

CSCA Occasional Paper No. 2

**FORMS OF
MISSION ENGAGEMENT**

A CSCA Forum



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FOREWORD

The Centre for the Study of Christianity in Asia (CSCA) facilitated a forum on, “Forms of mission engagement” in July 2006 to bring together colleagues working in cross-cultural and overseas mission activities and programmes for mutual learning and stimulation. The forum comprised of leaders from the Anglican Diocese, the Lutheran, the Methodist and the Presbyterian Churches of Singapore together with faculty and post-graduate students of Trinity Theological College.

The five presentations delivered at the Forum have been reproduced in written form in this CSCA Occasional Paper No. 2.

The main presentation, “Mission engagement in the contemporary world” was prepared and presented by the Rev Dr Andrew Kirk, the keynote speaker at the Forum. Dr Kirk is a well-known teacher of and practitioner in mission engagement. His experience which spans a few decades has been primarily in theological training in various contexts in Latin America and the United Kingdom. He resides in his country of origin, England, but travels widely to teach and lecture on mission engagement. He also continues to write and publish several books and articles on the theology of mission.

This paper also presents the four brief accounts delivered at the Forum by the Anglican Diocese, the Lutheran Church, the Methodist Missions Society and the

Presbyterian Church of Singapore, of their experience in mission engagement.

In reproducing the Forum proceedings as an occasional paper, CSCA seeks to provide a resource to a wider community interested in developing faithful forms of partnership in the mission of the Church. To this end, we refer you to the CSCA Website (www.ttc.edu.sg/csc.htm) to pursue further accounts on the forms of mission engagement that sections of the Church in Singapore have been involved in. We also draw your attention to our periodical, 'Church and Society in Asia Today' which is concerned with Christian ministry and mission in Asia today.

CSCA is grateful to Rev Dr Andrew Kirk for permission to publish his paper. We are also thankful to the Anglican Diocese, the Lutheran Church, the Methodist Missions Society and the Presbyterian Church of Singapore for allowing their reports to be included.

Mrs Kimhong Hazra
October 2006

MISSION ENGAGEMENT IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

J. Andrew Kirk¹

Introduction

Thank you for the invitation to share some reflections on the nature, means and methods of mission at this time. Today, as we look at some of the most crucial issues in mission we need to set them in the widest possible perspective: we have to speak about world Christianity and global mission. On account of the unprecedented patterns of migration, instantaneous and sophisticated means of communication and the shortening of distances through air travel, Christian mission, like almost every other activity, is caught up in the processes of 'globalisation'.

There are no longer any geographical or cultural frontiers to mission. There are few, if any, 'exotic' places left in the world that have not been thoroughly explored already. It would be hard to find any nations where there are not at least some Christians engaged in fulfilling the mission mandate in one way or another. The only mission frontier that exists in the modern world, as the CWME (Council for World Mission and Evangelism Commission

¹ Recent works by the same author on a similar theme are *Mission under Scrutiny: Confronting Current Challenges* (Fortress Press, September 2006) *What is Mission?: Theological Explorations* (Fortress Press, 2000) and *The Mission of Theology and Theology as Mission* (Trinity Press, 1997).

for World Mission and Evangelism)² conference in Mexico City declared more than 40 years ago, is “the line that separates belief from unbelief,” or, as Lesslie Newbigin³ would express it “belief from false beliefs”.

Identifying Mission

Ever since the mid-1970s, there has been considerable consensus among most Christian traditions about the meaning of mission. However, some misunderstandings continue to persist. In this section I will try to clarify in brief outline the nature of *integral* mission, starting with the main misconceptions.

1. *Mission takes place when national frontiers are crossed*

This view assumes that the world can still be divided into Christian and non-Christian parts. In 1910, the celebrated mission conference in Edinburgh was called to consider “the means of evangelising all the *non-Christian* world”. The organisers excluded Latin America as it was thought to be a Christian continent. As a result, some churches arranged their own mission conference in

²All footnotes are editor’s notes. CWME is a body that was formed under the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1961.

³ Lesslie Newbigin (1909-1998) served nearly 40 years as a missionary in India. Bishop Newbigin played a leading role in working for the unity of the church and was also respected as a theologian and author on issues related to the proclamation of the Christian message in pluralistic contexts, as for example, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Eerdmans Publishers, 1989).

Panama in 1916 to show that evangelisation was a legitimate task even in a region of the world nominally Catholic.

The view expressed here remains quite tenacious among certain groups of Christians. It goes back to the origins of the modern missionary movement. It is implied, for example, in David Livingstone's famous remark about the three benefits that the missionaries were supposed to be taking to Africa: Christianity, Civilisation and Commerce. It lingers on too in the notion that cross-cultural mission is the highest possible calling for a Christian and in the use of the term missions in the plural.

2. *Mission is identified with evangelism*

There are three different expressions of this opinion.

- i. *Primary evangelism is the complete goal of mission.* In other words evangelism is synonymous with mission, and vice-versa.
- ii. *All of mission is evangelism.* This suggests that tasks like that of serving the needs of the poor are equated with evangelism.
- iii. *Primary evangelism has primacy.* This view believes that mission is more than evangelism and that not all mission is evangelism. Nevertheless it holds strongly to the conviction that, if there has to be a choice, evangelism is always the priority. Such an opinion raises the question as to why there has to be a choice. Is it not possible for Christian communities to be

engaged in all forms of mission simultaneously?

3. *Mission primarily involves changing structures*

A number of people argue that the Gospel cannot be heard as 'good news' until those outside the community of believers see it engaged in making institutions that serve the needs of vulnerable and excluded members of society. The task of mission, to quote Isaiah, is "to bring justice to the nations" (Is 42:4). The Gospel has to become credible in acts of alleviating suffering, challenging oppression and corruption and creating conditions for people to live in dignity. This is, of course, a task that Christians can undertake together with non-Christians.

However, worthy though these objectives undoubtedly are they cannot be identified as the whole task of mission. Firstly, structures as such are not the recipients of the Gospel. The Gospel message is for people. It undoubtedly has implications for human institutions, but the latter are impersonal. Although they may be affected by it, they do not sin. Therefore, to use the theologically loaded language of liberation or grace with regard to structures is inappropriate; although change is a fitting goal.

Secondly, Christians are bound to tell the story of Jesus Christ. As the increasingly common language of human rights is being used in all sorts of

situations, it may also be applicable to talk of everyone's right to hear the significance of Jesus for their lives. Stories are told by people to people. The meaning of the story will ultimately affect structures. Only those who believe the story will tell it. This is an inescapable task for the followers of Jesus. So mission is about understanding and implementing the correct relationship between the story, people, practical living and institutions.

4. *Integral mission*

Mission has to be a both/and activity: both evangelism and social commitment. The Grand Rapids report of 1982 uses the analogies of the two wings of a bird or the two blades of a pair of scissors. One wing without the other, the bird cannot fly and one blade without the other, the scissors cannot cut.

Mission is about "making disciples", that is, people who follow in the way of Christ in the world, who are his presence in all the ordinary events of life. They seek "to obey everything I have commanded you" (Mt 28:20). According to the Sermon on the Mount⁴ this will involve, among other things, upholding the integrity of marriage, being true witnesses, exercising total ethical integrity in all dealings with others, being agents of reconciliation, avoiding retaliation and vengeance, loving one's enemy and trusting in God's providential care. Discipleship implies

⁴See Matthew 5-7.

engaging with every manifestation of a fallen world as Jesus would, that is the scope of mission.

Mission is “everything that Jesus sends his church into the world to do” (see Jn 20:21). Mission is the human response to the nature of God in prophetic, diaconic and evangelistic ministries.

Every aspect of mission has an evangelistic *dimension*, in that it shows forth the good news of Jesus Christ. Thus, for example, when Christians engage in the ministry of reconciliation they are proclaiming ultimately that “Jesus is our peace”. However, not every aspect of mission has an evangelistic *intention*. Sometimes the word comes first (for example, in Bible translation and distribution and in Alpha courses) and at other times, the deed (for example, teaching people work skills or caring for street children). But, unless word and deed happen together, mission is compromised, unbalanced and incomplete.

Means of Mission

Mission always requires at least three basic elements.

1. *People*
According to the understanding elaborated in the previous sections, every believer in Jesus is a missionary. We can divide mission into inter-cultural and cross-cultural. (In the latter case, sub-

cultures within the same geographical region are also included). It is important to recognise that the calling is always the same, even if the tasks may vary greatly.

Firstly, it involves being conscious of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus in ordinary, everyday life. Secondly, Christians should recognise normal activities as a call to mission: for example, parenting, employment, civic involvement, voluntary service and telling the story to neighbours, friends and work colleagues. Thirdly, it is right to understand that cross-cultural mission is an extension of ordinary mission in a different location: people who contribute to the life of communities beyond their nation as, for example, engineers, health-workers, teachers, accountants, agriculturalists, builders, craftsmen and women and evangelists.

Obviously, in this case, there is a distinction in patterns of mission engagement depending on whether another nation lacks particular skills. However, we have to try to overcome the common stereotypes about skill-sharing across the globe. This type of mission is taking place from everywhere to everywhere, as is illustrated by Brazilian agriculturists improving farming skills in North Africa or a Nigerian running workshops on substance-abuse in Uzbekistan.

2. *Finances*

This resource for mission is obviously problematical, when one is thinking about partnership with churches overseas. Wealth is unevenly distributed across the globe. One of the basic questions that troubles most mission agencies is how to maintain a right balance between a proper accountability for the money given for mission purposes and the possibility of independent decision-making on the part of the recipients. How does one avoid the 'begging-bowl' syndrome? Authentic partnership implies mutual responsibility for mission between two or more groups; it includes a reciprocal giving and receiving in mission. In deciding the goals and means of mission, including how money is to be spent, the objective should be mutual submission (Eph 5:21) between partner churches.

In order to emphasize the unitary nature of mission, I would suggest that local churches should not maintain a separate budget for mission. Rather, they might consider allocating one overall budget to different mission categories. In this way, they would demonstrate their belief that every activity of the church has both a missionary dimension and intention.

3. *Communication*

For the sake of brevity, let us focus on one crucial area, that of literature. This plays an enormous part in mission: from ways of making known the

activities of a local church within its neighbourhood to the writing of appropriate textbooks for students, church-leaders and professionals. How much thought and care goes into providing contextually relevant literature, written to high standards? How much in the way of resources goes into the training and enabling of good authors to have the incentive and time to write? The answer to these questions will indicate the degree of commitment to mission that a particular body undertakes.

Methods of Mission

1. *Reading the signs of the times*
In a world of so many needs and so many demands, determining priorities in mission is a crucial goal. It is clear that neither the church nor the mission agency can respond to every invitation or choose to follow every possible initiative. They need to know how to interpret different situations: to know, for example, where doors are opening or closing and where, therefore, the greatest opportunities exist at any particular moment. Discernment will include a right evaluation of political and economic realities in various parts of the world and which mission enterprises of partner churches need strengthening and who is best equipped to do it. This is a case of resources being transferred from everywhere to everywhere.

2. *Bold Humility*

The stance of the Christian community towards sharing the Gospel in word and deed is simultaneously one of boldness and humility, as David Bosch⁵ has emphasised. *Boldness* means possessing a proper confidence in the truth and relevance of the message and a refusal to be intimidated by opposition of any kind. If the Gospel is true, the latter is to be expected, for “the disciple is not above his or her master”. *Humility* means openness to listen, learn and change one’s mind, to engage in dialogue, reject any notion of personal or cultural superiority and to be willing to serve in any capacity. These two elements of mission methods should be key notions for training in mission.

3. *The local church in mission*

We start from the assumption that “the Church is missionary by its very nature” (*Ad Gentes*, 2)⁶. This means that the Church *is* a missionary event, rather than *having* a mission. The main form of

⁵ David Bosch (1929-1992) was a prominent theologian and social activist in racial reconciliation in his home country, South Africa. He is distinguished for his *magnum opus*, *Transforming mission: Paradigm shifts in Theology of mission* (Orbis Books, 1991) that is often recognised as the textbook that is most widely used in mission courses in seminaries.

⁶ *Ad Gentes* (To the nations) is a document on the missionary activity of the Roman Catholic Church adopted in 1965 as part of the Second Vatican Council.

mission engagement is to implement this reality and vision in the life of the local church.

If one thinks of mission in terms of witness to Jesus and the kingdom of God in “Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth” (Ac 1:8), then we can imagine the contemporary equivalents. Firstly, there is the *local neighbourhood*: in what specific ways can the Christian community meet needs that are not being addressed, such as homelessness, addiction, loneliness and the rehabilitation of prisoners released from prison. Secondly there is the *place of work*: how can the church support people who are working in a secular and possibly quite amoral environment? How can they help and encourage them to make a difference in that context by following in the way of Jesus?

Thirdly, there is the *national context*: depending on circumstances, there are a number of tasks that the church can be engaged in to fulfil its missionary obligation, such as the defence of an ‘open society’ (i.e. the maximum amount of civic freedoms compatible with a proper rule of law) various forms of political involvement, the preferential option for the poor, that is, victims and the vulnerable (such as refugees).

Finally, there is the *international context*. Here the local church can undertake several options, such as supporting mission-partners going overseas,

supporting overseas mission-partners working in the home nation, supporting missionaries going from one part of the 'global South' to another. In the case of my own local church, we have begun to take on these mission engagements, supporting a family working in Chile, a Kenyan family working in a deprived area of Oxford in the UK and a young Indian Christian working with the church in Nepal. The local church can also be aware of particular needs and respond to them appropriately according to its own circumstances: for example, natural disasters, zones of conflict and the persecuted church.

These are a few reflections on the nature of mission and some ideas about how Christians individually and as communities can engage in their calling to share the good news of Jesus Christ in word and action in every place and situation, beginning locally and extending globally.

DIOCESE OF SINGAPORE: OUR CURRENT MISSIONS ENGAGEMENT

Canon Kuan Kim Seng,
Director of Missions, Diocese of Singapore

Introduction: The Strange Arrangement

We need to begin the discussion on the Diocese of Singapore's current engagement in missions by highlighting a little known fact that the Diocese covers a territory far larger than the tiny State of Singapore of 682.7 sq km! The Diocese includes six other countries that are all far larger than Singapore in both population size and land space. These are Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal⁷, Thailand and Vietnam.

This unusual phenomenon is due simply to some strange quirks in history, or if we want to be more accurate theologically, it is due to the hand of God and devolves from the way the Anglican Communion has developed in this part of the world.

The Anglican Church accompanied the entry of the British into Southeast Asia during the late 18th Century. The

⁷In the late 1990s, the Diocese of Singapore accepted the affiliation of several Nepali independent church leaders who had requested the affiliation through an Episcopalian clergy ministering in the country. The clergyman was unwilling to see the Nepali churches becoming part of the Episcopal Church of the USA (ECUSA). His Bishop requested Bishop Moses Tay to help and the rest is history.

first Anglican Church building to be built in this region was St. George's Penang. It was consecrated on 11 May 1819 by the Rt Rev. Thomas Middleton, Bishop of Calcutta. The Bishop of Calcutta came to Penang to consecrate the building because all Anglican ministries in our part of the world were under the Bishop's ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

(This present account will not cover Anglican ministry in Myanmar and the Philippines. Both of which are quite different tracks from our subject this morning.)

Moving forward a hundred and fifty years to 1970, the Anglican ministry in Southeast Asia was present in all those parts of the region that were colonized by the British, namely, Brunei, East and West Malaysia and Singapore. In Brunei and East Malaysia, Anglican work had become two dioceses; the Diocese of Kuching and the Diocese of Sabah that were formed in 1962. West Malaysia and Singapore continued as one entity until 1971 when the Diocese of West Malaysia was formed. At this point in time, there were also Anglican chaplaincy churches in three Southeast Asian countries which were not British colonies. These were Jakarta, Bangkok and Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City).

The ecclesiastical jurisdictions of all the three Malaysian Anglican Dioceses were drawn along the political boundaries of Malaysia and Brunei and whatever was outside these boundaries became the ministry responsibility of the Diocese of Singapore!

Shh! Men at Work

When we woke up from our slumber, it was too late. This little Diocese with 20,000 members was entrusted with the responsibility of the Anglican ministry in a region that has more than 400 million people. To add to the pressure, there were no indigenous Anglican Churches in any of the countries that we are now responsible for. There were only two expatriate churches because the work in Saigon had disappeared when Vietnam was reunified.

The magnitude of the ministry did not dawn upon the Diocese of Singapore in the 1970s or even the 1980s. Although (some) Anglican Churches were actively involved in missions in many parts of Southeast Asia during this period, there was no concerted effort to plant any Anglican Church in any of the countries under the responsibility of the Diocese. The departure from this situation came only in the early 1990s when the Diocese of Singapore recognized the scale of our responsibilities and appointed our first Dean (Canon James Wong) to begin Anglican work in Indonesia.

Subsequently, other Deans were appointed for all the six deanery-countries. Missionaries were also raised from the Diocese and a more focused approach to the development of Anglican ministry in these countries was organised.

Even with all these developments, it was clear that the scale of the job was just far too huge for a small diocese of 20,000 members to bring to completion. It is also useful

to add that most of the Deans of our deanery-countries are people pastoring congregations. This means, these Deans were juggling two jobs, for example, the Director of Missions of the Diocese is also the Vicar of the Cathedral.

It is clear that we need help to do justice to the work before us. We, therefore, turn to the rest of the world-wide Anglican family.

‘Come Over and Help Us’

In May 2001, we organised a Missions Consultation in Singapore for Anglicans world-wide. The Consultation, with the theme, “*That They May Know and Confess Jesus as Saviour and Lord*” drew many significant participants, notably, archbishops and bishops as well as heads of Anglican missions agencies. Our intention, simply put was, ‘come over and help us’.

This Consultation shared with Anglicans world-wide that a significant work in this part of the world was begging for attention. God willing, in the near future, we will see Anglican dioceses in Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia and etcetera. But dioceses do not appear overnight and only Anglican dioceses or provinces can help to give birth to new Anglican dioceses.

The 2001 Consultation was followed by another Consultation in 2004. The 2004 Consultation was a roundtable discussion when all the Deans presented their reports followed by discussions and prayer. The 2004

Missions Consultation Roundtable was our way of making ourselves accountable to our fellow Anglicans who were coming to work with us.

We may summarise by saying we are happily helped in our mission responsibility in Southeast Asia by the other three Dioceses of the Province of the Anglican Church in Southeast Asia, as well as other Provinces and Dioceses and Parishes, and Anglican mission agencies. We see this partnership with other like-minded Dioceses as a crucial development in the years ahead for the Anglican Communion.

As an example of what is happening at the ground level, early this year we received a missionary couple from the Diocese of Pittsburgh. They are now in Cambodia. Next week, God willing, the Bishop of Pittsburgh, Bishop Bob Duncan and Archbishop John Chew would be up in Phnom Penh for the 'priesting' of the Rev. Colin Larkin. Bishop Duncan was one of the participants at our 2001 Missions Consultation.

A Summary of Anglican Work

Our work in Southeast Asia may be divided into two broad categories. The first category is the four deanery-countries of Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal and Thailand where we are doing direct church-planting. In all these instances, we are working with the locals. Our priority is two-fold, planting churches and raising indigenous leadership. Of course, the final 'end product' of normal Anglican church-planting is to

establish dioceses in the countries or regions where we are working. Therefore, raising indigenous clergy is a priority.

Of all the deanery-countries that we are now working in, Indonesia is most likely to become the first where a new diocese will emerge. This is both obvious and natural as half of the 400 million people in our area of responsibility are Indonesians.

The second category covers Laos and Vietnam. In both these cases, Christianity is usually seen by people in authority as a tool of the colonizing West and Asian Christians are people in 'cahoots' with those Western colonizers. Thus, church-planting, especially by foreigners, is a definite 'no-go'. We have no church-planting effort in these two countries, but that does not mean we are not present.

In Laos, we run a very successful school teaching the English language. This school has an unofficial expatriate church which the authorities are happy to pretend does not exist. Our missionaries in Laos attend the local churches and render whatever help they can. In Vietnam, we work with some Vietnamese Christian leaders and help to strengthen their churches and initiatives. We have also placed a missionary couple in Hanoi and are looking forward to see how things may progress.

We also work in cooperation with the Vietnamese authorities. In the past two years, the Diocese has hosted English Language camps in Singapore for Vietnamese children under the auspices of the United Nations

Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in Hanoi. We believe this will lead to better understanding between the Vietnamese authorities and the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have also communicated with the Vietnamese authorities on our desire to start an English language expatriate church in Hanoi.

As we summarise the missions work in the Diocese of Singapore, we must not fail to highlight two ministry components that have developed in recent years. The first is the Christian Micro Economic Development (CMED) component, which expresses how we live out the Great Commandment to love our neighbours as we love ourselves which in turn will lead to the fulfilling of the Great Commission.

The second mission ministry component is crisis relief, again also arising from the Great Commandment. Out of our crisis relief experience in the disastrous earthquake in Bam, Iran in December 2003, we organised a crisis relief setup in the Diocese. This volunteer group, the Anglican Crisis Relief Outreach and Support, Singapore (ACROSS) has proven to be very useful in our response to the Indian Ocean tsunami of December 2004 as well as the recent earthquake in the Bantul-Jogjakarta area.

Finally, we are not myopic or only doing our own things in fulfilling 'Anglican work'. We have alluded to our cooperation with churches in Laos and Vietnam. It is the same in other parts of the deanery-countries. In areas

where we are not directly present, we work with the local churches to advance the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Indonesia, following the disastrous tsunami in Aceh, we worked with *Peduli Bangsa*, an Indonesian Christian non-governmental organisation, in providing relief and reconstruction help. We are still on a house rebuilding programme with *Peduli Bangsa* in Aceh, but in the final phase as the money raised are drying up.

Conclusion: ‘Completing the Work You Gave Us to Do’

In John17:4, the Lord Jesus Christ prayed to the Father, ‘I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.’ (English Standard Version) In our case, completing the Great Commission that the Lord Jesus Christ gave to His Church is the ultimate expression to glorify God with which is true worship.

The work of the Great Commission is the shared responsibility of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are grateful to God for the privilege this morning to explore, learn from each other, and encourage each other as we see that Day drawing near.

Thank you.

MISSION INVOLVEMENT OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN SINGAPORE

Rev Terry Kee

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord and saviour, Jesus the Christ.

The Lutheran Church in Singapore is a small church of less than 4,000 members and thus has limited resource in its commitment to fulfill the mission of our Lord. Apart from ways in which church members may be giving individually to missions, we as a Church are involved in the following missions.

1. The Lutheran Mission in Thailand

The LCS works in partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hong Kong, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, Kinki Evangelical Lutheran Church (Japan), the Lutheran Church in Australia and the Norwegian Missionary Society in Thailand. Together we share a 28 missionary visa quota . In turn, the missionaries within this partnership work with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand in *diakonia* ministry, theological education, evangelism and church planting.

As a Lutheran Mission in Thailand, we have since 1993 maintained at least 1 unit of missionaries in Thailand.

2. Cambodia Mission

In Phnom Penh, we have established a mission clinic and a drug rehabilitation centre in partnership with the Danish Mission, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church. This was the result of our participation in the Mekong Mission Consultation coordinated by the Lutheran World Federation. We had embarked on the work after consulting the Kampuchea Council of Churches, the Evangelical Fellowship of Cambodia and the International Council of Cambodia.

Since then the partnership has broadened to include, the Methodist Mission, the Anglican Church, the Girls' Brigade and Rev. Timothy Ith of Phnom Penh Bible Seminary Dr. Felipe Castro, a medical doctor and pastor and Mr. Graham Shaw from the United Nations (Drug & Crime).

3. China Mission

As the church exploded numerically, the lack of pastoral care has left believers spiritually unstable. The Bible Training Centre in Xu Chang, Henan looked to the Lutheran Church in Singapore to assist in the training of local volunteer evangelists who will be sent to the preaching points to assist the pastors where 2.1 mil of the 9.1 mil. have become believers.

Since 2004, Zhou Kou Christian Training School has also invited us to assist them. We now send two pastors twice a year to teach during Summer and Autumn.

4. Mongolia Mission

The LCS sponsored Puje, a Mongolian for his studies with the Singapore Bible College between 1998 and 2002 and continued to support his ministry after his return to Mongolia. We are now exploring partnership with the Mongolian Lutheran Church in several ministry programmes such as, Summer Outreach, Youth Leadership Training Programmes and various micro-enterprise projects. We are also building a church to reach out to the needs of the community.

5. International Lutheran Seafarers' Mission

In partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Bavaria, we minister to the spiritual and social needs of international seafarers. We have distributed bibles, tracts and other reading materials as well as provided a Bible correspondence course in various languages.

6. Lutheran Mission to the Thais in Singapore

In partnership with the Lutheran Mission in Thailand and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thailand, the Thai Good News Centre in Singapore

was established to bring Christ's gospel through proclamation and service to the Thais living and working in Singapore.

THE METHODIST CHURCH OF SINGAPORE MISSIONS OVERVIEW

Rev George Martzen
(Delivered on behalf of, Rev Dr Norman Wong,
Methodist Missions Society)

Introduction

The Methodist mission movement began in 1885 with James Thoburn and William Oldham. Thoburn, an American missionary and Oldham, an English missionary were ministering in India when they responded to the possibility of establishing a Methodist witness in 'Singapore and the Malay peninsula'. After a week of preaching on such texts as Zechariah 4:6 ("Not by power, nor by might, but by my Spirit..."), the first Methodist church was planted. A major part of the mission endeavour in those early days was the establishment of mission schools. The initial effort was a school for boys until Sophia Blackmore began establishing mission schools for girls. When churches ministering in the local dialects were planted, it soon led to the establishment of the Methodist Church as a missions conference. Now there are over 33,000 Methodists in Singapore, with forty- three churches, many of which are sending missionaries into other parts of the world.

The Methodist Missions Society (MMS) was established in 1991. However, many Methodist congregations continue to be active in independent missions work while in partnership with MMS.

The MMS mission statement is to establish indigenous churches supported by mission endeavours in communities across our region where there is no Methodist presence.

The MMS has developed a “2020 Vision” that involves the following:

- * Multiplying 800 Indigenous Churches throughout the region in
 - Cambodia
 - China
 - Nepal
 - Thailand
 - Vietnam
 - Laos and Timor-Leste in the future

- * The hope is that at least twenty percent of our local church missions personnel and giving will be channelled through MMS to fulfill the MMS 2020 Vision.

Cambodia

- COSI (Community Outreach Services, Immanuel) Children’s Village includes 110 children.
- The Methodist School of Cambodia has fifty children in the kindergarten and 170 in the Primary School.
- Emmaus Women’s Centre has twenty women in this shelter.

- In church ministry, MMS is helping in ten churches. MCS cooperates with several other Methodist groups, including the United Methodist Church (USA), Korean Methodists, the World Federation of Chinese Methodist Churches (WFCMC) and Connexio (Swiss and French Methodists).

China

- In Fu Jian Province, there are various outreach projects which are education or agriculture based.
- Luo Yuan Student Centre
- Chen Dai Student Centre
- Nanping Training Centre that is still under construction

Nepal

- In church ministry there are four churches and four preaching points.
- The Caleb Bible Institute provides short-term bible training for Christian workers in a rural setting.
- Sophia's Girls' Home in Kathmandu is a shelter for twenty six school-going girls

Thailand

- *Muangthai Mettakij* Foundation is the social arm of the Mission. Its Centre in

Chiangmai runs a hostel for students from the hill tribes studying in the city and a kindergarten and childcare ministry called the Vineyard Childcare Centre.

- The church ministry is registered as the Mettakij Church Association in Thailand. There are eight churches, including work among the *Lahu* tribes and the *Isaan* province.

Vietnam

- The Mission works in cooperation with the Vietnamese government.
- In Ho Chi Minh City, it provides medical services to children from underprivileged families through the Love Child Charity Clinic, sponsors the education of 100 children in the 15 May School and supports the Hope Paediatric Oncology Ward.
- In Hanoi, the Mission supports the efforts of the *Linh Nam* Polyclinic.

Four problems for which you can pray with MMS

- How do you get mission churches to be self-supporting?
- How do you help Singapore churches catch the excitement of the mission field? For example, currently only half of the Cambodian churches are being supported by Singapore churches.

- What is the role of MMS as a General Conference agency? There are many different views about how to do missions among our forty-three churches.
- How do you care for missionaries? Currently there are twelve full-time MMS missionaries and five potential personnel.

THE 'EVANGELISM MODEL' IN OUR REGION

Rev Sunil Jayantha A G

(Delivered on behalf of, the Rt Rev Phua Chee Seng,
Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Singapore)

The 'Mission of the Church' is a very wide concern, but in this presentation, I will focus on the "evangelism model" in our region.

In advancing towards a global evangelistic objective, the establishment of co-operation in evangelism amongst the regional Church is a top priority. The government has set for us a good model for regional co-operation. Our former Prime Minister, Mr. Goh Chok Tong, promoted the concept of an "Economic Triangle", which covers Singapore, Malaysia, and some of the Indonesian islands. Singapore has the advantage of technical, communications and transport infrastructure, whereas Malaysia and Indonesia have land, labour, water and electrical power. Exploitation of mutual strengths will lead to win-win situations for all. This model will lead to economic growth into the 21st century as each country concentrates on the economic activities in which it has inherent strengths.

From a global economic viewpoint, the ASEAN grouping has become a large and important alliance that is able to tackle issues in economic growth and co-operation as well as other problems facing the region, such as the haze, drug abuse et cetera.

Based on such a regional partnership concept, the Singapore Presbyterian Church has adopted a “consolidate and open” attitude towards the work of church planting. By consolidating the efforts of the Presbyterian churches in the region, we are able to encourage more local churches to be involved in missions and from that to church planting. At the moment, the work has started within the triangle of Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. Besides these countries, we are also preparing for involvement in other countries.

From the relationships built with the common goal of church planting, we hope the regional churches will one day form a strategic alliance that discusses mutual areas of interest in evangelism and plans for the development of evangelistic work in this region, so that we would move towards a global church-based evangelistic ministry.

About C S C A

The Centre for the Study of Christianity in Asia (CSCA) is the mission research arm of Trinity Theological College. It first began on 4 October 2001. We work closely with churches and seminaries in Singapore and the neighbouring regions to build up confident and theologically mature Christian communities.

Our work gathers around three research clusters:

A. Mission Practice, Coordinator: Mrs Kimhong Hazra

- To work with the Church in critical reflection on the impact of the Christian mission enterprise in South East Asia.

B. Faith and Society, Coordinator: Dr Mark Chan

- To facilitate Christian reflection on public issues and to promote responsible Christian engagement in society.

C. History and Documentation, Coordinator: Rev. Dr Michael Poon

- To improve documentation of Christianity and reflect on the church histories of Singapore and its neighbouring regions.

CSCA website:
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