



DOCUMENTS

FROM THE DEPARTMENT ON THE LAITY
WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
17, ROUTE DE MALAGNOU, GENEVA

September 1957

DOCUMENT No. V

MEN AND WOMEN WORKING ABROAD

At its meeting at the Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Conn., USA, in August 1957, the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches decided to "draw the attention of the Member Churches of the World Council of Churches, of Christian Councils and of National Councils of Churches, to the importance of giving adequate preparation, acceptance and spiritual support to men and women working abroad in governmental, intergovernmental, industrial or commercial employment". Attention should be drawn also "to the urgent importance of encouraging laymen and laywomen to undertake service abroad as a Christian vocation, for example in technical assistance programmes".

This DOCUMENT contains the full text of the above-mentioned recommendations as well as some background material for a better appreciation of the scope and implications of this recommendation. This background material originated from a consultation organized by the Department on the Laity at Moor Park College, Farnham, England (April 28/29, 1957) on "Laymen Working Abroad".

CONTENTS:

Men and Women Working Abroad

The Recommendation of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches p. 2

Laymen Working Abroad

Background Paper for the Moor Park College Consultation p. 4

Summary of the Talk by Dr. H.B.T. Holland at the Moor Park Consultation p. 17

Report of the Moor Park College Consultation p. 20

A Tentative Bibliography on Laymen Working Abroad p. 23

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

The history of the United States is a story of growth and change. It begins with the first settlers, who came to the Americas in search of a new life. They found a land of opportunity, but also one of hardship. The early years were marked by struggle and sacrifice, as the settlers fought to establish a new society. Over time, the United States grew from a small colony into a powerful nation. It has faced many challenges, but it has always emerged stronger and more united than before.

The United States has a rich and diverse culture. It is a land of many peoples, each with their own traditions and customs. This diversity has been one of the strengths of the United States, allowing it to embrace change and innovation. The American dream is a powerful idea that has inspired millions of people. It is the belief that anyone can achieve success and happiness through hard work and determination.

CHAPTER I

The first chapter of the history of the United States is the story of the early settlers. They came to the Americas in search of a new life. They found a land of opportunity, but also one of hardship. The early years were marked by struggle and sacrifice, as the settlers fought to establish a new society.

The settlers faced many challenges, but they persevered. They built a new society, one that was based on the principles of freedom and democracy. They fought for their rights, and they won. The United States was born, and it has since become a powerful nation.

The United States has a long and proud history. It has been a land of opportunity and growth. It has been a land of struggle and sacrifice. But it has always been a land of hope and dreams.

VI. The United States has a rich and diverse culture. It is a land of many peoples, each with their own traditions and customs. This diversity has been one of the strengths of the United States, allowing it to embrace change and innovation.

The American dream is a powerful idea that has inspired millions of people. It is the belief that anyone can achieve success and happiness through hard work and determination.

MEN AND WOMEN WORKING ABROAD

"When in 1848 the first missionary came to East Java (Indonesia), he found that the Church was already there: two Western laymen who worked in East Java had quite spontaneously begun to witness to Christ in and through their "secular" jobs: one of them was a German watchmaker, Johannes Emde, the other a half Russian, half Javanese civil servant, Conrad Laurens Coolen. The fruit of their witness was the beginning of the present Protestant Church in East Java. This is the promise which lays upon the subject under consideration: Men and women working abroad (be they Americans or Europeans, working in Asia, Africa or Latin America, or be they for instance Asians working and studying in the West) can become quite spontaneously non-professional missionaries.

But this is only part of the truth: Many men and women working abroad, even Christian men and women, do not become witnesses to Christ. Under the pressures, temptations and difficulties of working in a completely foreign culture, society and climate, the gulf between their personal faith and their daily work and life becomes too often hopelessly wide, the attitude towards the people abroad conforms uncritically to corrupt patterns, and instead of being missionaries for Christ, these men and women become missionaries for secularism, materialism, etc."

With these words the following recommendations of the Working Committee of the Department on the Laity were brought before the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting at the Yale Divinity School, New Haven, U.S.A., in August 1957:

It is recommended:

"1. that the Central Committee draw the attention of the Member Churches of the World Council, of Christian Councils and National Council of Churches, to the great importance of giving adequate preparation, acceptance and spiritual support to men and women working abroad in governmental, intergovernmental, industrial or commercial employment;

2. that the Central Committee also draw the attention of the Member Churches and of National Councils to the urgent importance of encouraging laymen and laywomen to undertake service abroad as a Christian vocation, for example in technical assistance programmes;

3. that the Department on the Laity be asked to continue to keep in touch with those Christian agencies which are already concerned with this matter, and to give them all the assistance that it can, taking into account its limited staff and budget;

4. that the General Secretariat of the World Council of Churches be asked to consider whether a more substantial service could and should in future be rendered by the World Council of Churches in this whole area."

These recommendations were discussed and unanimously accepted by the Central Committee.

LAYMEN WORKING ABROAD

Background paper for the Consultation on
Laymen Working Abroad
Moor Park College, Farnham, England,
April 28th-29th, 1957.

CONTENTS:

I. THEME AND CONTEXT OF THE ENQUIRY

1. The role of the laity in the life and mission
of the Church p.
2. The ongoing discussion p.
3. The first realizations p.
4. Agencies concerned with laymen working abroad p.

II. SOME ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM

1. How to become a "layman"? p.
2. How to obtain employment abroad? p.
3. The many or the few p.
4. How to recruit? p.
5. How to prepare laymen going abroad? p.
6. How to sustain laymen working abroad? p.
- P.S. On foreign students p.

I. THEME AND CONTEXT OF THE ENQUIRY

1. The role of the laity in the life and mission of the Church

The laity (derived from the New Testament word "laos" - "people of God") has an important role in all the functions of the Church because laymen and laywomen are the Church together with the "office-bearers" (those among the members of the people of God who are entrusted with special ministries within the Church, i.e. clergy or ministers, presbyters, Sunday school teachers, etc.). There are, however, differences of responsibilities with regard to different functions:

The "equipment" of the people of God is mainly the task of the "office-bearers" (Ephesians 4:11-12). This equipment takes place mainly when the people of God assemble for fellowship, worship and teaching. Here the "office-bearers" have the leading role, although the others should by no means remain passive (see I Corinthians 14:26!).

But as soon as the people of God are sent out (the benediction at the end of church gatherings is nothing less than an echo of Matthew 28:18-20), thus scattered in every walk of life and layer of society, the main responsibility of being the Church passes on to the laity; the Church functions (or fails to function) as salt mainly through the life and work of individual laymen and laywomen and through small groups of Christians in their respective concrete social environments¹⁾.

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The recognition of the differences between the main responsibilities of the laity and the "office-bearers" within the people of God has deep implications for the evangelistic and missionary work of the Church. In traditional thinking, evangelism and missions are mainly the task of special ministries, special "office-bearers", i.e. the (generally especially trained and full-time) evangelists and missionaries. There is nothing wrong with these special ministries. - Paul said that the ministries of "apostles" and "evangelists" are special gifts of Christ (Ephesians 4:11) and the Church will always need such special ministries and "office-bearers" to fulfill its missionary task - but it is wrong that the mission of the Church has almost exclusively been narrowed down to the work of those special ministries. Studies in the missionary expansion of the Church during the first Christian centuries show us that then the chief missionaries were the ordinary laymen and laywomen who, when dispersed in their non-Christian social environments, lived, served and spoke as Christians.²⁾ Likewise most of the more recent studies on evangelism and mission ask for an "evangelistic" or "missionary" Church, stressing the spontaneous missionary "rayonnement" and the utmost importance of the witness

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- 1) For a further development of this point see: "The Laity - The Christian in his Vocation", Survey and Report of the VI Section of Evanston; and "The Ministry of the Laity in the World": A Statement commended by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches to the Churches.
 - 2) A. Harnack, "Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten", 2. Auflage, Leipzig, 1906. G. Bardy, "La Conversion au Christianisme durant les premiers siècles", Paris, 1947.

of the laity. But what is such a spontaneous missionary Church? And what is the specific role of the laity in this missionary outreach of the Church?

These questions are the context of our enquiry. We do not deal with the general question of "the role of the laity in the missionary outreach of the Church"³⁾, but with the special subject of the witness of laymen and laywomen working abroad, and with the question how they can best be prepared for and sustained in their witness.

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In this enquiry the term "laymen working abroad" is used to denote men and women, not in full-time service of the Churches, who are serving, for longer or shorter periods, in Western, Asian, African or Latin American countries other than their own, whether in governmental, intergovernmental, industrial or commercial employment. This definition rules out:

- a) Western, Asian, African or Latin American nationals within their own countries -
- b) Immigrants -
- c) Mission and church-workers (whether ordained or lay), as well as fraternal workers etc. in the service of Churches or Christian organizations.

This limited definition does of course not involve any judgment of value. Ordained and lay missionaries or fraternal workers etc., immigrants and especially the laity working in their own country will in fact often play a far more important role in the total witness of the Church than the "laymen working abroad".

2. The ongoing discussion

At the last conference of the International Missionary Council (Willingen, 1952), Canon M.A.C. Warren gave a talk on "The Christian Mission and the Cross", in which he spoke of "an entirely new type of missionary activity to be developed alongside the traditional modes". He then went on to speak of the work of Christian scientists, Christian trade union leaders and experts in the cooperative organizations who ought to go to Asia and Africa in order to bear witness to Christ through their secular occupations.⁴⁾

This appeal was taken up at Willingen itself by the discussion group of "Missionary Vocation and Training", which produced, as one of its findings, the following: "We believe that God is calling the Church to express its mission not only through foreign missionaries sent by the boards, but also through an increasing flow of Christian lay men and women who go out across the world in business, industry and government, and who do so with a deep conviction that

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- 3) This is the subject of a working party of the Department on the Laity (Yale, July 21-23, 1957), where the following papers will be read: "The Role of the Laity in the Missionary Expansion of the Church in the First Christian Centuries" - "The Role of the Laity in the Missionary Expansion of the Church in Uganda and the Church in East Java" - "Evangelism's Threefold Witness: koinonia, diakonia, kerygma".
 - 4) Norman Goodall, "Missions Under the Cross", Edinburgh House Press, London, 1953, p. 315.

God calls to them to witness for Him all of life. The Churches should be alive to the strategic importance of the spread of the Gospel by such lay people. The IMC is requested to explore ways whereby the Churches can prepare and advise such lay people, linking them to the Churches and foreign missionary societies in the areas to which they go."⁵⁾

These topics have also been discussed repeatedly in the ecumenical youth organizations: the Youth Department of the World Council of Churches, the World's Student Christian Federation, and the World YMCA and YWCA.

The same questions were discussed at Evanston in Section IV on "Christians in the Struggle for World Community", and the following resolution was drawn up: "We appeal to the Churches to bid their members recognize their political responsibilities, and also to ask Christian technicians and administrators to find a vocation in the service of United Nations agencies engaged in meeting the needs of economically and technically under-developed countries, thus bringing a Christian temper of love and understanding to bear upon the immensely difficult task of mutual assistance in the encounter of different cultures."⁶⁾

Finally, a discussion on these questions was held at the meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches at Davos in 1955. The Bishop of Chichester proposed that the World Council should send out an appeal to young Christians to place their lives in the service of the Churches and people in countries of rapid social change. These questions raised at Davos are now being examined by the World Council.

On the basis of some twenty replies to an extensive Memorandum and Questionnaire Dr. Robert C. Mackie made a preliminary study on "Laymen Working Abroad" (Spring 1956) which was circulated by the Department on the Laity.

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The discussion on this subject was not limited, however, to ecumenical gatherings and organizations. Already in 1929 the Rev. Roland Allen published privately a brochure on this very question ("Non-Professional Missionaries"), and two years later Sir Kenneth G. Grubb wrote a similar article in WORLD DOMINION. Since then much has been written on the subject both by Catholic and Protestant authors.⁷⁾

3. The first realizations

The discussion was from the very beginning not purely academic. In the course of the history of missions, many a layman working abroad had become a consistent witness for Christ. The best-known examples are perhaps some of the military and administrative officers in the Indian army and civil service in the course of the nineteenth century.

5) Norman Goodall, "Missions Under the Cross", Edinburgh House Press, London, 1953, p. 211.

6) "Evanston Speaks", SCM Press, London, 1954, p. 83.

7) See the tentative bibliography on "Laymen Working Abroad".

The first two writers on the subject were both actually doing something about it. In the last years of his life, Roland Allen worked as a "non-professional missionary" in East Africa. And Sir Kenneth Grubb made probably one of the first attempts to foster consciously the Christian witness through laymen working abroad by the enterprise, "Christian Service Overseas" which he ran for some ten years prior to the second world war: In different capitals of the world Sir Kenneth identified British business men who were keen Christians. They advised him regularly of any vacancies in the local establishments of British firms. In Britain Sir Kenneth had similar correspondants in a number of centres and in the places where men are trained for business careers. These correspondants in turn advised him that they were in touch with men who had professional qualifications (e.g. as chartered accountants), who were keen Christians and who were ready to take a post abroad and witness for Christ at the same time. These possible candidates at home were advised of the possible vacancies abroad and by watching the advertisement columns of the press or applying directly to headquarters of the firm in Britain, they were able to get these jobs. There was no attempt to train these men for their witness. It was simply a Christian business exchange and appointments bureau.

Similar courses as those held at present by the British Overseas Service were held in 1930 in the AMVJ building in Amsterdam with the financial help of big firms sending out employees to Indonesia.

These are some of the first attempts to foster the Christian witness through laymen working abroad. Especially since the matter has come into the spotlight of international missionary and ecumenical discussions these attempts have been multiplied.

4. Agencies concerned with laymen working abroad

Most of the agencies mentioned below have published leaflets and pamphlets describing their work.⁸⁾ In the following we are therefore only giving the names and addresses of these agencies. Many an agency will be unknown to us and we welcome any complementary indication.

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| Australia: | Scheme for Graduate Employment in Indonesia (since 1950), NUAUS, Union House, University of Melbourne, Carlton N. 3, Victoria. (Secretary: Mr. Jim Webb.) |
| Canada: | Department of Overseas Missions, The Canadian Council of Churches, 3 Willcocks Street, Toronto 5, Ontario. (Secretary: Rev. Robert B. Tillman.) |
| Germany: | Informationskurse (since 1957), Evangelische Zentrale für Auswandererhilfe, Gerokstrasse 17, Stuttgart. (Leiter: Dr. F. Schröder.) |
| Netherlands: | De Kerk Overzee (since 1955), Leidsestraatweg 11, Oegstgeest. (Secretary: Ds H.A.C. Hildering.) |

8) A limited number of folders containing each the most important pamphlets and leaflets of these agencies are available at the Department on the Laity, World Council of Churches, 17 route de Malagnou, Geneva, Switzerland.

Switzerland: Werkmissionarskurse (since 1952),
Basler Mission, Missionsstrasse 21, Basel 3. (Leiter: Pfarrer
Robert Kurtz.)

United Kingdom: Associates of the London Missionary Society (since 1954),
42, Broadway, London S.W. 1. (General Secretary: Rev. Maxwell
O. Janes.)

The Inter-Varsity Overseas Fellowship,
Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 39 Bedford Square, London W.C. 1.
(Secretary: Mr. F.H. Crittenden.)

Oversea Service (since 1953),
Moor Park College, Farnham, Surrey. (General Secretary:
Dr. H.B.T. Holland.)

United States: Division of Foreign Missions,
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.,
156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N.Y. (Secretary: Rev. E. Bruce
Copland.)

The Fellowship of St. Paul (since 1954),
Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, 228 McAllister Street,
San Francisco 2, California. (Secretary: Dr. Archie R. Crouch.)

International Voluntary Services Inc. (since 1953),
1930 Columbia Road N.W., Washington 9, D.C. (Executive
Director: Dr. J.S. Noffsinger.)

Koinonia Foundation (since 1949),
Pikesville Box 5744, Baltimore 3, Maryland.

Student Volunteer Movement,
257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N.Y. (General Secretary:
Mr. Newton Thurber.)

Roman Catholic
Church:

Different agencies with the international bureau:
Union catholique de Coopération interraciale,
Secrétariat international, 5 rue Kramer, Milan, Italie.
(Secrétaire: Dr. M. Candia.)

(Note: This Union comprehends also agencies which deal with
non-ordained mission and church workers.)

II. SOME ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM

1. How to become a "layman"?

This is the fundamental, and perhaps the most tricky question within the whole enquiry. Most of the agencies mentioned above do not ask this question because they start from the assumption that the persons they are dealing with are already laymen and laywomen.

However, if we take the full biblical significance of the term "laity", nobody is born a "layman", not even if he comes from a so-called Christian culture, country or family or if he pays church taxes. For a layman is a

person who functions as salt wherever he is. Sooner or later it must become evident in the life and work of a layman that it makes a difference to be one of the people of God.

To help men and women to become laymen and laywomen in this full sense of the word is the task of the whole Church and cannot be done by agencies concerned with laymen working abroad. But these agencies must recognize that at present the normal life, teaching and worship of the Churches, helps the church members very little to become "salty Christians" in the modern world. They are too one-sidedly helped to become Christians in Christian gatherings and organizations and they are often left at a loss when it comes to being Christians in the decisions of daily life, in their "secular" work of the work-a-day world. It is not astounding therefore that many Christians going abroad become more easily "office-bearers" abroad (Sunday school teachers, elders, lay preachers, etc.) than laymen in the sense that they become witnesses in their daily "secular" work and use of free-time. The fact that laymen working abroad become "office-bearers", working for the "equipment" of the people of God abroad, is excellent. But in this enquiry our main concern is that laymen working abroad become also (and very especially) real laymen abroad, participating in the Church's function as the salt in the world.

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Besides helping the laymen going abroad to grow in their Christian faith some of the agencies have included in their training programme courses and reading material on "the ministry of the laity", "work and vocation", "diaconate in the modern world", "the universal priesthood", etc. (see for instance the programmes of the "Werkmissionarskurse" at Basel, the conferences of "De Kerk Overzee" in the Netherlands, the suggested study outline of the Fellowship of St. Paul in the U.S.A.).

It seems to be most desirable that the work of agencies concerned with laymen working abroad be intimately linked with the work of all the agencies within the Church who are especially concerned with the preparation of the laity for their ministry in the world, e.g. with "Evangelical Academies", lay training centres, etc. The courses of the British Oversea Service are held at Moor Park College, a lay training centre, and the German "Informationskurse" are organized at, and in collaboration with, the Evangelical Academy Arnoldshain. Laymen and laywomen who have been helped to meet the challenges of the world, to listen to one another and to see the implications of the Gospel for their work and decisions in the "secular" world - this is the main work done in the lay institutes and similar frontier movements⁹⁾ - are indeed the best candidates to become laymen working abroad.

For the same reason a continuing concern of Christian student movements (SCM, IVF, the "Evangelisches Studienwerk Haus Villigst" in Germany and the Faith and Life Community in Texas) and associations of university teachers and graduates for laymen working abroad is essential. The IVF, the Australian SCM the Student Volunteer Movement in the U.S.A. and others have already done much in this matter.

9) See the work of the centres described in "Signs of Renewal - The Life of the Lay Institute in Europe", 2nd edition, 1957; but also movements like the Christian Frontier Council in Britain, the A.P.P. in France, etc.

2. How to obtain employment abroad?

It is not as easy as one might think to get employment overseas. It has been said that "except for technical and specialist jobs there are more candidates than places". The fact remains, however, that every year thousands of men and women go abroad in "national missions" (legations, consulates and their attached experts), in "intergovernmental agencies" (U.N. Technical Assistance Administration, etc., U.S.A. Point Four Programme, "Colombo Plan"), in "governmental agencies" (civil servants, etc.), in industry, manufacturing, banking and commerce, in military service, as planters, and others who earn an independent or semi-independent livelihood, as university teachers, for special research work (anthropologists, etc.), as tourists¹⁰⁾ and as students¹¹⁾.

Most of the agencies concerned with laymen working abroad try only to come into contact with nominal Christians and committed laymen among the thousands of persons who are going abroad anyway. There are, however, some exceptions:

We have mentioned already the former British enterprise "Christian Service Overseas" (see above p. 7) which functioned as a Christian business exchange and appointments bureau. Also the NUAUS Graduate Employment Scheme in Australia has especially been created in order to open up new ways of service for laymen working abroad. A similar scheme is at present being planned by the student Christian movement in the U.S.A. - Some agencies advise laymen who want to work or study abroad where they can apply: see for instance the mimeographed document "Vocational Witness Overseas", produced by the North American IVF, which gives many good hints where to find "openings". The American SVM has recently extended its programme for vocational counselling giving also information with regard to employment opportunities for qualified young Christian people overseas in non-church-related capacities.

3. The many or the few?

Shall we try to come into contact with as many as possible of those going to work abroad, helping them to become at least decent representatives of the so-called "Western Christian Civilization" by adjusting themselves rightly to the foreign culture, and working for good international and interracial relationships and a healthy society? Or shall we try to find out the few and train them to become not only "office-bearers" abroad but also fully committed "salty Christians" in their work? We must not press this distinction too much: among the many nominal Christians and non-Christians are many latent committed Christians; and among the few fervent Christians are many who will never see that Christ is the Lord over Church and world, soul and body, Sunday and work-days. Robert C. Mackie has rightly observed that "some who make fewer pretensions of witness are more effective than those whose aim is conscious".

10) The witness of Christian tourists does not fall directly under our enquiry, as they are not going to work abroad. But this question should nevertheless be studied by the Churches as these tourists can foster (or hinder!) the course of Christian missions.

11) See P.S. on Foreign Students, at the end of this paper.

Still, the fact remains that the agencies concerned with laymen working abroad are roughly facing the following three categories of persons:

1) Many nominal Christians and non-Christians who are aware of the fact that working as specialists in a foreign area of rapid social change demands more than just technical skill. They welcome therefore some orientation for work abroad, whether given by their firm or university or by some institution.

2) Fewer committed laymen who already function as "office-bearers" and "salty Christians" at home and who - as they are now going abroad - seek information and guidance in order to continue to be committed laymen in the often more difficult environment abroad.

3) Very few committed laymen (mostly students) who do not want to apply to a mission board, but whose ideal is to undertake disciplined professional service overseas, constrained by a sense of Christian vocation and missionary purpose.

The different agencies mentioned on p. 7-8 have different priorities with regard to these three categories. The British Oversea Service addresses itself to all categories, but its ways of publicity and recruitment are mainly directed towards the first category (because the spirit of the whole enterprise is genuinely Christian, many a nominal Christian, however, became a committed layman through his connection with Oversea Service). The Associate Scheme of the London Missionary Society, the Brotherhood of St. Paul of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. and others are mainly dealing with categories 2) and 3). Accordingly Oversea Service was able to help many persons going abroad (from autumn 1953 - autumn 1956: 532 persons) while the LMS Associate Scheme (established in 1954) had only about thirty Associates by the autumn of 1956.

The different priorities with regard to the above-mentioned three categories have great influence on the character of the different agencies, for instance on their way of recruitment.

4. How to recruit?

In order to reach nominal and non-Christians among those going abroad, the following ways seem to be important:

1) Extensive contact with employers, both private firms and government departments. This seems to be most possible in Great Britain, where the term "Christian civilization" seems still to have some meaning for the whole British people, including large British firms and the Government. Oversea Service makes extensive use of this fact and at least 90% of the people recruited for courses are sent (and paid!) by their employers. - But countries where the term "Christian" has a far more strictly limited sense (as in the Netherlands and other countries of the European continent) and in countries with a strong separation between Church and State (as in the U.S.A. where state and business agencies are not allowed to ask for, let alone to give information about, the church adherence of their personnel) other ways have to be found.

2) As most of those going abroad are specialists who have had training in universities or certain professional schools, an intimate contact with a selected group of university departments and schools as well as with the

student and teachers associations in these places are important. The Division of Foreign Missions of the NCCC in U.S.A., the Student Volunteer Movement in U.S.A., the Inter-Varsity Fellowship and the Dutch commission "De Kerk Overzee" are mainly working in this way. The aim of these contacts is not only to recruit students and teachers for especially organized courses, conferences and study groups, but also to convince faculties to include in their regular curriculum "area study programmes" and for instance a course on the ethical implications of technical assistance in areas of rapid social change.

3) A third way of reaching "the many" is through the usual means of publicity. One of the best examples of this approach is the leaflet "So... You are going abroad", issued by the Canadian Council of Churches and widely distributed through travel agencies, consulates, student Christian movements, mission boards and churches.

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In order to reach the above-mentioned categories 2) and 3) (committed laymen and laywomen with a special missionary vocation) the following ways seem most appropriate:

1) Contact with local churches, Christian youth groups, Christian lay movements, lay centres and groups, and with missionary circles. The leader of the "Werkmissionarskurse" in Switzerland, for instance, sends out every year a circular letter to all the Protestant ministers or leaders of youth groups.

2) Contact with Christian student and teachers associations.

3) Publicity through articles in church papers etc. and through special pamphlets, leaflets and open letters (see for instance the excellent leaflet "Working Abroad as a Christian", issued by the Student Volunteer Movement in U.S.A.).

4) Other agencies - like the Fellowship of St. Paul - are consciously avoiding any publicity, and are mainly working through personal contacts.

5. How to prepare laymen going abroad?

All agencies concerned with laymen working abroad insist on the fact that those going abroad must first of all be well trained for, and competent and conscientious in, their profession or occupation. The agencies do not, however, give any professional training¹²⁾, nor is language study included in their training¹³⁾.

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12) Exception: Since 1956 the Koinonia Foundation has been providing technical training for people to become literacy specialists for functional adult literacy programmes abroad.

13) Most of the agencies advise their trained people to learn at least rudimentally the language of the area where they will be working. But it is becoming more and more difficult to fulfil this requirement because of the growing mobility in the life and work of laymen working abroad (see last paragraph of this chapter).

The help given in the preparation for work overseas covers mainly the following fields:

1) Area studies: The courses of the British Oversea Service and the conferences of the Dutch commission "De Kerk Overzee" for instance each deal with a certain world area whereby specialists and nationals of that area are functioning as teachers.

2) Help for a right adjustment abroad: For instance the "training through community life" which is given in "Koinonia" regarding collaboration with people of other races.

3) Help to see the ethical implications in work abroad: The work and approach with non-Christians and nominal Christians will greatly differ from the work and approach with committed laymen, because the two groups have quite another basis for conversation, and other terms of reference.

4) Some of the agencies mentioned (for instance the "Werkmissionarskurse" in Switzerland) help people of the second and third category to become more articulate Christians by providing courses on the biblical message, on Christian faith and life, on the Church and its mission, as well as practical training for group work, for leading Bible studies, etc.

5) All agencies try to help laymen going abroad to become persons of greater maturity and integrity; in the courses of the British Oversea Service this is mainly done through work in small groups, where the trained are led to ask and tackle questions which are beyond their professional interest; agencies mainly dealing with persons of the second and third categories concentrate on helping those whom they train to grow in Christ.

The ways of training used by the different agencies show a great variety. Here are the most important elements of this variety.

1) Courses and weekend conferences: British Oversea Service organized, until the end of 1956, 41 six-days residential courses with 10-20 participants each. Since 1955, the Dutch commission "De Kerk Overzee" arranged 4 weekend conferences with 30-40 participants each; and since 1952, the Swiss "Werkmissionarskurse" organized 5 courses of one month's length with about twenty participants each.

2) Community life: One of the most important elements in the above-mentioned courses and conferences is the community life. This element is most outspoken in the training provided by the Koinonia Foundation.

3) Relevant lectures in the regular curriculum of certain universities and professional schools: As recorded above, the Division of Foreign Missions of the NCCC in U.S.A. and the Student Volunteer Movement in U.S.A., try to persuade faculties to include courses for area studies and on ethical implications in the regular curriculum.

4) Study groups: This is the classical way of training in student groups and it is used, for instance, by the Student Volunteer Movement in U.S.A.

5) Guided private study through reading: The Fellowship of St. Paul, the LMS Associate Scheme, and other agencies are mainly following this way.

6) Pastoral counselling: All the agencies insist on the primary importance of individual pastoral counselling, preferably done by experienced laymen who have worked in the area to which the trained person is going.

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A growing mobility characterizes the life and work of laymen working abroad. The decision to send someone abroad is often taken only some weeks before the departure, and there is a growing tendency to move employees from one area to another after short periods of work. This mobility greatly hampers any preparation before the departure as well as any serious language study. Training during the work abroad therefore seems most important, but no serious attempt has, as yet, been made to provide such training in the free time abroad.

6. How to sustain laymen working abroad?

Preparation is not even half of the task to be accomplished by agencies concerned with laymen working abroad. For the real problems begin when the laymen are abroad. The highest ideals are then tested by many difficulties, for instance:

1) Personal morality: The strain of living away from home in positions of loneliness and isolation, in trying climates, often with inadequate housing conditions, implies great moral temptations.

2) The snags of new community relationships: The clash between the familiar and alien ways of behaviour has usually destructive consequences in human relationships. Every layman working abroad has for instance to struggle for a right attitude towards racial prejudice and such social ailments as corruption.

3) The "brand" of the working relationship: The employers and not the employees determine a great part of the aim and patterns of the work. If - rightly or wrongly - the employer's aim and pattern of work is considered obnoxious and loathsome, the brand of such a working relationship can annihilate the best personal witness.

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In order to sustain laymen working abroad in these and other difficulties, it is most important to provide them with the right relations and contacts. The following contacts should be considered:

1) Continuing contact with an agency concerned with laymen working abroad: This is important both for non-Christians and nominal Christians whom it is difficult to link with churches, missions, etc. (see for instance the extensive correspondence between British Oversea Service and those who went through its training), and for committed laymen who, through this continuing link, can become a real Christian brotherhood (see for instance the Fellowship of St. Paul, the fellowship of the "Koinonians", or the Inter-Varsity Overseas

Fellowship). Most of the agencies concerned with laymen working abroad try to maintain this contact with "their" persons by means of personal correspondence, news letters, bulletins, or some other way.

2) Contact with the "home" Church: Missionaries often have the backing of a local congregation, of a region or a certain group within the home Church. The Fellowship of St. Paul provides the same backing for laymen working abroad. This is expressed in a "Commissioning Service" within the home congregation of a layman going abroad, for which a special liturgy has been worked out.

3) Contact with missionary agencies: See for instance the links of the LMS Associates with the London Missionary Society or the relationship of the "Werkmissionare" with the Basel Mission.

4) Contact with chaplaincies abroad: This contact is especially important when the laymen working abroad who have ^{not} sufficient command of the language of the area in which they are working.

5) Special contact persons abroad: Many of the above-mentioned agencies are beginning to build up, for every region to which "their" laymen are going, a panel of names and addresses of experienced residents who are willing to help newcomers.

6) The most important (but perhaps most difficult) contact is that with the national Church abroad. Most of the agencies mentioned inform "their" laymen about the national Churches in the areas where they are going to work, and they help to establish the contacts. But here lies still one of the most crucial tasks to accomplish in the whole realm of laymen working abroad.

All such contacts give laymen working abroad the support of fellowship. Christian fellowship is dependent on at least the two following elements:

1) Intercession: No layman working abroad will be able to be steadfast in his witness in the midst of all the tensions and difficulties without the backing of intercession. The Inter-Varsity Fellowship has included the names of the members of the Inter-Varsity Overseas Fellowship in its "Prayer Helpers Newsletter". Intercession is also the heart of the work of the Koinonia Foundation and other agencies concerned with laymen working abroad.

2) A common discipline: No army can fight without discipline. Laymen working abroad are at one of the most difficult and crucial points of the fight of Christ's army for the world. Many of them therefore feel the need for a common discipline. In the above-mentioned liturgy of the Commissioning Service of the Fellowship of St. Paul, the congregation promises to intercede steadfastly for the layman who is being commissioned; thereafter the layman going abroad takes upon himself the following commitment:

"As one who seeks to submit his will to the will of Christ I humbly undertake to serve Him worldwide through:

1. The sincerity of my relationships with other people, being open to fellowship regardless of condition, race, nationality or belief.
2. The high quality of my workmanship, and my willingness to take part in the occupational fellowship of organizations related to my work.
3. The communication of the Gospel as appropriate opportunities arise.
4. The regular participation in the worship, work and fellowship of a particular church in the community in which I live."

P.S. On Foreign Students

The great number of Asian, African and Latin American students studying in North American and European universities are also "working abroad". In fact, these students are probably the most strategic group among all the laymen working abroad, not so much during the period when they are abroad, but after their return when almost all of them will occupy the most important positions in Asian, African and Latin American society. However, we are dealing here only with the period when the students are studying abroad. The Christians among them can give a strong witness in the secularized universities and in "older" Churches of the West. The Churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America should encourage their young members who are going to study abroad, to give this witness.

But all of these foreign students, Christians as well as non-Christians, also need much help during their studies abroad. Hitherto this help has been regarded too exclusively as the responsibility of student Christian movements or missionary agencies. The persons really competent to give this help are committed laymen in the West. The mission leaders and the student Christian movements should therefore cooperate with the best lay institutes and lay movements in the West in order to bring Asian, African and Latin American students into contact with these committed laymen in the West. A doctor who is endeavouring to do his work as a Christian is the most suitable person to help an Asian medical student to recognize his medical study and his future work in Asia as a Christian vocation. And a lawyer, who interprets law as a Christian, can open the eyes of African students of law to the great mission task awaiting them in their professional work in Africa.

H.R. Weber

EXPERIENCE IN OVERSEA SERVICE IN THE PREPARATION OF AND

CONTINUED AID TO LAYMEN WORKING ABROAD

by H.B.T. Holland

It has always been characteristic of our work that we have been dealing with all the three categories of people mentioned in Mr. Weber's background paper, page 10, "The Many of the Few".

Because the majority of those who come to our Courses may be categorized as nominal Christians or those without any Christian affiliation, it is assumed that our courses are more suitable and intended for them, rather than for those who are more fully committed. To this assumption we do not agree, and for the explanation of our method a short philosophical or theological introduction may be pardoned.

The concern of all fully committed Christians who are laymen, as, indeed, of many professional and full-time ministers or church or mission workers, may be said to be one of ethics, or the discovery of the divine will in particular circumstances, in what is called the secular world, or the activity of what the paper calls "the salt function" of the Church in the world. I say "discovery" because, whether it is theologically satisfying or not, far too much prominence is still given to the idea that Christianity is a set of known general principles (extracted by theological science from the data given in the Bible, which have then to be "applied" in the world by the members of the Church, and handed down from one generation to another and by the clergy to the people).

But this seems actually to contradict the experience of Christians as the Bible itself recounts them to us, and is more reminiscent of the attitude of the Jewish scribes and legal experts of New Testament times. The early Christians did not use such Bible as they had as a text-book or regulation, but rather in their knowledge of God, as revealed in the Bible and in Jesus Christ, they expected His Spirit to show them what to do in the particular circumstances of their own lives, and the Epistles are full of examples of the way in which the Spirit said what He had to say to individual Christians and to Christian groups or Churches in and through particular circumstances and particular people who were responsibly involved in those circumstances.

For our own day we cannot doubt that the same thing ought to apply - that is, that what "the Spirit saith to the Churches" is likely to be said to individuals and groups in and through the secular or worldly circumstances of their own particular situation, and in and through particular people who are, or have been, involved in that situation. This makes it very important that the situation itself should be grasped and understood as fully as possible, and therefore responsibly entered into, and that first-hand experience of past and present particular situations should be the guide in helping people to prepare for their own involvement in future ones.

This might be called a revival of the prophetic, as distinct from the priestly, or amateur instead of professional, lay instead of clerical, outlook in dealing with the question of how men ought to behave. It is vitally

necessary where most ethical teaching is given from pulpits by people who are not only theologically trained but are also ordained priests and ministers and full-time officials who ipso facto cannot be responsibly involved in the situations about which they seek to give guidance. It may also be noted in this connection that a new test of Christian commitment is also likely to be emphasized by this approach, as it is unfortunately not necessarily true that all who profess themselves fully committed Christians have the same insight into a situation as some who are less committed but who are able, by acting more "realistically" or "existentially", sometimes even to do the will of God better than the more consciously committed!

The less committed also often start with the advantage that they know that they do not know what is to be done, and are therefore ready to try to discover the right course, whereas some who approach a situation with a fixed and doctrinaire point of view think they know already and are therefore hindered in finding a new truth. The ethics of chair-borne theology have so often been wrong.

One might sum up this part of the argument (an aspect of the doctrine of the Divine Immanence) by saying that the God in Whom Christians believe is not only constantly active in the present situation in His world, and personally involved in the particular, but that His initiative is constantly directed towards involving us men with Him in active cooperation, and seeking to do this by speaking to us, calling us by means of the concrete situation and particular people and current events, if we have ears to hear, and respond as truly responsible people, or, in other words, if we can both perceive and know what things we ought to do and have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is the purpose of worship and the devotional life to make and remake and keep us sensitive and responsive to this divine initiative - the kind of people who can hear because they are awake and alert. And it is our experience that, in some cases, and often for the first time, people in our Courses have become aware of this possibility treated as a fact of everyday life (and not as an elevated principle) and have responded, sometimes dramatically and often unexpectedly. This I would describe as a definite evangelistic aspect of our Courses, and one whose possibilities one can seldom anticipate or follow, but only be thankful for and seek to exploit. Here is one important function for a resident chaplain.

There is also a special sense of responsibility inherent in the particular situation of anyone of whatever belief going out as a citizen of any part of the "Western Christendom" of our own day. Such an individual citizen may be firmly convinced that the society of which he is a member is very far from being Christian. And he may be right. Moreover he may think this state of affairs a matter for regret, and hope for a more truly Christian society; or, on the contrary, he may think it a matter for self-congratulation that he belongs to a society which has emerged into the post-Christian era, free from all the evils of ecclesiasticism. But either way he cannot responsibly ignore two facts - first that the Christian Church was for many centuries part and parcel of the fabric of European society, and emigrated with it across the North Atlantic and to the Antipodes; and second that this association of Christian Church and Western peoples in past history and present civilization

is part of the concept of "the West" in the thinking of the vast majority of the non-Christian peoples of the world - whatever the "Westerners" may say. It is in this sense, and especially where group-consciousness is stimulated by national, racial, economic or ideological pressures, that he carries an increasingly inescapable representative responsibility for the "Western Christian" civilization from which he springs.

The application of this to the methods in Oversea Service may now be examined. Reference to the sample programmes will show that perhaps 70 or 80 per cent of the time involved is spent on considering what are normally called secular issues, as seen through people who have had, or still have, direct responsibility in the area of the subject they talk about and first-hand experience of the region being studied. The aim is so to prepare those who have not yet been involved in these questions, because they have not yet been abroad, that when they are so involved they may "ask the right questions" and so be enabled to find for themselves in a "responsible" way the right answers. And this is best done by meeting "information going about on two legs", the personal and informal approach.

Furthermore, towards the end of the Course they begin to realize, and it is, in fact, repeatedly pointed out, that, so far from their being isolated individuals, they are already one of a growing number of people, including many of experience in the region to which they go, who are concerned with these same problems. They also discover, or are urged to do so, that the problems they will be encountering, particularly the more difficult ones, are almost, if not all, impossible of solution on the basis of one race or group or class, and such a discovery, even though they have had no previous experience of it, can give them the kind of introduction to the meaning of the Church, particularly in a multi-racial society and in areas of rapid social change, which is the only hope for proper development of those areas in the right kind of progress.

They start this introduction to people of other races at the Course itself, where it is almost always practicable to invite as guests, and where possible, as speakers, nationals of the country to which the students are going.

REPORT ON THE MOOR PARK COLLEGE CONSULTATION ON

"LAYMEN WORKING ABROAD"

Preparation, Programme and Participants

The paragraph on "the ongoing discussion" in the background paper for the consultation (p. 5) summarizes the main thinking done so far on this subject. In preparing the consultation, the Department on the Laity came into closer contact with many agencies concerned with laymen working abroad, prepared folders containing the important pamphlets and leaflets of these agencies, and issued the background paper for the consultation. Both the folder and the background paper were sent to the participants of the consultation for their preparatory study.

The programme allowed for six sessions: an introductory session and a session of exchange of experience, followed by three sessions for the discussion of crucial points which arose from the discussions in the first two sessions, and finally a closing period.

Among the participants were six persons working in European agencies concerned with laymen working abroad; seven participants came from general lay training work, and four represented ecumenical organizations concerned with this subject.

The consultation met at Moor Park College at Farnham, Surrey (England), the headquarters of the British Oversea Service whose guests we were. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Mark Gibbs, Assistant Editor of the CHRISTIAN NEWS LETTER.

The Course of the Discussion

At the first session, H.R. Weber introduced the background paper. He spoke first on the following three questions: "Who is a layman?", "Who is a layman working abroad?", and "What different categories are there among the laymen working abroad?". He then emphasized the amazing diversity of approach so far made by the different agencies. This diversity of approach promises a fruitful exchange of experience and mutual learning and teaching, but at the same time it shows us that we must be extremely careful in considering and propagating one specific approach as the approach in this matter.

Dr. H.B.T. Holland, General Secretary of the British Oversea Service, introduced the session on the exchange of experience with a stimulating paper on "Experience in Overseas Service in the Preparation of and Continued Aid to Laymen Working Abroad" (see the summary published on page 17 of this DOCUMENT). The discussion centered mostly around the experience of the British Oversea Service, comparing it with the approach and experience of other agencies. Very much interest was shown in the work of follow-up done by Oversea Service. Whereas the whole report on the work of Oversea Service was received with a deep admiration, some members of the consultation pointed out that their agency could never carry on such an expensive programme (Oversea Service estimated £ 40 as the cost for each student, about one third of which is met by grants from

trusts). Others challenged Dr. Holland concerning his speaking about a "Western Christian Civilization".

All participants in the consultation agreed, that the preparation given to laymen before going to work abroad is not even half of our task: The real difficulties begin when the laymen are abroad. The third session was therefore devoted to a discussion of the specific pressures on those working abroad: How can we help them not to adopt the "we" and "they" attitude?

No fixed pattern of behaviour can be recommended because the situations in which laymen working abroad are finding themselves are utterly different, depending on whether they work in a colonial or post-colonial situation, in a multi-racial society, in a Moslem or Hindu country, etc. It is essential that laymen working abroad do not fight yesterday's battle nor judge people abroad by "home" cultures. The temptation to fall back into old patterns is so great that nothing less than a real conversion to a new attitude is needed. It was pointed out that this conversion could only come through the Holy Spirit. Guidance in spiritual and devotional life overseas and a real partaking in the "fellowship of the Holy Spirit" are therefore essential.

During its fourth session the consultation considered the ways in which the Churches, very especially the office-bearers of the Churches, could be made much more aware of the importance of laymen working abroad. Here a "conversion" of the office-bearers is needed, in order that they fully appreciate the role of the laity in the life and mission of the Church. Different approaches (through theological colleges, pastors' courses, synods, wide publicity in church publications, etc.) were considered. Finally the consultation decided to write a letter to Dr. Norman Goodall, Secretary of the Joint Committee of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council (with copies to the General Secretaries of the WCC and the IMC), emphasizing the need for action to prepare and sustain laymen working abroad and for some co-ordinating body to be set up to deal with this matter ecumenically. The hope was expressed that a discussion could be held both at the Central Committee meetings of the World Council at New Haven, U.S.A., and at the meeting of the International Missionary Council at Achimota, Ghana, stressing the importance of the laymen working abroad and the responsibility of the Churches to train and sustain them when once abroad.

The right relationship between foreign laymen and the laity of the national Church was the subject of the fifth session. Despite all the difficulties and barriers confronting a close relationship (language, different standards of life, different cultures, races and denominations, the mobility which is becoming more and more characteristic in work abroad, etc.) most of the members of the consultation considered such a close relationship between foreign and national laymen the test of a fruitful service abroad. Stress was laid on the importance of fellowship with students from overseas and on the necessity of an "open door life" abroad (and therefore a right preparation of the fiancées or wives of those going to work abroad). The specific problems and opportunities arising from the existence of foreign language congregations abroad were

discussed. Finally much consideration was given to the right attitude of laymen working abroad in areas of racial and ethnic tension.

Summing up

In summing up, the Chairman said that the consultation had primarily dealt with the right function of the Church: The Church is not just the body of the office-bearers, but the whole people of God, that is, both office-bearers and laity. Likewise the missionary outreach of the Church is not only the concern of full-time evangelists and missionaries, but of every church member. But how can we challenge the mass of nominal church members and lead them to commit themselves to become "salty Christians" in their daily work and leisure wherever they are? And how can the office-bearers of the Church be made aware of this decisive role of the laity?

Secondly, the consultation gave much attention to the right training: Much was to be learned from the rich experience of the British Oversea Service; special stress was laid on the importance of the process of "briefing", i.e. the giving of first-hand information by those coming home on leave from abroad. The training should lead to a real commitment and especially help those going abroad to be humble before God and man.

Finally, the consultation was very much aware of the loneliness of those working abroad. Much more thought must still be given to the right contacts of laymen working abroad with national Churches or - where such Churches do not exist - with any other Christian fellowship.

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P.S. Most of the agencies concerned with laymen working abroad have published printed or mimeographed leaflets, folders, circular letters, etc.

