

**Integration; Leading; Consolidating; Prayer**

*Father, once again we bow before You together and acknowledge You as the Lord. We acknowledge Jesus Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, as the risen one, the Lord above all lords, the King above all kings and the only creator and redeemer of the world. We acknowledge You, Holy Spirit, as the one who created, redeemed us, sealed us, is at work convicting the world of sin and unrighteousness, and who is honoring and glorifying the Son and the Father. Thank You that as we labor each day and live each day in this world that it is Your commitment, O great triune God, to redeem this world that turned its back on You. Yet You are making it right. We are happy to stay, to belong to Your people, and to have been compelled by Your Spirit by the wonders and sweetness of the Gospel to come to You with so many others in the body of Christ to be a part of Your people. As we seek to navigate our way before Your Word as led by Your Spirit, encouraged and challenged by each other, we ask for Your continued guidance and help. Help us in our families, in our apartments, and in our neighborhoods to seek justice and mercy and to walk humbly before You. Help us as we pray, speak with others, and think about wider issues in the world to know that You are the Lord, that You are the compassionate one, and to entrust ourselves and others to You. God, as we meet again today, we look to You to guide us and lead us, further equipping us for the sake of the Gospel. We do not ask this in a perfunctory way, but we truly ask it from our hearts, in Jesus' name. Amen*

In this lesson, we are moving to topic 34, "Contemporary Realities." We will first of all think of those contemporary realities in the wake of the modern missions movement. I want us to think in a 500-year block. However, if you think in a 200-year block, it is certainly fine. As you know, most of the literature points to the last 200 years. The last 200 years is where things intensified, including Protestants and what has happened with orthodox churches as well, especially Russian orthodoxy. So, in the wake of the modern missions movement, where are we? What sorts of things do we have, and what categories within which do we think and operate and address particular, concrete matters in our local churches and as individuals?

We have various distinctions that come up at different times. They have their own particular place, and they are still very meaningful for us. First, and perhaps foremost (at least for those of us who are evangelicals), is the liberal, evangelical distinction with which we operate—or liberal conservative. This continues to define our official church relations. It often describes our local church cooperative efforts. It describes how we will speak with family members. It often defines how we advise people coming to us for advice about church affiliation. You will know that this particular broad category is coming out of the early to mid-twentieth century and the fundamentalist controversies that were taking place. You can look back at the nineteenth century and what happened with the formulations of all sorts of interesting theologies (Schlerrmacher, Ritche, and others in Germany) or what happened in Britain. In response to some of those things, we saw the rise of scientific explanations of the universe and scientific attempts to approach the Bible as any other book. All of that led to what is happening in the United States in the twentieth century between those who want to hang on to the fundamentals of the Christian faith (virgin birth, the second coming, and such) and those who see that those are perhaps historically conditioned in their formulations and that only the essence of the Christian faith needs to be captured.

So, these categories very much remain with us today. Also, they are very connected to the modern missions movement. This comes out in the second category, which is similar to the first, namely the ecumenical and separatist Lausanne movements. These categories almost overlap with the liberal, evangelical categories.

Let me first take you to a site that describes for us aspects of the Lausanne movement. You read about some of these meetings and categories of the Lausanne movement in at least one of the Escobar essays that you read. An historic meeting of the church took place in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974, which has become the descriptive term, the Lausanne movement. The official name is the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. This was where the first international congress on world evangelization was held, which was the in the wake of a meeting that Billy Graham and others helped pull together in Berlin in 1966. The purpose of the committee was to further the evangelization of the world by building bridges of understanding and cooperation among Christian leaders everywhere to mobilize the whole church to proclaim the whole Gospel to the whole world. There is a lot in that purpose of the Lausanne movement.

In the 1960s, all sorts of things were happening within the wider dynamic of the broader church of Jesus Christ. We are going to look, in a second, at the background specifically of the World Council of Churches. The Lausanne movement came into being as an organization as a reaction to what was happening within the World Council of Churches. The World Council of Churches came about as a direct result of the worldwide, international modern missions movement. It was almost directly out of the missionary conference in Edinburgh in 1910. There had been a few others before that in New York, London, etc. Out of that, John R. Mott and Oldham went to set up national Christian councils in various countries in the world prior to World War I to help coordinate evangelistic efforts. This is putting it generally, but it is fairly accurate in describing the dynamics of what happened. World War I happened, and it shattered European and Western confidence. It shattered Western confidence in the Western world in general and the Western world's relationship with the rest of the world. In addition, there was a seemingly inexorable spread of the Christian faith.

So, after World War I, there were questions arising about other faiths in the world. As meetings took place in the wake of Edinburgh in the 1920s and 1930s, there were serious questions coming up. People were asking questions such as "What about these millions of Hindus and Buddhists who have credible societies and age-old philosophies? They are not going away? Are they condemned if they are outside the Christian church?" These types of questions led to struggles within the church. Then World War II occurred. After World War II, European confidence was further shattered. In the 1950s and 1960s, there were many radical movements in the church. For example, we talked briefly about some of the important missiologists such as Hoekendijk, who was one of the Dutch missiologists. He called for a radical secularization of the church. He believed that the church, organizationally, needed to lose itself and find God in the world. The understanding had been that God reaches and works in the world through His church. However, a reversal of this took place, and God worked directly in the world in all sorts of sociopolitical movements. The classic cases that seemed to rub a lot of people the wrong way were the guerilla independence movements in Central and South America. The church meets God when it gets involved with the world. So, there was support of certain political and economic movements directly. Evangelicals did not have the name yet. (Carl Henry in the late 1940s and 1950s helped formulate the name.) People began to be alarmed by these sorts of things. So, it was no coincidence that this congress took place in Berlin in 1966 and the formal organization of the Lausanne movement in 1974. Then, there were subsequent meetings that have continued in the laws on movement among evangelicals, such as Manila in 1989, etc.

The purpose of the Lausanne Committee was to further the evangelization of the world (this phrase also came up during the Student Volunteer Movement at the end of the nineteenth century or early twentieth century) by building bridges of understanding and cooperation among Christian leaders everywhere and to mobilize the whole church to proclaim the whole Gospel to the whole world. You can see in those last phrases that there is recognition among evangelicals now that we are a worldwide body of Christ, and we need to hear, for example, leaders from Latin America who are telling us that we must not have an

over-spiritualized, truncated Gospel. It takes a whole Gospel preached by the whole church to the whole world. So, you see an evangelical movement taking shape and taking on those characteristics. The Lausanne movement was in reaction to the ecumenical movement, which took shape within the World Council of Churches (WCC). Often times, you will see WCC mentioned in literature. You will see mention of it in some of your readings. You will have heard mention of some of the various WCC worldwide gatherings (Nairobi, Delhi, Mexico City, etc.) The initial meeting took place in 1948. There were six presidents elected at the first assembly, which was held in Amsterdam. The ecumenical movement really became an attempt to seek organizational union of the various churches of Christendom. The primary flash points were between Roman Catholics and Protestants. However, Orthodox churches were involved as well. So, all of these statements that you occasionally hear about (for example, Lutherans and Catholics realizing that they can agree on justification by faith) come out of this ecumenical organizational movement in attempts at coming together. The year 1948 is the key date.

I want to briefly trace the highlights of the twentieth century ecumenical movement. Edinburgh was in 1910, and then there were three branches: Life and Work Committee, Faith and Order, and the International Missionary Council (IMC). The two branches, Faith and Order and Life and Work, did not begin organization until the 1920s. It was the IMC that began in 1910. By 1948, when Faith and Order and Life and Work came together to form the WCC, the IMC came in at New Delhi in 1961. Then there was a larger stream with another previous World Council of Christian Education, which came in the 1970s. This is the broader ecumenical movement and its various assemblies that have been held. The larger mainline denominations would be a part of this. The Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) is not. Most evangelical denominations are not. Often times, when there is talk of organizationally affiliating or cooperating with some group, one of the first questions that people ask is, "Do they have association with the WCC?" If they do, it is not good. The two streams of Life and Work and Faith and Order merged before the WCC began in 1948. Then, in 1961, the International Missionary Council came into the WCC, and that is where it all came back together.

You can go back and read what people like McGavrin, Winter, and others were saying at the time. They were saying that questions concerning the uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the inerrancy of the Bible are basic questions. So, they broke off and formed a separate organization. The main way that there has been some cross-pollination has been through academic circles and through missionary cooperation. There were varieties of academic organizations set up in various places in the world. In Latin America, there are contrasting academic associations. It is the same way in Africa. Some are especially evangelical. Byang Kato is a name I mentioned recently. He was from East Africa. He did his studies at Dallas Seminary and then returned to East Africa in the 1970s. He said, "All of this talk in the WCC about African theology is liberal, dangerous, and wrong." He wrote a very influential book called *The Theological Pitfalls of African Theology*. He took on the influential people in the argument and said, "These guys are flirting with the devil." So, you have had, in various categories, separate workings of evangelicals and ecumenicals. There has been some cooperation between these groups in academic circles. For example, I am going in a few days to a meeting of professors of missions in this part of the country. There will be all sorts of people there. In various disciplines you will find that although there are differences, they do not prevent these different groups from having a great deal in common. So, cooperation is taking place in academic settings as well as in some actual ministry situations.

I have been asked if the United States organization, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), possibly cooperates in some way with the WCC by allowing its member organization churches to also be affiliated with the WCC. If so, is that some kind of a sign of movement? I honestly do not know the answer to that question. I do know that in the PCA, we do not have those kinds of affiliations. I know from my experience in Japan that the Presbyterian Church in Japan wrestled over its involvement and

organization in the wider evangelical group. It is officially an anathema to have any affiliation with the wider ecumenical groups. Cooperation takes place on local levels and in academics but not officially.

The question has been asked, “Is it bad to have a blanket condemnation of the WCC or a blanket bar on cooperation with it? What does that mean for organizations, denominations, and public postures? What does it mean in person-to-person contact or in cooperation between local congregations?” You need to widen the circle more and ask the question this way: “What about the following situation? The local school board in your school district wants to implement certain value teachings and instruction with regard to homosexuality, which is unacceptable from a biblical Christian standpoint. Should you align yourself with some ecumenical Christians who would concur, with the Roman Catholics, with the Islamic community, or the conservative Jewish community—anyone who will align together in a coalition on this public issue of morality?” Those are not easy questions. There has been a great deal of cooperation in this country between evangelicals and Roman Catholics on abortion. Many people have questioned that cooperation because of the basic theological differences that continue to exist. It is not an easy answer to give. I see the Lord not abandoning what He is doing in all sorts of groups. What that means in particular instances and situations often times takes judgment on how you are perceived, what the object is, what the long-range implications are, etc. So, a blanket statement saying, “We will not listen to these people” is probably not right. If I said this was my position, it would betray how much I learned from all sorts of circles. It would not be fair of me to say that.

This paradigm points to how many in the WCC were in connection with supporting liberation movements and the liberation theology that was coming out of Latin America. They were also affiliating with an expressly communist ideology in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. On one hand, evangelicals especially were reacting to that ideology. In WCC gatherings, there were ecumenical worship practices in which all sorts of peoples and religious traditions were included in the name of tolerance and acceptance of diversity. People from a Christian standpoint were wondering how they could do that. So, it is understandable, then, that there were these types of reactions against it.

These are the continuing realities within which we are living. It is connected with the modern missions movement. I hope you can see that. Some of these things came up because of the Western church getting involved in the rest of the world. There were scientific and Enlightenment-related questions arising out of the West and non-West, such as “What about all of these other religions?” and “What about this economic-political disparity within the Cold War that we are seeing after World War II in these independence movements?” People asked, “Should not the church be concerned about the oppression of the peoples of Asia and Africa that the West has imposed, and should not we, from the name of the kingdom of God and for the full scope of the Gospel, support these independence movements?” Through this confusing situation, the WCC evangelicals addressed those questions each in their respective ways. We are still in that situation.

Third, you have, of course, various denominations and their stepchildren. Wherever you go in the world, you will find the same sorts of denominations that you will find where those denominations originated geographically and historically. For example, in Nigeria, you have various Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, and many others. It is the same in Ethiopia, Japan, Mexico, etc. This is a reality. Because of comity agreements, often times areas will have been particularly given to the Presbyterians. You certainly see that in Mexico and Korea. Certain places will be strong Presbyterian territory or strong Methodist territory. Obviously, for example, in Africa, former French colonies are going to be strong in Roman Catholicism, and former British colonies are going to be strong Anglican colonies. Evangelicals have come in former German colonies, and they have a strong Lutheran presence.

We talked briefly about the New Religious Movements (NRMs)—African Independent Churches, African Indigenous Churches, and African Initiated Churches that, perhaps in reaction to the foreignness of these churches, went off on their own and started new churches, which was a worldwide phenomenon. I would encourage you to think it is not just outside the West that that is the case. We discussed how one way to look at AIC is not just as African Independent Churches but as American Independent Churches. When you see churches that break off and do their own thing in the Western part of the world, often they exhibit the desire to be properly contextualized and to meet the current needs of people. The way to do that is often not to be associated with a particular denomination and to become oriented with the needs of the people. Sometimes these can be called community churches, though I hesitate to use that term. I do not want to brand in any negative way. I just want to be descriptive of what is happening on the landscape. Within NRMs, there are mission churches.

There is the difference in the modern missions movement between the Western Christian world and the non-Western world. The Lausanne movement and—certainly even prior to the Lausanne Movement, the WCC—has sought to be truly worldwide. Look, for example, where the WCC has held their meetings. They have been all over the world. Lausanne met first in Switzerland, but then it met in Manila in 1989. There is still a difference, in many ways, between the broad categories of Western and non-Western religious movements. As we have talked about, it depends on where we are in our missions thinking and our instincts. For us, wherever we live in the world, missions means white people go to the rest of the world. The money flow and theological influence is a difference between Western and non-Western religious movements. You can look at what books are translated from what languages into what languages to see this difference. It shows whose consumption they are for.

I plead with those of you who have translation capabilities or networks to facilitate that to help the translation of materials from non-Western languages into Western languages. It has happened some, but I think it needs to happen more. I have a couple of projects that I have some people helping me with. Because Japanese is one of my languages, I want to help those of us who speak English and do not have access to that world to have that translation work. I would also encourage you to try to learn new languages, but not just for the sake of going somewhere and evangelizing in those languages. It is daunting, but you could learn what the church says in those places. Those of us in the English-speaking Christian world are all the more deprived of hearing, for example, theological articulations in Korea. By and large we do not know Korean, so we are all the more impoverished because of that. We need to recognize that gap.

There is also a gap in first-world and third-world in the modern missions movement. We hear a lot of statistics about the increasing affluence gap between the northern and southern hemispheres. That seems to be compounded, and we need to know how to address that in a macro-structural sort of way. We need to think about what that means personally for us and how to deal with that in this world.

Another difference in the missions movement is between the Pentecostals and charismatics and the non-Pentecostals and charismatics. There has been incredible growth of Pentecostal churches around the world. In many places, Pentecostals and evangelicals are seeking to come together, and charismatic expressions of Christianity find expression within various other groups. Despite these mergers, that distinction is still there as well. If for no other reason, we need to recognize the strong presence of Pentecostalism and charismatic Christianity throughout the world and a theological viability and output that increasingly comes from those circles. Those are some of the categories that we have in the wake of the modern missions movement.

We also have various evangelical missions or mission organizations. We have a myriad of U.S. based evangelical missions. If you look on the Internet, for example, or at some of the literature and magazines that come out, you will find that there are all sorts of evangelical missions. Some of these have long histories, some have short histories, and some are very specific in reaching particular types of people, doing particular work. There might be a missions group to reach taxicab drivers in Bangkok, seamen, or those associated with radio ministry. There are Bible translators, church planters, and relief groups. There are denominational organizations such as Mission to the World for the Presbyterian Church in America, the International Board of Missions for the Southern Baptists, and others. There are many U.S. based evangelical missions.

We have talked about the U.S. Center for World Mission, and it needs to be acknowledged for its influence in a great deal of evangelical missions thinking. They do the *Mission Frontiers* magazine, the Perspectives course, the adopt-a-people program, the Joshua Project, and the Caleb project. Many of these are things that your church will make decisions about participating in. They will either not be involved with it or will actively use those sorts of resources. It is something of which you need to be aware. Their focus is to reach the unreached peoples of the world. That is the final frontier of missions in the three-era scheme of the modern missions movement. I noted to you that this was a helpful scheme, but we need to qualify that. I share the perspective that it is rather presumptuous to call anything the “final frontier” of missions. I would like to see a more comprehensive understanding of world mission. The U.S. Center for World Mission has a tremendous influence and does a great amount of service to the wider body of Christ.

Another mission organization includes Advancing Churches in Missions Commitment (ACMC). They have a lot of resources to encourage churches in putting on missions conferences, how to set up a missions budget, and other things. My perspective on ACMC is that, similar to most U.S. based evangelical missions organizations, it is more in a modern missions movement mode than the next multi-polar, multidirectional worldwide mode. I do not want to draw a hard line of distinction, but there are some differences between being Western based and worldwide based. How you understand yourselves corporately in terms of your identity can affect this as well. The ACMC works much more along the lines of how to go from one place to another. It does not have to be that way, and they do not want to be confined that way. It seems to me, though, as I look at their material, that that is where they will be. This is an organization that provides a lot of resources for people.

Let me also acknowledge Korea-based evangelical missions. There is one for Korean churches in North America, called the Korea World Missions Council in North America. There is a list of a variety of churches with people responsible throughout the North American network who cooperate to send out evangelical missionaries. They come from Pennsylvania, California, Kentucky, Texas, Washington, Florida, New York, Virginia, and other places. You may know that almost anywhere you go in the world, there will be Korean churches. Certainly in any place in America, there are Korean churches. Some have asked where the Korean church is that sends out Korean missionaries to other parts of the world. If I have my statistics right, about 10 percent of that Korean church is in North America. There is a Korean church in Korea, and there is one in North America.

As someone pointed out to me, Korean American Christian brothers and sisters in churches face specific issues with regard to generational change. This is true of all immigrants. They have a very strong awareness of where they fit generationally. They will know if they are a first- or second-generation Korean. That makes for tremendous differences in how the churches themselves function. For example, there is a Korean Presbyterian Church in Saint Louis that meets on Manchester Road in Kirkwood. They have a Korean language church and an English language division. Most of the college students will be in

the English service. I meet those people, and they are more American than I am. It is very interesting. When you have people who are bicultural and bilingual like that, they have some unique capabilities of being cross-cultural missionaries in comparison to originally mono-cultural people. This is an overgeneralization, but Korean Americans tend to have zeal and fervor, a sense of being an oppressed people, and a sense of being an especially called people. They can also speak English, which is the single lingua franca in comparison to any other single language in terms of trade and negotiation. As a result, Korean Americans are uniquely equipped to serve as missionaries in various parts of the world. There is a Korean World Mission Association based out of Korea. All sorts of world congresses and huge meetings are held in Korea on a regular basis. Thousands and thousands of leaders meet there. The church in Korea has a really strong sense of God's calling and of being His special agents to reach the world for Christ. They have a strong sense of calling as the Korean church, which is manifest in the huge number of mission organizations from Korea. The Korean World Mission Association says the church in Korea was established in the late 1800s. There was an American missionary, John Nevius, from China who came over and helped implement the three-self movement. It was the three-self formula that Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson helped articulate.

There are evangelical missions based in various places in the world. There are churches in Nigeria that send out missionaries to other parts of Nigeria. The same thing takes place in Ethiopia, India, Brazil, Japan, and almost anywhere. Some of them are organizations that began in the West, and some are organizations that began where they still are. We will soon have a speaker on campus who was the director of the InterVarsity equivalent in Anglophone, Africa. He will help us to see the wider implications of the worldwide Christian movement, including the evangelical movement. Another category that we have in the wake of the modern missions movement today is our own respective cultural groups or nationalities. These help us define who we are as the Lord's people and recognize that, as a worldwide church of Jesus Christ, seeing that is a part of realizing who it is that we are and the categories that we have.

Now as missionaries go from North America to other parts of the world, they are aligned with mission organizations, but churches are also directly involved. Certainly within the last 10 to 15 years, local congregations and "everybody" has gotten more involved in terms of awareness and actually participating and going. The most obvious manifestation of that is the huge growth of short-term missionaries going on one- or two-week sorts of trips. Some have asked if that helps the churches here become more global. My first and overriding thought about that is that it is reality. Direct church involvement is just what has been happening, so it overrides any attempt at evaluating whether it is good or bad. There are clearly positive benefits to it, including the heightened awareness of the rest of the world, the actual good that people do, the transformation that comes in people's lives who go, and the cooperative relationships between Christians in various parts of the world that emerge out of those sorts of trips. Some of the downsides that people use in criticizing short-term missions trips include the expense and the damage that people can cause by going in without being aware of cultural norms. They commit all sorts of cultural mistakes without even realizing it. Some people point toward the continued imperialism of short-term missions. Some say they are expensive, glorified vacations for people. To me it is reality, and there is a great deal of positive things going on. We should encourage that while continuing to cultivate the need to be a multi-polar and multidirectional church in our cross-cultural missions efforts. It is a good question and one that comes up a lot.

For those of you who end up in local church missions committees, these sorts of decisions that you make will be critical. Often times there will be heated discussions. I hope this course has at least begun to give you a framework for evaluating where we are historically and what the issues are. Should you support non-North American indigenous missionaries or North American missionaries? What about these short-

term trips? These questions will come up, and we need to put them within the framework of where we are in history. We must not simply absolutize the problem in and of itself and get caught up in the pros and cons only, apart from the historical setting. I think short-term trips will continue so long as the American military and economy are as strong as they are relative to the rest of the world. It is inevitable. That is not a value statement but a descriptive statement.

Let us talk about our historical understandings and explanations of how things have come about. Chapter 13 of Shenk's *Changing Frontiers of Mission* is entitled "Mission in Transition: 1970 to 1994." Shenk says that as the modern missions movement has continued to evolve, we have had a correlative three stages of understanding of world history. One is a Eurocentric understanding, then there was a bipolar, geo-political understanding within the Cold War, and now we need to have a polycentric understanding of world history. We need to understand the worldwide Christian movement in general and the worldwide Christian missionary movement in particular. To have that polycentric historical understanding is very important.

Personally, I agree with Shenk—dangers at being associated with politically correct thought and postmodern thought notwithstanding. To me it only makes sense in order to allow God to be God and to give full recognition to how He has been working around the world. We need to have a worldwide understanding of history and of Christian history. That causes some changes, but it does not mean that you change history deliberately. It does mean some alterations in some ways that some of us have been taught. At the risk of being misunderstood, for example, I am not sure what to make of classic Christian schools. I think there is great value in helping kids know Latin, Greek, and classical European history. But if those schools have as part of their purpose to re-anchor kids in a Christian worldview by anchoring them in the classic world of language and literature, I think that moves backward. I may not have my impressions right about that, though. It is just one example to me that I would want to ask more about. Another example is how world history classes are taught in high school. When I studied world history in high school, we took a glance at Chinese and Russian history, but we basically looked at what happened in the Western world through Europe. They called that world history, but that is not the world. I take a risk in saying that in offending some people who rightly hold Western values dear. I do not mean to disparage Western values per se. I want to embrace the full scope of what God does. The whole thing about history becomes so important, because we need to know other people's history as it is closely connected with genuine respect.

Let us move on to topic 35 about integration and further integrating some of these things with where we are and where we want to go. Shenk, in his chapter "The Future of Mission," gives some particular reflections and clues. The first is that "the modern missionary movement has ended, and a new epic in Christian mission is unfolding." He does not want to be misunderstood here to say that Christian mission is ending. The mode of the modern missionary movement in particular as he has described it in the book is over. Namely, missions being out of the modern Western world to the rest of the world and all that is associated with European Christendom is over. We have a new era in what Christian mission is all about. I question a little bit when he says, "We stand at the junction in between two eras. Indeed we are moving ineluctably into the postmodern period without knowing quite what to name it." In one sense I can see why he says that. But I find that we often give too much credit to postmodernism for its worldwide effect. In Ethiopia, for example, postmodernism is not a major influence for the average young person. For many rural people, postmodernism would not be a major influence. In urban settings, because of the worldwide, connected nature of the world, there is a postmodern influence. We need to think about how to allow postmodernism in its confusing constructs and categories to be informative to us without allowing it to be an all-in-all descriptive category for all of the world. This is important to remember.

The second point that Shenk makes is that “Christian faith is inherently expansionist in its link to the goal of history.” Christian faith should not just simply be domesticated and come all the way home in places. It will be ever expanding and growing. Third, “Recovering a vision of Jesus Christ as God incarnate who became Savior and Lord will be linked to the genuine renewal of Christian faith issued in fresh missionary witness.” Fourth, “faithful mission is always in vital link with the sociopolitical realm.” Because of some of the issues we talked about for evangelicals and some of these sorts of realities, we have at times shied away from sociopolitical realities. This can raise some questions, rightly so, for us. As we also saw, it is never the case that anyone lives outside of sociopolitical realities in some form or fashion. As we have an emphasis on the Gospel and the kingdom of Jesus Christ, we cannot run away from those. To think that we can is naïve. “The church of the future will be a minority church in most parts of the world.” That is the case, and increasingly in this part of the world we see that about ourselves too. “In every age, the church must struggle to remain open to the fullness of the Gospel, to rehear afresh the Scriptures.” His seventh point is related to that: “The world is a singular seminal force.” Eighth, “The greatest integrity and vitality of faith today appears to be found in those churches that have suffered and known martyrdom firsthand.” It is hard to argue with that last point as you encounter those who have experienced what they have in Sudan or went through what they did in early twentieth-century Korea. People now flee for their lives in parts of Indonesia and the southern Philippines. Some of you will know Christians who lived through the 1970s in Uganda under Idi Amin. That brought incredible revival for the people there, and it influenced people like Jack Miller and Harvey Conn, who started the Sonship movement. You can trace it as a very close relationship with what happened in Uganda and what the Christians there experienced together with those from North America who were connected to them.

We need to know where we are in history within wider history. We are at the beginning of the twentieth century, after the Cold War. Those of us who were born and raised in the United States have a particular setting. We need to know that the Christian church as we are today has not always been in this situation. History has not always been what it is today. We need to note where we suffer persecution, poverty, and political oppression. We also need to be aware of where we have political freedom, affluence, and resources. That should drive us as the worldwide church of Jesus Christ to cooperate, learn from each other, and gain stimulus from each other. I do not hear my friends in Uganda say, “You guys really should not be well off. That is bad.” More than that, I have heard my friends in Uganda say, “That gives us something to hope for. Consider it a blessing. Second, insofar as God enables us to share those blessings together, we should. We have our experience of trial and tribulation under Idi Amin and the joy we know in our poverty. And you have the blessings and the technical knowledge in running businesses and having electronic resources and money. Let us thank the Lord and move ahead together.” I do not hear the need for those of us who are in relative comfort to feel guilty coming from brothers and sisters in Christ who are in different situations. But I have heard at times warnings that we should not think that it is simply those in situations of poverty who are the only ones who have to battle sin and struggle. The struggle and the entrapments of comfort and affluence are real. There is balance of enjoying the good gifts of God, thanking Him for a good meal, and enjoying an incredible baseball game. Whatever it might be, we should enjoy the good gifts of God while balancing that with iniquities and temptations. It is a struggle that we will never be able to leave. We need to remember who we are as the church. We are made up of all sorts of different people. It is not just us in this class or even in Saint Louis. We cannot lose sight of the glory, magnificence, and challenge of who we are as the church of Jesus Christ in Saint Louis and in various parts of the world together.

One point of integration will come theologically and intellectually for many of us. One example is out of Chapter two of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. I have vowed that this is the system of doctrine that I sincerely receive and adopt as what the Scriptures teach. I have taken a public, personal vow about it.

In it I read, “Of God and of the Trinity, there is but one only living and true God who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure Spirit, invisible without body parts or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will for His own glory [...]” I need to know how to believe, embrace, and glory in it while feeling the contrasting tone that this relatively precise language would have with other legitimate articulations of the nature of God. It is not that they would contradict each other, but the tone would be different. This was articulated in a particular setting. When they said that God is without passions, that is in reference to some specific philosophical construct of *Spinoza*. It does not mean that God is not passionate. God is very passionate. We need to recognize those contextual particularities and embrace this as true but to the all-in-all in nuance and tone. This will be part of articulating and integrating the worldwide multiform expression of the Christian faith in our local communities.

We had a need in this class to spell out the *ordo salutis*. God elects, He calls, He regenerates, and He grants repentance and faith. That is true, and I believe it, because it is what the Scriptures teach. At the same time, it might be the case that some settings do not have the same sort of need to scientifically delineate the precise order in which those things happen. They might not need the same sort of articulation of confession of faith. To work through that particular issue is part of what it means to contextualize and allow for difference while holding passionately to what we confess as true. This is biblical, but you do not see the Bible use this systematic way to lay it out together. Covenant Seminary seeks to embody being exegetically driven in comparison to systematically driven. Other settings will systematize the exegetical outworking of how the God of the Bible comes to them and shows Himself to them, but it might not spell out in exactly the same systematic delineation that it would here. That is a tricky proposition in not wanting to call into question the truthfulness of this. The form and the precise tone might not be fully appropriate in other settings. The *Confession* continues, “most loving, gracious, merciful, abounding in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression of sin [...]” This is a delineation of God in a way that is appropriate and true. Yet in other settings it could be a more fluid situation than what we want to grant. How we read it also makes a difference. Others might not think that it is dry and rigid.