- By white racism we mean the conscious or unconscious belief in the inherent superiority of persons of European ancestry (particularly those of Northern European origin) which entitles all white peoples to a position of dominance and privilege, coupled with the belief in the innate inferiority of all darker peoples, especially those of African ancestry, which justifies their subordination and exploitation. By focusing on white racism we are not unaware of other forms of ethnocentrism, which produce inter-ethnic and inter-tribal tensions and conflict throughout the world today.

The roots of white racism lie in powerful developed countries. What Americans can learn from South Africa is that if race created the problem, race must be considered in designing the solution.

In order to deal with such a large undertaking, we begin where we are. The experience in South Africa has shown a willingness of the oppressed to forgive. Forgiveness is central to our preaching but neglected in practice and is necessary to the reconciliation of broken relationships in order for racism to be overcome. Humanity must share what we have in common. The task of the church is to learn how to build community by design and sustain that community. Diversity did not divide in Paul's vision.

A quotation from **Vaselav Havel**: “I am not an optimist who believes that everything ends well; nor am I a pessimist, because I do not believe that everything ends badly. But I could not accomplish anything if I did not have hope within me. For the gift of hope is as big a gift as the gift of life itself. We live in a time of broken spirits and delayed dreams, but we keep the faith because we believe in a God who’s got the whole world in his hands.”

## **Discussion**

**Dennis Case**: What can the Standing Commission do?

**Kate Cullinane**: In reference to the Japanese-Americans placed in internment camps during World War II, the most significant step in reconciliation was the apology. The money was not important; most gave it away.

**Helena Mbele-Mbong**: The Japanese were the first to rally in support of Middle-Eastern people who were singled out for hatred after September 11th.

**Diane Dillenberger-Frade**: How do we get people to focus on who they are, and what they are doing and what this means?

**Burgess Carr’s answer**: Come at it from alternating focus, how to get people to enter in. Cornel West’s book *Race Matters* says the outstretched hand needs someone to grasp it.

Why did the US pay reparations to Japanese-Americans and not to blacks?

Enabling to rebuild lives needs to be present in prisons. When does society finish extracting its pound of flesh? We must find ways to identify with the oppressed.

**Jonathan Bonk**: Has the Episcopal Church devised any means to address blacks as Canada has with the native people? The Canadian church gained a weighted voice through its act of reparation.

**Burgess Carr’s answer**: In South Africa the Episcopal Church was among the first to disinvest in corporations.

**Judith Stuart**: The power of truth telling, accepting racism as prejudice and power and being able to speak of it.

**Diana Dillenberger-Frade**: What have white people lost by not being oppressed and being the oppressor?

**Burgess Carr**: Why do the oppressed find it easier to forgive the oppressors than each other?

**Bill Skilton**: A problem is getting people to recognize the oppressed and the oppressor.

**Juan Marquez**: How can we help the church raise the issue? Crossing borders makes us uncomfortable.

**Willis Jenkins**: Conditions may be there if mission makes a space for that to happen.

**Titus Presler**: The experience of mission has some racial ambiguities. How are these issues affecting presence, policies, decisions? **How are we experiencing that as a commission?**

**Juan Marquez**: It is time for the church to stop being afraid to address these issues, get beyond the giver and move it into a caregiver position. Invest our money without being afraid. Recruit more people who have not been mission partners.

**Helena Mbele-Mbong:** Recognize where we are, have the courage to speak out for the support to go into uncomfortable space. Raise issues, engage people.

**Edwina Thomas:** Relationships changed her understanding; the church must offer people the opportunity for relationships.

**Tom Pritchard:** Reconcile demands; identify with the oppressed and their losses.

**Sister Marjorie:** The oppressed have to gain appreciation of their own history and share it with the oppressor.

**Burgess Carr:** We may identify ourselves one way, but the world identifies us another way. Quoting Bishop Brown of Cyprus and the Gulf “The church has a presence in Iraq, but is not allowed in Saudi Arabia who are our friends.”

## **Session II: Mission and Money – Presenter: The Revd Dr Jonathan Bonk**

- **Jonathan Bonk** began with a quote: “A missionary is somebody who’s paid to be religious somewhere else.”

He then gave the background for his interest in this subject. He grew up in Ethiopia, the son of missionaries, and attended a boarding school for mission children, who were waited on by the Ethiopians. In 1974 he returned to Ethiopia as director of a famine project and was caught up in the winds of change, working hard with the people, and feeling somewhat smug about his part. But the reality was that his salary was \$1000/month and his colleagues had \$20/month. He found himself faced with charges of insurrection, capitalism and exploitation brought by his colleagues. This brought a painful awareness of how disparities distort relationships and our perception of those relationships. This led him to Yale and research on his book.

Those of us in the west **are** rich in any other context, not just in dollars but also in other privileges. Therefore, what the scriptures say to and about the wealthy applies to all of us. Furthermore, the poor cannot replicate some of the bases for this wealth; e.g. new lands to “discover” and exploit. As a consumer society, our sense of entitlement must always be inflated. Part of the good news we incarnate is consumerism – “consume” – “Our God is a consuming fire” – “Consumption” (which also refers to TB). The desires of yesterday become needs of today. Consumerism has become the basis of wealth and health. People naturally want that life; if we deny it, we are not playing fair. To this we now add globalization – a product of Judeo-Christian civilization and progress. Exportation of education and enculturation has brought a consumer way of life to the world. Western education is enough to alienate people from the old ways but not enough to do anything in the new. The percentage of poor people is increasing, while fewer and fewer wealthy control more and more of the world’s resources.

According to **Robert Conquest**, the contributions of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to history are total war, totalitarianism, and terror – made possible by modern science and its productivity. Western churches and their missions bear the imprint of this infectious culture that values consumption of material goods above any other activity – and they have virtually no control over it.

Our affluence makes us uncomfortable, leads to institutional isolation and insulation and undermines our preaching. Since our message is meaningless to those in the slums, we focus on the upwardly mobile.

Affluence leads to independence and segregation, to the state of being free from control by others. North Americans prize their independence, but only people of means can keep it. Modern missionaries still go out as before, but they are separated by wealth. Their secure world is viewed with envy and bitterness, destroying the relationships that should be there. – But our Gospel talks about interdependence and relationships.

Affluence in the midst of poverty raises other questions concerning the integrity of missionaries. Is the desire for more an innocently acquired trait? How can those well-off teach sacrifice, simplicity, etc.? Is the sin of greed less deadly for us than for the poor to whom we preach the gospel? (“Greed”: wanting more than enough when amongst those with less than enough.) How do we consciously reflect on this inversion of Biblical values?

There is no easy way out of this dilemma. Bonk suggested several practical areas involving a reexamination of our ecclesiology, theology, and missiology to surmount the challenges.

***The cuckoo phenomenon:*** (Cuckoos lay their eggs in the nests of other birds, who then feed their offspring to the detriment of their own.): Seminaries in Africa are built on North American models and can survive only at the sacrifice of the people they are meant to serve. The language of the church is largely managerial – e.g. partnerships with economic inferiors, reinforcing the otherness. Scripture uses organic language, emphasizing interdependence; we are all part of the one body. We need to use scriptural terms.

***The partnership challenge:*** Can theological seminaries and mission societies construct a more rigorously biblical ecclesiology? We must get back to speaking of the one body, of using terminology that won’t allow us to separate.

***Conversion challenge:*** All missionary models so far assume power and affluence, going to other places of poverty and weakness. Yet the real missionary work is done by the indigenous, with little education or money. Western missionaries are the storekeepers for the real missionaries. Although missiology is formed by “subsidy”, the goal becomes independence of the mission field. But that is not the goal of God’s mission – which is reconciliation.

***Relevance challenge:*** Can Western well-meaning be translated into contextual meaning? Yes: by a theology of the neighbor and a missiology of interruptions. Jesus ministry was constantly interrupted, by all kinds of people with their own agendas. We cannot love the world, only God does; but we can love our neighbor. This requires a practical theology of servanthood, where the agenda is set by the people served. This is difficult for us to do. We must listen to the others, get our mission into context, rethink our theological training, and renew a theology of interdependence and of the righteous rich – of servanthood and of neighbors.

### ***Discussion:***

***Edmundo Desueza:*** The divine economy has given resources to sustain life. The human economy has the ability for self-destruction – when “enough” becomes too much. We need a re-conceptualization of what is needed to overcome the risk of disappearing as a species. How can we enjoy and sustain life, rather than destroy life?

***Jonathan Bonk:*** Deuteronomy – Among people of God there was to be no endemic, sustained poverty – the sabbatical and jubilee. The rights of God’s people with respect to private property are not absolute. – We are caught up in a culture where we are teaching our children a way of life with which we actually can’t agree.

**Edwina Thomas:** Often missionaries from poor communities are very effective to other communities. So, can we help by providing the training and support? EPW: Help dioceses move from maintenance to mission. Anglican Frontier Missions is training people to go where westerners can't.

**Titus Presler:** Bonk is saying feeling guilty about wealth is not enough if don't do something about it. But we can't simply divest ourselves. What do you mean by "wealthy righteous"? What about the institutional issues of covenant financing?

**Edmundo Desueza:** Mission has not always been from rich to poor, e.g. tribes to Rome.

**Jonathan Bonk:** Internships are often thought of as being one-way. They should be two-way, which will help tackle it.

**Willis Jenkins:** Two-way mission also increases accountability.

**Edwina Thomas:** Bishops come to the States with begging bowls because they need funds. Americans are generous and have funds. This has set up an unhealthy dichotomy. Therefore SOMA has been inviting teams to mission to the States – with the requirement that they not come with requests. It is a somewhat artificial and expensive program, but they are recognizing that they are now givers – no longer receivers.

**Jonathan Bonk:** This is a cuckoo question – the institutional problem of our model: needs for schools, hospitals, etc.

**Edmundo Desueza:** Many missionaries are following their people to the States to minister to them – from Latin America, Asia, etc.

**Burgess Carr:** Internships raises the problem of money: many people of color are unable to raise their own funds. African independent churches want to establish the institutional profile of mission churches, while mission churches want to be authentically African.

**Jonathan Bonk:** All mission is subsidy. The institutions we establish require an ongoing resourcing that is not indigenous.

**Nancy Broadwell:** How can we build an ongoing relationship with our covenant arrangements? Is this possible while they're dependent on us?

**Jonathan Bonk:** Can't drop a covenant. Must be a true covenant of two: mutually agreed. Look at potential perils; look at positives. What process is needed to renew and refresh the covenant so it continues to reflect the real situation?

**Edmundo Desueza:** It's the attitude that needs to change.

**Juan Marquez:** How can we give resources that really support growth? Challenge churches to think "mission" rather than maintenance. Raise vision for mission before we simply give more money.

**Harold Lewis:** Who are "we"? In fact, a number of mission groups, ideologically driven, are exporting abroad the divisions at home. There is no universally recognizable authority to take the mission abroad.

**Diana Dillenberger-Frade:** We need to feed this golden egg; but it also feeds us. We've sent them away, when they should be at the table. So let's bring back the people we have sent off.

**Bill Skilton:** How are we working with these churches we have spawned?

**Burgess Carr:** Why send money from US poor to subsidize rich Liberians? But in the socioeconomic and political situation the Liberian church cannot do its work. Must work for peace, creating an atmosphere of reconciliation. What can the Episcopal Church do to speak out about the political situation?

**Jonathan Bonk:** We need a movement of repentance; conversion comes later.

We must keep money and race on the agenda.

### **Section III: Mission and Power – Presenter: The Revd Edmundo Desueza**

*1 Corinthians 1: 2, 18-31 (also vs. 10 and 17)*

**Dr Desueza**, reported that he chose these scriptures since he believes they are at the center of what defines mission. This part of Paul’s introduction to the letter of the Corinthians is very, very subversive and yet, it is fundamental.

It is one thing to discover what the text says. It is another to try to find out to whom it was written or the context in which it was written. For example: “Called to be holy...” Is that to say that the church is sanctified and called to be holy, which is not the same as to say we are individually called to be saints?

In the context in which Paul was writing there were many factions and struggles. In our present day we have bishops who don’t talk about Jesus as Lord. Some even say the cross is foolishness. How is it that they do they not have the honesty to step down if they do not believe in these things? Power? Power. Power is at the center of these things.

**Lord Acton**, a strong and militant Roman Catholic, once said: “Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

Power is not just about money but it is also about fear, intimidation, resources, information, etc. If we are able to affect others we are in a position of power. We might conclude that power like this precedes hierarchical power. This may be true but not always.

When a person becomes appointed as a missionary he takes on another role. This position may give that person power in a way that he/she did not have in their home environment.

Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Baruch analyzed power in their own contexts. These prophets may well be the sociologists of the past. They had what it took to become interpreters of situations at the very center of wisdom and power, mission and power.

**Hobbs**, said absolute power was necessary during the era of numerous monarchical governments to protect the weak. The powerful were able to protect the poor and the weak. Having Jesus as our Lord frees us from being at the mercy of others with power. This is subversive. So therefore, because it is subversive, Paul speaks of the wisdom and power of the Lord.

The problem we have today in our post-industrial age is the inability of the intelligentsia to affirm the foolishness of the cross. Paul speaks to the world but he also speaks to the new Christians who have begun to deal with the issues of power. Paul was implicating the religious leaders of his day and perhaps the religious leaders of the future.

“Because you know not Christ as you should, you begin to lord over others.” From the beginning of the Christian mission this has been a problem. If we use the words of Lord Acton,

the only way we can avoid corruption is when we proclaim Jesus as our Lord. We are then free from lording over others and having others lord over us.

There are two separate parts of this mission. First, we are called to be common servants of the Lord. In that context the weak became God's powerful. Second, the authenticity of the mission can be measured by the level of freedom created among those we have missioned.

Power in the church did not derive from money or military power. The church in reality grew from the weak to the strong; from the poor to the wealthy; from the lack of political involvement to alliance with the powers that be. It grew initially with missionaries who took only the message of the liberating Lord. When Constantine became Christian, that did not give the church power. The church received power when the Church became Constantinianized.

In the letter of Paul to Philemon: "yet, I would rather appeal to you out of the power of love." This implies that Paul has some power over a person who has more power and money than Paul.

The church learned about that power early and the church began to use that power early. This is because the church held onto the power of mystery. There is nothing wrong with holding onto the power of mystery until that power is used in detrimental ways over those under the church.

I believe the intelligentsia of our day is not willing to acknowledge the power of the cross and resurrection. If we understand that the power of the cross comes from our acceptance of the risen Lord, then it means that there will be demands placed on us.

Churches acquire power in the ability to influence political structures. Some churches have managed to do this in such a way as to acquire masses of people and therefore can wield power within the political structure. The risk of doing manipulation in doing mission is terrible. There exists the ability to create racial divide in the midst of missions.

Graham Green portrays this in *The Power and the Glory*. The new political reality is as frightening to the priest as to the people. The use of the word "half-caste" is degrading. Yet the *mestizo* is the one, now converted from his Indian religion, who won't let the priest abandon his own faith. The power of the church and religion goes much, much deeper than politics or money. The Mexican revolution persecuted the church. Yet the church retained the power of mystery and power over individuals.

Recently the Pope prayed for and to Fr Kolbe. He also prayed for and to a Jewish Carmelite, Judith Stein. Can you imagine a powerful Pope praying to a priest and a nun? This would be incongruous except that through ritual and mystery it gives even more power to the Pope.

A Carmelite convent has been placed at the gates of the Auschwitz concentration camp. The location of this convent became controversial. Some argued that we should stop praying for Fr Kolbe and Judith Stein. Fr Kolbe ran a printing press which printed anti-Semitic literature. Judith Stein would be seen as an apostate to the Jews. This is the church humiliating other people in the name of mission and yet retaining power.

The dark side of Christian mission is the history of using force to convert. We are therefore left with the image in many minds that Christians are converted by force.

What about empowerment? I have a problem with the words "enabling" and "empowerment". What gives us the right to decide who is and is not able or should be enabled?

**W.E.B. Dubois** once wrote that the process of accumulation meant the taking away from others their ways, language and culture, as well as goods. Now how can you come to those same people and tell them that you are now coming to enable or empower?

The church has participated in a process that allowed things central to life to be taken away. Should we be surprised that the picture of the Christianized world now appears upside-down?

The churches of the South are now standing up and asserting their own right to be counted and not as dependent children. There was a time when I was proud to use terms like “enable” and “empower.” Good intentions may disguise evil. Notice how often Christian missionaries proclaimed humility and obedience as fundamental Christian virtues.

A common theme of discussion is the concept of autonomy. But what is it that restrains the process? Who decides when a group is “developed” enough to become autonomous? Is this a process of congratulating the missionaries for their “good work?”

Autonomy as a process occurred first when the church which established the mission no longer wanted to support dependent provinces or dioceses; and second, when the indigenous churches were questioning the disparity of salary and benefits between missionaries and local clergy. Third, the church was dealing with worldly power but was ill-informed about the issues and discovered that other non-profits could do a better job of addressing local and world problems

The time of the greatest growth of the churches of the North Atlantic was also the time of greatest missionary activity. The national churches were able to have a better understanding of their own identity through this missionary endeavor. Sometime around the Cuban revolution there had come a point when local thinkers began to question the presence of North Americans. All of this now prompts the question: who is responsible for having planted the seeds of the idea of autonomy?

## **Discussion**

**Burgess Carr:** How many times have you made this speech? Didn’t Jesus say, “They hear but they do not hear.” I wonder if I can ever retire. I have been speaking this message for 40 years and it is still not yet heard in our own church. Notice that in the post-independence years, when the church was in the hands of Africans, the church has multiplied many, many times.

**Jonathan Bonk:** Quoting someone: “Nothing so gives the illusion of intelligence as the close association with money.” I was also intrigued by your idea that the language of “enabling” and “empowering” is disabling language.

Part of the eighties represented the lack of courage to really face the problems of the world. The WCC is currently weaker than it was. In the support of people in struggle it was never able to engage the oppressor into a deeper analysis as to why that struggle was there. But now I think we have more people rethinking the nature of human society. The Christian world is now more in touch with the discussion of life from a sanctification point of view. I believe that ritual and mystery help us to interpret our role when we begin to approach life from another point of view. It means we can enter into relationship with others of dissenting points of view not because we want to but because we meet that which is missing in ourselves.

In taking on the term “empowerment” you are taking on a sacred cow in some circles. In its place you suggest liberation and freeing people which would be the sign of missionary faithfulness and authenticity.

Sometimes I believe that missionary enterprise means we say the Word and share with the people the context in which those things came. We then allow ourselves to be present to the process of how they decide where to go. What we put in place is the telling of the story of Jesus.

In Paul to the Corinthians, the discussion is not about raising money but about living life together.

In the 1970s at a WCC meeting it was suggested that there be a moratorium on sending people and money to Africa for a period of time in order for the church in Africa to have space to digest and create the church for their own context. What would that have meant?

North Atlantics couldn’t yet trust the locals to replicate the church. Were there enough people educated? Education is the process of learning the codes that transmit concepts. The difficulty is learning the concept without carrying cultural baggage.

Are we ready to abandon the terms “empower” and “enable”? My understanding of the concept of evil is that it has no capacity to exist in a vacuum. What is it that is good that people are trying to say in the use of the terms “empower” and “enable”?

**Edmundo Desueza:** I believe that there is nothing that is ultimately sacrosanct about words. At the same time, words are carriers of the sacred. We need words until we find words that better express the character of the ideal.

When language began to be written it started to “freeze” concepts. We still have a fear of what language may mean as a tool. In a work entitled *A Separate Reality*, the author describes that when you tell a child that the color they are looking at is green, it can no longer be what it is. That which had no reality now has a frozen reality. In the future, for that child it will always be green with no future openness to another reality.

### **Summary Reflections of SCWM Group following presentations on race and money:**

- Need to always keep race on the table. Need to get people to recognize and see the truth of racism. Difficult to speak to those who don’t understand there is a problem.
- Truth is a prerequisite for reconciliation. Reconciliation came out as the major theme; not justice or integration.
- Must also put money on the table.
- Need to work out issues of race, money and truth in the context of mission. Invite people into the mission of the church.
- Need to identify the unintentional, but harmful. Often unaware of underlying racism and influence of money. – Mission work was racist from its inception: based on bringing the light to the colored heathen.
- Where is racism in mission today?
- Reginal Heber’s hymns indicate racism at inception of ECUSA’s world mission.

- Missionaries often feel they have all the answers and things will be done their way.
- Need to look at church policies toward justice and, for instance, how they relate to mission. E.g. Church Pension Fund adopts a minimum pension for domestic clergy but not for non-USA clergy. Question of what to do with the abundance of CPF. Covenantal commitments need to be fulfilled. Bill Skilton: Concerning Church Pension Fund: Is it within our purview to make a statement about the injustice?
- If we presume that we can address racism issues within ourselves, without engaging with people of other races, then that is a racist assumption of privilege and power. – This conversation must be a dialogue with our partners.
- Jane Butterfield: Requiring superlative standards prior to mission service may constitute a requirement that reduces the missionary force. Missionaries must be willing to go out and possibly fail. Need more retreats for missionaries and more time treating race, money and power.
- Missionary of today should be a catalyst and a servant.
- We talk about volunteer missionaries, or missionaries raising part of their funding. Implies that only those who have a base of support and resources can be missionaries. In fact, the developing world does look to us for resources. What can we do to turn that around? – EPGM has one possible answer.
- Feeling that doing mission only if giving to poor, third world, people of color. An implicit racial reference. –Power moving out to the lack of power. Cultural issue is always present: ECUSA missioners are going with cultural superiority assumptions regardless of race of missioner.
- People will work with Africans, but not with African Americans.
- The man who pays the piper chooses the tune. In covenants we still consider ourselves the senior partner. E.g. at Lambeth there was USA outrage that African dioceses receiving USA support could vote against the will of most ECUSA dioceses.

## **SCWM Debriefing on Consultation**

**Following the Consultation, just the SCWM discussed what they had gleaned. Major points:**

- Provided clarity and confirmation.
- Reflections from seasoned participants and observers, speaking forcefully, prophetically, with real seasoning.
- Rooted in scripture.
- Threw out a lot of assumptions and highlighted other things not thought important.
- Use of terminology is very important. We must be specific and be aware of the connotations of words.
- We must not pretend to be other than what we are. Need to honestly recognize who we are and who we aren't.

- Some problems can be as much cultural as racial.
- Power is not bad in itself. It's the use/abuse of power that is problematic.
- Power has a negative connotation because we live in a fallen, sinful world and that's how it is used. Badness arises from unmerited and unearned, based on American meritocracy. – Unless based in the power and glory of God. If our vision of mission is clear then we needn't be ashamed of the power of God to accomplish that mission.
- It is impossible to separate race, money and power; the first two lead into power, which is the harder issue to grasp.
- We need to explore further: what is power, and what is proper and good use of power?
- A question of justice – right/wrong – more than good/bad

There was a brief discussion as to whether this report should simply point to resources and raise the questions or provide a statement giving guidance. Titus Presler pointed out that our role is to advise, to provide guidance. Therefore we should prepare a statement that has had a lot of thought and distilling, which can carry some weight. Bill Skilton added that it is our responsibility to raise a voice – not only a brief statement, but also a full paper for all the mission agencies, as well as DFMS staff who are hoping for some clear guidance and an updated mission statement from GC. In short, what we are gathering is too valuable not to share and get to as many as possible. Our duty is to provide sound policy for overseas mission. It also has budget implications.

**The Commission agreed on this understanding of our task and on the following procedure:**

- a) Get minutes, notes, papers in a continuous document
- b) Give comments, suggestions
- c) One person to draft
- d) Get everyone's comments
- e) Put in report form

Deadline: January 2003, to be included in Blue Book

**Carole** will report on this action to the International Committee of GC/Executive Council.

## Annex

October 16, 2001

Mr. Alan Blanchard  
Church Pension Fund  
445 Fifth Ave.  
New York, NY 10016

Dear Mr. Blanchard,

At the regular meeting of the Standing Commission on World Mission it came to our attention that a number of issues remain unresolved regarding the Church Pension Fund and the process of autonomy. There also came to our attention a perception of inequity among the remainder of the Dioceses within Province IX regarding the pension fund minimum in retirement. The Province of Mexico and the Province of Central America (IARCA) are still tenuous in their respective pension plans. The remainder of the Dioceses in Province IX perceive that even though they still belong to ECUSA there is no minimum set for pensions similar to the minimum set for pensions for those serving within the geographical boundaries of the U.S. This poses a question of equity for our brothers and sisters who serve the same church (ECUSA) but just happen to serve outside the geographical boundaries of the USA.

As these issues continue to remain unresolved it further slows the progress of the mission of the church. The Dioceses in the Caribbean are currently exploring the possibility of an autonomous Province. As they look to models of autonomy and see unresolved pension issues it operates as a deterrence to these discussions.

We would like to invite the Church Pension Fund to send a board and staff representative to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Standing Commission on World Mission to discuss possible solutions to these issues. Our next meeting is scheduled for April 23 – 26, 2002 at St. Christopher's Conference Center in the Diocese of South Carolina. We are hopeful that you be able to send representatives.

A copy of this letter and the SCWM resolution is also being sent the Abundance Committee. We would like to make that committee aware of this problem, as future solutions may need to involve their participation.

If you have any questions or would like more information on our next meeting please do feel free to contact me at the address on this letterhead.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Canon Kathleen Cullinane  
Vice-Chair, Standing Commission on World Mission

cc: Church Pension Fund Board of Trustees  
The Most Rev. Frank Griswold, Presiding Bishop  
The Rev. George Werner; President, House of Deputies  
The Rt. Rev. Catherine Waynick; Chair, CPF Abundance Committee  
The Rev. Pat Mauney, Anglican and Global Relations

Enclosure: Resolution

## STANDING COMMISSION ON WORLD MISSION

October 5, 2001

### RESOLUTION

The following resolution was adopted at the October 3 – 5, 2001 meeting of the Standing Commission on World Mission.

**RESOLVED**, that the Standing Commission on World Mission endorses the Covenant Committee for the Caribbean Region and requests the Trustees of the Church Pension Fund to give urgent consideration of the ways and means by which historic inconsistencies and injustices in the administration of pensions for clergy and lay employees both present and former of non-USA jurisdictions may be corrected.