

FROM CAPE TOWN 2010 TO BUSAN 2013

Cape Town and Busan - Two World Conferences

The basic problem that presents itself to us in this Rolf Scheffbuch-Symposium, also includes the question: To what extent have the so differently oriented theological directions as the Geneva Commission on World Mission and Evangelism and the Lausanne Movement for World Evangelization, in other words, “ecumenicals and evangelicals”, recently approximated toward each other in their understanding of salvation and missions today?

I want to try to answer this by comparing two documents with each other, in which the two movements have recently expressed their current understanding of missions, namely the one originated in Cape Town in 2010 and the one to be generated in Busan in November 2013. I begin by outlining each congress, respectively, the General Assembly as an event.

I. Cape Town 2010

1. The mission-historical significance of the III. International Congress on World Evangelization

Already in 1806, the Baptist lay preacher and pioneer of the modern evangelical missionary movement *William Carey* had a “*pleasing dream*”¹, which he told the London secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society. It was the vision of an international and interdenomina-

tional missions conference, to which the missionaries distributed over all continents should gather at the southern tip of Africa in order to consult on the joint fulfillment of the Great Commission of the Risen One “*Go into all the world and make disciples of all nations*”.

Thus Carey had already considered a century in advance what was actually fulfilled in 1910 in Edinburgh, Scotland, led by the missionary statesman John R. Mott. That was the beginning of the modern ecumenical missionary movement, which had found its coordination center initially in the International Missionary Council (est. 1921) and later after its incorporation into the World Council of Churches (1961) in Geneva.

Another century later the Edinburgh Jubilee was celebrated in several countries, but nowhere as spectacular as from 16 to 25 October 2010 now actually in Cape Town! And this in the form of the third congress of the Lausanne Movement, preceded by the first one in Lausanne in 1974 and the second in Manila in 1989. As the British chairman of the Lausanne Movement *Doug (Ias) Birdsall* cheerfully announced in his opening speech, this congress was the “most representative gathering of evangelical Christians in history”. This was true in so far as there 4,200 representatives of the evangelical missionary movement and of the indigenous churches founded by them came together from 197 countries. Birdsall expressed the hope “that God will place through Cape Town a fire that is not quenched again,

but continues to spread.” Over the congress or invisibly alive in its midst hovered the spiritual father of the missionary revival of evangelicals, *Billy Graham*, and the theological mentor of the movement, *John R.W. Stott*, both well advanced in years, who had not been able to come to Cape Town. The 200-meter-long congress hall quickly filled with participants from all over the world, who are also actively leading the missionary proclamation or in the training of missionaries at home.

The general theme of the congress was taken from the 5th chapter of 2 Corinthians: “*God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself... and has established the ministry of reconciliation among us.*” In doing so, the organizers were aware that reconciliation is a salvific event that proceeds from God and primarily restores the communion with him and man, broken by sin. Yet the trend has become clear very quickly in the lectures and appeals to shift the emphasis to the horizontal level of reconciliation of disunited people as well as social and political communities. Thus asked the Norwegian theologian *Odd Sverre Hove* in his press release worrying if here would not be a danger of changing the message of reconciliation - as it is very centrally unfolded in the Lutheran doctrine of atonement -, into an inner-worldly event of reconciliation of people with one another. Also in Cape Town was much talk about globalization as the great phenomenon of our time and as a new basic condition of the task of evangelism. This was also based on the relationship with people of other faiths. Finally, one could observe how in the Lausanne movement, the “holistic” understanding of missions, as it had been touched upon in the disputed 5. Article of LC, has always been more oriented toward the socio-political responsibility.

2. The missions theology of Cape Town Declaration

The document that emerged from the Cape Town Congress is significant. Although it is

not treated there, but was fixed and published only months after the congress, it bears the name *Cape Town Commitment* (German: *Die Kapstadt-Verpflichtung*, abbreviated: KV). The Theological Commission of LCWE had created it in a careful, a year-long work and with the endeavor to place it in the tradition of the final documents of the two previous Congresses, the “*Lausanne Commitment* (actually “Covenant”) and the “*Manila Manifesto*”.

However, already the first theologically fundamental main part was much longer than the two previous documents. For here, both the spiritual task of the mission was considered in all its aspects and it was anchored bible-theologically and dogmatically. This testifies to a profound exegetical and systematic-theological scholarship. Unfortunately this already finished part of the Cape Town Declaration was deliberately withheld up to the Sixth Conference day. The main reason for this was that it should only be published together with the II. main part still in progress, which is entitled “*For the world we serve: The Cape Town Call to Action*”. A translation into German was made accessible only two years later by Michael Herbst in the documentary volume published in the AUSAAT-Verlag to make it available for the public.

It is impossible within the scope of this article to present in detail the Cape Town Commitment and to undergo an examination. The authors of the theological foundation have organized it into ten elaborated theses with each introduced by the formula “*We love ...*”:

1. because God first loved us, we love
2. the living God,
3. God the Father,
4. God the Son,
5. God the Holy Spirit,
6. God’s Word,
7. God’s world,
8. God’s gospel,
9. God’s people,
10. God’s mission.

That was certainly innovative, and it appears to be anchored in God’s courteous love. Equally gratifying is that the KV founds missions in a *trinitarian* way, as it has become common at

the latest at the 5th World Mission Conference in Willingen. It is to be welcomed that each of the theses is substantiated with many Scripture quotations.

However, the question must be raised whether out of the new motivation for missions because of our love, in a subtle way the *theocentric*, i.e. the subject of missions located in God himself is shifted in an *anthropocentric* way, by the nature of its style, namely through the introductory “*We love ...*”, man is made to be the starting point. Since this shows the danger at hand, that of the *Missio Dei*, God’s mission, now becomes a *Missio hominum* (mission of people), especially because the substance of the content places its main weight on the action-oriented II. Part of the KV.

More precarious is yet another danger, detected by attentive observers that is even deeper rooted theologically. It is that the evangelicals in the Lausanne Movement have probably developed an altered *understanding of the world* in relation to the biblical, especially the Johannine writings. This can be found in Part II “For the world, we serve”. The term “world” (Greek κόσμος) is in the New Testament so ambivalent, that is, ambiguously used: It is in fact on the one hand within the meaning of John 3:16 the world that God so loved that he gave his only begotten Son for it. Secondly, “world” here means generally also the universal habitat of all created beings. “World” also appears thirdly - especially with John and Paul – as the corrupted world from the rebellion of Satan and the fall into sin which is the revolting humanity, collectively resisting against their Creator.

That understanding of world and humanity was also foundational for the theology of the reformers, particularly Martin Luther. To a related change in the conservative evangelicals the leading missions theologian of the Vatican, Professor Dr. *Robert Schreiter* calls attention in a theological evaluation of the KV.²

He observes quite correctly that in the 1990s and in the first decade of the 21st century, a greater interest in the term “*reconciliation*” is coming to the foreground, and this across the denominations. This was similarly done already at the recent world mission conference of the WCC in Athens 2005. In the Lausanne Covenant 1974 there still seems to be a distant relationship between the Church and the world, derived from the fall into sin narrative in Genesis 3. Christians are called out “from the world” and would be sent back “into the world”. “The Cape Town Commitment”, says Schreiter, “deals with the question in another way, by providing the biblical story of God’s action in the world in the context of the topic ‘love’. It does not deny the sinfulness ... But it is striking that it sets the tone, to love the world as God would do it. The reviewer of the Cape Town Commitment here arrives at the decisive double question: “Does the Cape Town Commitment represent a total shift in an evangelical theology of missions? Does from its warm world embrace arise a radical dissonance with the Reformed reading of the radical nature of the fall of Adam and Eve, which has hitherto been the foundation of its missions theology?”

This astute observation of a leading Catholic missions theologian deserves high regard in my opinion. This is not at all a dispute over isolated dogmatic questions. Rather, arising out of the issues of world and human understanding highlighted here, there are far-reaching consequences for the missionary thinking and acting in general. An observer, living in Cape Town and trained in theological judgments, *Dorothea Scarborough* - previously active in missionary work among the Polynesians³ - shared with me after reading the *Cape Town Commitment* her first impression:

“I think it’s beautifully written. But the over-emphasis of love makes it one-sided; because Martin Luther says it: ‘We are to fear God above all things, love and trust’ ... Nowhere is clearly stated that pagan religions

are demonic. ... The sin, the wrath of God and eternal damnation, as well as the devil, are hardly mentioned in the Commitment. ... All this fits with your theme, 'convergence between Lausanne and WCC'."

And she added:

"By being nice alone there cannot be the contending Church on earth and the triumphing Church in heaven." - Due to the over-emphasis of the terms "reconciliation" (especially in the horizontal sense) and "love", the aspect of the confrontation between the Gospel and a world hostile to God is in danger of getting lost in the new evangelical missions theology.

Not only in Cape Town but in contemporary church and theology in general the salvation-historical dualism is lost. Because the image of God is too one-sidedly marked by his love and goodness, while he is barely recognized and preached as the *Holy One* any more. At this weak point also the urgently imperative mission theological study of the results of Lausanne II should start in Cape Town.

II. Busan 2013

1. The importance of the X. General Assembly for the current situation of the WCC

In spring 2010, the National Christian Council of Korea decided to invite the WCC to hold its X. General Assembly in the South Korean port city of Busan. This will be the first time that a WCC General Assembly takes place in the Far East. For this option there are various reasons; some are in the interest of the National Council of Churches in Korea itself, other considerations are in the senior staff of the World Council of Churches in Geneva. Probably these hope that the accommodation of the General Assembly will exert - in a country that is known for the spiritual vitality of its Chris-

tian inhabitants -, an invigorating effect on the further development of the WCC at all. Since at present the WCC is in a sickly situation. Its former momentum in the era of such famous General Assemblies like the one in New Delhi in 1961 and Uppsala in 1968 under very energetic and purposeful Secretaries-General as *Willem A. Visser 't Hooft* and *Philip Potter* slackened after the VII. General Assembly in 1991 in Canberra.

An entire block of important member churches, namely the Orthodox and evangelical participants, had been dismayed at particularly to the demonstration of a shamanic ritual by the Korean *theology professor Chung, Hyun Kyung* -, where she had called the *han*-spirits of the dead, and this in the name the leading motto of Canberra: "*Come, Holy Spirit, renew the whole creation!*" For the Orthodox Churches this appeared to be proof that the WCC has now openly taken a syncretistic course. They threatened to cancel their membership if not the whole system of the WCC will thoroughly reformed. During his last term of office general secretary *Konrad Raiser* spoke about the demands of the Orthodox and began to work on a structural reform. Since then, the conductive Geneva staff have retained to express provocative pronouncements and to impose on the member churches a prefabricated agenda. But the WCC has lost much of its public interest.

2. The new ecumenical mission statement "*Together towards Life*"

1. *The ecumenical view of missions of Uppsala 1968*

On the Protestant side, there were the evangelical churches and mission agencies around the world, which very early objected to the inadequate biblical substantiation of ecumenical pronouncements and programs of action. In particular, they complained that in the official plans, soul winning evangelization and church planting and growth in the geographical areas

hardly reached with the message of Christ. So the well-known missiologist *Dr. Donald McGavran* presented the challenging question to the Geneva planning group in 1968: “Will Uppsala betray the two billions?” He meant precisely those ethnic groups in remote areas, who have never heard the Gospel. Because the main concern for Uppsala was the “humanization” socio-political structures in the two-thirds world of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

For this, in the past decade and a half since the end of World War II. the former *International Missionary Council*, and then the WCC, into which this was incorporated in New Delhi, had developed a new concept of mission and evangelism, propagated under the name “*Missio Dei*”. This term implied that “missions” originally was not a task entrusted primarily to the Church, but a work of the Triune God himself, who was present in the world of politics as well as in nature and both, sometimes in soft development, sometimes by revolutions, guiding them to their goal, the “kingdom of God”. Being his human instruments in this process, God can also use other ones than the church, both from other religions as well as political liberation movements. Thus the World Council of Churches included as Instruments of the *Missio Dei* also communist guerrilla groups. This meant that until the collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989/90 the political statements made by the Geneva staff letter with a prophetic claim, were very rarely directed against acts of oppression and persecution, committed by communist governments. This “selective indignation” finds today an explosive parallel: The terrible persecutions of Christians in North Korea are concealed in the preparatory documents for Busan and will play no role in the topics to be addressed.

2. A new ecumenical mission statement

Already there is the draft for a mission statement, the first since 1982, where the WCC had published a document under the name “*Mission and Evangelism - An Ecumenical*

Affirmation”. Exactly three decades later, in September 2012, the WCC Central Committee agreed at its meeting in Crete to a detailed declaration, presented to them by the host of the Geneva Commission on world mission and evangelism, Metropolitan *Geevarghese Mor Coorilos*. It is entitled: “*Together towards life: mission and evangelism in changing landscapes*”.

At first glance, in this document its spiritual language is striking. It addresses some key biblical terms, like especially “spirit”, “life”, “creation” and “kingdom of God”. The authors of this mission statement endeavor to place this in this close relationship with the main theme of the X. Assembly of the WCC “God of life - Lead us to justice and peace”. The main divine person who is called by the motto for Busan “God of life”, is consistently called in all 112 paragraphs of the Declaration “the spirit”, sometimes also “Holy Spirit”. This is described as one who is present and active in the world’s history and in the whole of creation, and that includes the entire cosmos. The Spirit has a central mission, to take part in which we all are called: the bringing about justice and peace between all members of the human society and to lead the whole of creation to their destination, the kingdom of God. This ultimate goal is not understood as being attained by an eschatological act of God in the creation of a new earth. It should rather come through a gradual *transformation* into existence. “Transformation” is a key concept in ecumenical theology, which, as we have seen, is increasingly used also by evangelical groups and theologians.

The presence of the Spirit is recognized everywhere where a change in the present situation of injustice and conflicts takes place. That is why it is also the mission of God’s people to get involved in such a transformation. The declaration states in § 10: “The Church is God’s gift to the world for their transformation towards the Kingdom of God”.

In this view, the mission of the church is viewed much broader than that, to seek the salvation of souls. Because - and this is true for now - "Both the earth and our bodies must be transformed by the grace of the Spirit." (§ 20) - "Mission resists spiritually against all unjust structures and is ready to transform all life-destroying values and systems, wherever they are at work in our economy, our politics, and even in our churches." - This means that Christian missionaries may not limit their *spiritual* task to preaching, prayer and service; because the statement tells us so, that "God's free gift of life compels us (sic!), to take up the confrontation with idolatrous attitudes, unjust systems, political domination and exploitation in our current world economic order (§ 30). What a tremendous task is assigned here to the churches, mission societies and individual Christians regardless of whether they are professionally qualified at all! They are expected to solve all those tricky problems of our contemporary world, where governments, economists, scientists and other specialists, and even the United Nations itself strive to overcome them usually in vain.

Another key concept, which plays an important role in the explanation, is the word "life". Their title is indeed "*Together on the road to life*". Even the motto of the conference is calling God as a "God of life" and begs him to lead us to justice and peace. We should especially believe in God the Holy Spirit, who keep the life and strength and renew the whole creation. The mission of the church is described as one, "to celebrate life and in the power of the Holy Spirit to resist all life-destroying forces and transform them."

After all of this the attentive reader will wonder what the essence of the so cherished "life" actually would be. Apparently it is identical with creation itself, and preservation of life is the same as our responsibility for the preservation of pristine creation. Such a concept is well-approved without difficulty -, in secu-

larized societies, up to the representatives of African tribal religions, the center of which is, according to *Placides Tempels*, the "force vital", on which all natural beings depend.

My impression is that the statement does not clearly distinguish between two essentially different kinds of life, where the former is called in Greek βίος, the other ζωή. A biblical concordance study shows us that βίος essentially refers to the earthly life according to its function and its length. On the other hand the word ζωή refers to an ontologically higher form; it means the supernatural life, which God the Father and Jesus Christ already have and in which the believers should gain full share after their resurrection. Already now they have received it incipiently in Christ. Especially in the Gospel of John we encounter the term ζωή frequently. It is centrally unfolded as the gift of salvation, which Jesus gives to those who come to him and remain in him. In John 5:24 Jesus assures his followers: "*Verily I say unto you, He who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.*"

Unfortunately, this truly Christological and soteriological understanding of the key biblical term "life" has been lost in the mission statement for Busan. It has been extended or watered down to a universal force of nature that can be easily taken captive by followers of any pantheistic religion or ideology, including the gurus in the New Age movement.

III. The need for a confessional-theological wake-up call

1. The dilemma of evangelical churches in Korea in view of Busan 2013

The Geneva leadership of the WCC has gratefully accepted the invitation to Korea, knowing that the vast majority of churches and Christians are evangelical there. Not all responsible

church leaders and theologians in Korea were supporting that the X. General Assembly would be taking place in their country. They feared indeed that the questionable traits of the Geneva Ecumenical Movement, in which they had previously taken offense, especially the political one-sidedness and the pluralistic view of non-Christian religions, could fatally affect the evangelical character of the host churches. In the Korean Evangelical Association whose Chairman, Prof. Dr. *Myung-Hyuk Kim*, also a regional representative of the *International Christian Network*, they deliberated about the wisdom of participating in the Busan conference and invited me to provide a critical analysis of the preparation plans for the X. General Assembly as well as give advice for an evangelical contribution to a positive outcome of the conference. Since I had to cancel my planned fifteenth journey to Korea for family reasons, I sent two lecture manuscripts in written form. - I recommended to the Korean theologians also to study for themselves the most important preparatory document carefully, and cautioned them of the evangelical and very biblical sounding style of the document.

This biblical character is based, incidentally, also on the fact that some passages are written by evangelical theologians from Asia committed to the WCC. But closely associated with such seemingly or actually biblically orthodox statements that are reminiscent of the Lausanne Movement documents, are completely different ones.

The most important correction which evangelical theologians should apply to the new ecumenical mission statement refers to the mixing or confusion of two modes of history, namely, *world history* and *salvation history*. It must be pointed out that God is at work in these two areas in different ways. In world history, he acts as the creator, preserver and judge, while according to Rom 13,1-7 he authorizes the governmental organs to bring to bear his commandments.

However, world history does not move continuously and straight forward to convert the present state of affairs into the kingdom of God. The concept of “*transformation*” is erroneous. It is not a biblical term and contradicts the Christian teaching on the relationship between the present world and the future Kingdom of God in power and glory. Between the two successive conditions gaps a chasm which is marked by the return of Christ. He himself will end the old aeon, by executing the judgment of the world court and then making visible his previously hidden world rule. Therefore evangelical theologians should bring this prophetic vision again to the foreground and vigorously demand a biblical eschatology, which is ultimately repressed in that ecumenical mission document.

Truly evangelical mission, and that is, mission in a consistently biblical sense is always oriented by the “view toward the end” (Walter Freytag). It knows that the return of Christ will only take place when all the nations of the earth will have received the testimony of the gospel of the kingdom (Matt 24, 14; 28, 18-20), and this not in a gently-natural transformation process, but in the form of a confrontational and battle action.

2. The risk of an altered understanding of missions by ecumenism

For those who had observed the tensioned opposition between ecumenists and evangelicals especially since their confrontation in the mission section II in Uppsala 1968 and even observed much earlier, it seemed highly surprising that one of the first greeting speeches given at the opening of the Cape Town Congress greetings came from the - specifically invited! - new general secretary of the WCC, the Norwegian pastor *Olav Fykse Tveit*. Clearly he alluded to the earlier difference between the modern ecumenical and evangelical mission understanding, which had been one of the

reasons that following the 8th World Missionary Conference in Bangkok 1973 in the next year the very differently targeted Congress in Lausanne was scheduled. Tveit explained that the geographical distance between Lausanne and Geneva was not far, and so it should be hoped that also the theological distance between the two movements will be overcome more and more. He became even more clearly in a personal interview, which he led in December 2011 with me and my companion *Dr. Werner Neuner* at our visit to the Ecumenical Centre. He explained almost verbatim: “That which evangelicals have denounced particularly sharply at the Bangkok conference 1973 has now become their own understanding of missions!” Particularly he probably thought about the new “holistic” concept and program of a mission in which the evangelistic, social and political responsibility of the church are inextricably linked. This is also a query to the progress and outcome of the Lausanne Congress in Cape Town.

Certainly all the organizers, speakers and participants who were there, agreed that it was still valid for them what the Lausanne Covenant has to say in its 3rd article in 1974:

“Jesus Christ ... has given himself as the only ransom for sinners. He is the only mediator between God and men. ... All people are lost in their sin, but God loves all. He does not want that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. “

But the consequence of this fact that this must also become visible that “in the mission of the church toward the dedicative ministry, evangelism is in the first place”, was only advanced by part of the delegates in Lausanne 1974. To others, this statement was more of a thorn in the flesh. Instead, after Lausanne, the left wing in the form of so-called “Radical evangelicals”, also called “*Social Concern Evangelicals*” became stronger. They have already articulated themselves vigorously during II. Lausanne Congress in Manila 1989 and also influenced

the *Cape Town Commitment*, particularly in the II., the main part dedicated to missionary practice. If this influence continues, the evangelical movement for world evangelization might take step by step the same course which paralyzed the international missionary movement which had so powerfully taken off in Edinburgh 1910, in the second and third decade of the 20th century, and finally bringing about its downfall in the 1960s.

3. Evangelical transformation theorists among us

The temptation to change course of evangelical missions in theory and practice is stirred also in Germany and other European countries. I am thinking in particular of the programmatic book by the Swiss missiologist *Roland Hardmeier* “Church is Mission: Towards a holistic understanding of mission”⁴. This is based on his doctoral thesis, by which he attained a doctorate in 2008 at the University of South Africa (UNISA). It is entitled: “The whole gospel for a world in need of healing: On the mission theology of the radical evangelicals”⁵.

In Germany, the position in question is largely taken by two lecturers at the Marburg Bible Seminary, Johannes Reimer⁶, also a lecturer at UNISA, and Tobias Faix⁷. Also in the Korntal “Academy for World Missions” (AWM) their “holistic understanding of missions” is represented at least by one lecturer, Dr. Andreas Kusch⁸.

Early this year 2013 a study meeting in Herrenberg was held, whose aim was to bring the representatives of the two contrary understandings of missions into dialogue and if possible, to a theological understanding. The interest was, as it turned out already at the high number of participants, very large. The aim of the moderator *Dr. mult. Thomas Schirrmacher*, to arrive by way of clarification of positions at a convergence, seemed achieved by the fact that

the lecturers from the Marburg Bible Seminary asserted that also in their efforts to social transformation, evangelistic proclamation was included. However, for some conservative participants and observers this did not remove the skepticism that the consensus achieved in Herrenberg was superficial.

4. Practical implications of the altered understanding of missions

Last year a missionary of the Liebenzell Mission in Zambia, *Michael Pflaum*, came on a visit to Germany to give especially reports on the progress of the missionary work in Southern Africa. In personal conversation, he complained that the lately sent missionaries primarily had endeavored to initiate and promote technical and economic projects for the benefit of the poor population. However, that would take their time and energy so that they barely achieve the evangelization of pagan tribes.

Similar observations were made by the Württemberg pastor *Karl Baral*, whom I had also invited to this symposium. He would have been very happy to come because he recognized the importance of our cause. In his letter of refusal, he wrote:

“Thank you for inviting me to this exciting conference. With Rolf Scheffbuch I was very much connected, but also the theme of transformation moves me for quite some time. It seems to me: What was advanced in the late 1960s and early 1970s by the WCC and what was rejected as anti-Christian by the professing side (the former Hofacker Association, etc.), is now enforced powerfully by the evangelicals themselves. I remember in great gratitude the lectures from you from that time, and your books back then “Kingdom of God or world community?” (Beyerhaus/Künne) or “Bangkok ‘73 - beginning or end of world missions?”, which gave direction to me.”

I had once also appreciated *John Stott*, but it seems that (among other things) through him this new direction has entered into the evangelical movement⁹, which now controls not only the Marburg CTL College, but also strongly the practical life and the topics of evangelicalism in Germany.

I also think of the theme of last year’s Liebenzell children’s missions conference “*world changer*”. A young boy came home from this festival and said: “I am now also a world changer”. - Where we have made in former times missionary assignments, today evangelical communities and free churches make assignments for social welfare in kindergartens and other facilities.”

5. Task and content of a new declaration on the foundational crisis of missions

The theological and practical trends in the evangelical missionary movement both globally as well as here in Germany, as I have tried to show in this paper, cause us to be deeply troubled. They do not allow professing Bible-believing Christians and communities, to pass over in silence, since the warning is incumbent: „Resist the beginnings!“

We have not done well in the past. I remember rather that the first statement with which the Theological Convention of Confessing Movement, founded in 1969 and continued today by the International Conference of the Confessing Communities, a few months after the IV. WCC General assembly in Uppsala 1968, went public, was the *Frankfurt Declaration on the foundational crisis of missions*. It was sent shortly after its adoption on 4 March 1970, to the leadership of all German Protestant missionary societies and instigated them to a strong excitement. Yes, it came about at a polarization within the mission societies federated in the German Protestant Missionary Association and a separation between the

older missions aligned to Geneva and the younger evangelical missions, who joined forces to work in the Association of Evangelical Missions. And not only from Germany came the echo, but due to their translation in more than a half-dozen languages also from other countries up to the Far East. Everywhere it was recognized that this is a threat to the biblical course of missions which needed to be recognized and rejected. In the course of that time it happened that just then many new doors opened to authentic Gospel proclamation, therefore the first Frankfurt Declaration paved the way to the First Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in July 1974.

Now my friends and I, as well as the deceased great mission friend *Rolf Scheffbuch*, have recognized that the evangelical missionary movement today is threatened by a similar risk of change of direction. This time it occurs in succession of past unbiblical mission objectives like “*Social Gospel*” or “humanization” under slogans like “holistic understanding of missions” and “transformation”.

That is why we have invited to this Symposium. We hope that the lectures held here will open our eyes to the seriousness of the situation. Moreover, we have also prepared a final document, which we like to call “Tuebingen Declaration on the foundational crisis of missions”. As in our first two Frankfurt declarations from 1970 and 1989, this draft is based on the biblical *salvation-historical* perspective, which is guiding the German protestant mission since Zinzendorf. Thus we consider this to be extremely helpful and non-relinquishable today in response to all current challenges of Christian missions. We hope that we can adopt it here together and that we will be heard through it by those responsible in mission and church, as long as there is still time to be heard.

ENDNOTES

1 When choosing the venue for the III. Lausanne Congress, the Lausanne Committee

consciously followed Carey’s proposal. Already on 4 May 2007 declared its Chairman *Douglas Bridesall*: “We believe that the two hundredth anniversary of Carey’s vision and the centennial of its fulfillment (in Edinburgh 1910) is an appropriate frame to encourage the international leadership again to join forces, to determine the course of global evangelism for the 21st century.”

- 2 Robert J. Schreiter: „*From the Lausanne Covenant to the Cape Town Commitment: A Theological Assessment*“, in: *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 35, No 2, April 1011, pp. 88-92.
- 3 She is, by the way, member of the leading committee of the International Conference of Confessing Communities.
- 4 Schwarzenfeld: Neufeld, 2009.
- 5 Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2008.
- 6 Cf. J. Reimer, *Leben. Rufen. Verändern: Chancen und Herausforderungen gesellschaftstransformativer Evangelisation heute* (Marburg an der Lahn: Francke, 2013).
- 7 Cf. T. Faix et al. (ed.), *Würdest du bei IKEA einkaufen?: 4 x 3 Aktiveinheiten zur ganzheitlichen Nachfolge* (Schwarzenfeld: Neufeld, 2009).
- 8 Cf. A. Kusch (ed.), *Der Kampf gegen die weltweite Armut - Aufgabe der Evangelischen Allianz?: zur biblisch-theologischen Begründung der Micha-Initiative* (Bonn: Verl. für Kultur u. Wissenschaft, 2009).
- 9 In the *Lausanne Commitment* written by John R. W. Stott, it is written in § 5: (See *Lausanne Documents* vol. 1, p. 12): „Nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and social as well as political activity are even-handedly (sic!!) our duty as Christians.”

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