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THE PRESSURE OF GRACE

Roland E. Miller

To understand the pressure of grace is to feel the pressure of love. In the New Testament, indeed, in the Bible as a whole, it is hard to distinguish between grace and love. In the Gospels the word “love” rules; “grace” is seldom used. It is not even mentioned in Matthew or Luke. In Acts the term “grace” begins to emerge and it becomes a dominant theme in the epistles, especially in Paul and Peter. Then in the letters of John and in the Book of Revelation grace retreats and love comes forward again. What this says is that these two terms represent almost identical themes.

It is not surprising, therefore, that grace has been described as “God’s covenant-love”¹ This definition is possible if the word “covenant” is not used in a restricted sense; if it is given its universal implication. I would like to suggest another definition, namely, that grace is *love-in-motion*. From one point of view this definition can be seen as a tautology, since there is no such thing as motionless love. Indeed, as we well know, love is a dam that will burst unless its waters flow. But that is the precise point that my definition is intended to underline.

Grace is love-in-motion. Grace therefore has in it a pressure. It is not static but active. It is not a quiet pool but a rushing stream. It is love expressing itself. It is love channelled into activity. In the mountains of Kerala, India, where we lived and worked, a high four-sectioned dam has been constructed with Canadian aid. The dam catches the monsoon-fed waters, that otherwise

1. Alan Richardson, ed., *A Theological Wordbook of the Bible* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1962), p. 101.

tumbled wastefully into the sea, and imprisons them in a vast basin of deep and quiet water. But below the dam a group of brilliant Canadian engineers and intrepid Indian workmen, working together, have drilled a four-foot wide tunnel. Thousands of feet long, it slopes downward through the heart of the mountain at a very steep angle until it finally emerges in a huge cavern. The cavern is a man-made cave, cut out at the base of the mountain. Within the cavern there are four giant generators. The water from the quiet dam above comes charging with monumental force through the long tunnel and down into the generators. When this remarkable dam was commissioned last year, the total of India's hydroelectric output increased by more than 50 per cent in one fell swoop.

Grace too has pressure in it -- furious pressure. It is after all, the grace of God. It exerts a primal force. It produces energy, and energy results in activity. It propels us from where we are to where we should be. It does not argue with us. It pushes us -- it pushes us toward mission and unity.

So often we seem to adopt the stance of engineers and presume that we can control the pressure of grace. We engage in our carefully-measured and finely-tuned ecclesiastical activities, as though we were in charge of matters. But the opposite is true -- grace is in charge of us. We are not in control of grace; grace is in control of us.

This fact, once it is accepted and understood, delivers us from many evils; we let God be God and follow the movement of his Spirit. One of the evils from which we are delivered is the assumption that we have a large number of options in spiritual matters. We have far fewer options than our pride and selfishness would have us believe. For we are not the designers of the plan; nor are we the spiritual engineers. At best we are the generators, the electrical wires, and the lights; the design and the power is of God. The *world* can turn off that power, but far be it for *Christians* to resist the grace of God. Let the grace of God carry us to the goals of God! And, as the writer to the Hebrews says in another context, "Guard against turning back from the grace of God" (12,15).

THE PRESSURE OF GRACE TOWARDS MISSION

The pressure of grace towards mission is a fundamental pressure. How fundamental it is we can see from the pattern of God our Saviour, who is love-in-motion. Grace in him pressed him to undertake the first and greatest of all missionary journeys, the sending of himself in his Son Jesus. Grace in the heart of God became grace incarnate in the world. Grace incarnate in the Word made flesh became grace uplifted on the Cross. That uplifting was the supremely gracious self-sacrifice of Christ. "Jesus . . . was made lower . . . so that through God's grace he should die for everyone" (Heb. 2,9). Because of love-in-motion we are meeting at this conference as the children of grace, for the children of God are the children of grace. The goodness and

loving-kindness of God appeared to save us, "so that by his grace we might be put right with God" (Titus 3, 4-7).

This unique grace was not something that we deserved; it was undeserved. We know what we have deserved -- the condemnation of God because of our sin. In that there is no distinction, for "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." But in that hopeless situation divine grace entered in. It came as a gift, as it always does if grace is grace.

They are justified by his grace, as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God has put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith (Rom. 3,24).

Neither was this unique grace something that we earned. How can an unworthy servant earn anything from deeds that are just dues, from deeds that are so imperfect and stained? No, grace and earnings do not belong together. "It is by grace you have been saved." In fact, we were dead through our trespasses, but God made us alive together with Christ.

He did this to demonstrate for all time to come the extraordinary greatness of his *grace* in the *love* he showed us in Christ Jesus. For it is by God's grace that you have been saved, not of works, lest any man should boast (Eph. 2,5.8.9).

Yes, let him that boasts, boast in the Lord. He is the God of all grace.

Now the same pressure that pressed God to go into his undeserving world to seek and to save that which was lost takes the children of grace into the path of their missionary Father. For in Christ we too have become love-in-motion. This is not a love that depends on anything outside of us. It depends entirely on what is inside of us -- Christ in us, the grace of God in us. It does not depend on the worth of the loved. It does not depend on the promise of rewards. In Christ Jesus we are lovers-in-motion, who spontaneously and joyfully go out from themselves in sacrificial service, as God went out of himself in the self-giving of the Son of God.² The specific command of Jesus, "As the Father sent me, so send I you" (John 20,21) expressed the result of love-in-motion. Grace in God results in the sending, the self-sending of God to man. Grace in man results in the sending, the self-sending of man to man.

The pressure of grace towards mission is not only evident from the very idea of grace. It is also clear from the links that are forged between grace and apostleship in the New Testament. In Rom. 1,5 we have this great word:

Through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about obedience to the faith for the sake of his name among all the nations.
(RSV)

Through whom I received the privilege of a commission in his name to

2. Cf. Roland E. Miller, "The Biblical Basis of Mission," in *Concordia Theological Monthly* (1965), for a full development of this idea.

lead to faith and obedience men in all nations, yourselves among them . . .
(NEB)

Apostleship is a grace-gift. It is part of the privilege of grace -- the privilege of leading men to faith and to obedience.

As a boy, I attended the Barnum and Bailey Bros. Circus. There I was particularly fascinated by an event called "The Human Cannonball." A man was shot from a gun and landed in a net on the other side of the arena. Similarly the child of grace is shot from a gun . . . and he must be involved in the mission of God with the same inevitability as the man who arches across the arena. Grace propels the church of God into the world.

As the church responds to the pressure of grace and takes up its apostolic mission, it finds that grace also provides the content of the mission task. For the task of mission is the proclamation of grace. In his farewell address to the Ephesians, Paul says:

I reckon my own life to be worth nothing to me. I only want to complete my mission and to finish the work that the Lord Jesus gave me to do, which is to declare the good news about the grace of God . . . And now I commend you to the care of God and to the message of his grace, which is able to build you up . . . (Acts 20, 24.32)

And later on, when he sends his letter to the Ephesians to encourage and strengthen them in their faith, he defines his whole ministry as "the stewardship of the grace of God" (Eph. 3,2). I have described the Muslim and Hindu ideas of grace. Certainly the task of the church in the world, also in these modern days, must continue to be defined as "the stewardship of the grace of God."

Not only does grace produce mission, not only does it provide the content of mission, but grace also defines the scope of mission. "For the grace of God," says St. Paul, "has appeared for the salvation of all men" (Tit. 2,11). At a time when the Christian church was evidently nothing more than a few zealots, who were filled with delusions and dreams based on the life of an obscure village carpenter in a subject state, it was almost overwhelming to say that the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men. Yet, not only was St. Paul convinced of the fact of God's universal plan of love, he was equally sure that the plan was one that required the practical action of committed believers, and that he himself had his appointed role in that activity. So in the same passage where he speaks of the stewardship of grace, he goes on to say:

Of this Gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace . . . To me . . . this grace was given to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, to make all men see how God's secret plan is to be put into effect (Eph. 3:7-8).

Despite the growth of the Christian church over the centuries, it is still almost overwhelming to say and to believe that the grace of God has

appeared for the salvation of all men.

The vast numbers of people in the world today, the broad range of their religious views, the strength of the competing systems, especially the new quasi-religions of man, the continuing growth of world population, the diminishing freedom in the world for the traditional missionary enterprise, the erosion of faith and commitment within the Christian church itself are all factors which are individually forbidding; put together they present a picture that can daunt the hardest Christian soul. In this situation and at this time, there is no alternative to opening ourselves anew to the pressure of grace and allowing it to carry us out to this challenging global complexity. As simple, naive Christians, we must be convinced that love-in-motion is the need of this day too, and we must be just as sure that lovers-in-motion are God's chosen instruments to put into effect God's secret plan in our age. There is no alternative but to say with Paul and to believe with him that "of this Gospel we were made ministers according to the gifts of God's grace" to proclaim "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

What is the place of the Lutheran Church in Canada? What is the place of the church that banners the affirmation GRACE ALONE? It is a sobering question, for we certainly want to live up to our affirmations. As I observed the development of the vision of a united Lutheran Church in Canada, from the great spatial and cultural distance of India, I could not help but note with deep pleasure the steady linking of that movement with the concept of mission. It was said that the mission to Canada could be most effectively carried out by a single Lutheran Church that unified the efforts of all. This thinking seemed sound and paralleled the experience of mission field churches. As the latter faced the tasks -- in the most cases very staggering tasks -- of communicating the Gospel to their own people, many came to the conclusion that functional unity and national identity were both necessary marks of a church intent on witnessing effectively in its own context. In arriving at this same conclusion Lutherans in Canada were expressing a viewpoint that has been widely maintained and energetically acted upon in various mission fields of the church.

Nevertheless, I had a feeling that the vision was too low, and I am wondering whether that feeling is correct. At least in the published literature that came to my attention, it did not seem that the fullness of the missionary vision of God was being captured. For I did not see reflected a strong awareness that another fundamental purpose for striving to unify Lutherans in Canada is to bring a more effective contribution to the *world* mission of the church. In my opinion this dimension of the vision must be deepened and enlarged. The universal character of grace and the mission of grace must be perceived at the beginning of a church's development, both in terms of its theology and its organizational goals. "Jerusalem, Samaria, uttermost parts of the earth" was not at all a chronological phasing of priorities, as is clearly evident from the response of the first Christians. Rather, Christ thereby intended to alert his church to the full dimension of the missionary task. Thus,

before Jerusalem was fully evangelized, Barnabas was sent to Antioch; and before the work in Antioch was complete, the Spirit and the church sent missionaries from there to Asia Minor. The importance for Lutherans in Canada to appropriate the full dimension of its task may be underlined by a personal reminiscence.

In the mid-sixties the India mission field of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod faced a crisis in staffing. Since 1955 the India Government had not permitted the entry of non-Commonwealth evangelistic missionaries into India. The reasons for this action were complex, and some of them related to a national hangover from the colonial ear which was quite understandable. This restriction had the effect of severely diminishing the work that was carried on in the traditional pattern.

Since the India Government had not yet extended the restriction to Commonwealth nations, with whom India maintained special reciprocal relations, evangelistic missionaries of Commonwealth nationalities could freely enter into India. Many mission societies took the opportunity to strengthen their missionary staff via this route. India missionaries and India church authorities again and again communicated this fact of life to the headquarters of the Missouri Synod, urging the church to take advantage of the opportunity while it lasted. There was a double stream of response -- both streams negative. One stream was characterized by a seeming inability to grasp the significance of Commonwealth status. The second stream was characterized by the comment that Canadian Districts of the Synod were "uninterested" because they did not have enough Canadian personnel to staff their own needs.

In 1965 I returned from India, on commission of the India church, with mission to do two things: one, to press home the fact of the opportunity; two, to recruit Canadians who could possibly be called. Both objectives were achieved. A remarkably able and committed group of Canadian pastors and laymen offered their services for the India mission. But alas! The administrative wheels ground too slowly. By the time church agencies got around to dealing with the matter, the India Government had acted again, this time extending to Commonwealth nations the restriction against evangelistic missionaries. The doors to India, for all practical purposes, had slammed shut. By a fortunate quirk since that time, one ordained Missouri Synod missionary received permission to enter India; but by attrition the once flourishing India missionary staff is now reduced to six clergy members, five of whom are quite senior.

It is quite conceivable that had there been an effective Lutheran Church in Canada at that time, this "sad" event would not have transpired. It happened because the forms of the church were not being molded by the missionary function of the church. Are we sufficiently sensitive to the pressure of grace? Grace presses us on to the redemption of the world. In these days of lengthening shadows and shortening time, it is absolutely essential that the organization of the church shall serve the mission of the church, and not vice

versa; this principle must be soundly applied in the thinking and planning of the Lutheran Church in Canada.

The grace of God was given to us as a treasure of life to be shared with the world. It is not responsible or fitting for us to close off or diminish the pressure of grace by putting in wheel valves where they are not needed or do not belong. After St. Paul had completed the great reconciliation passage of 2 Cor. 5, and had proclaimed his call to us to be ambassadors for Christ, he adds a word that is equally trenchant: "In our work together with God, I beg you who have received God's grace, *not to let it be wasted*" (2 Cor. 6,1).

Grace warms our hearts, opens our eyes, and lifts up our heads so that we too see and share the vision of St. Paul: "As the abounding grace of God is shared by more and more, the greater may be the chorus of thanksgiving that ascends to the glory of God!" (2 Cor. 4,15)

THE PRESSURE OF GRACE TOWARDS UNITY

Thanksgiving is a chorus. It is together that we praise God for his grace, and together we carry out the mission of grace. This brings me to the second pressure which we are dealing with at this time -- the pressure of grace towards the unity of the church.

Here too we must check whether we are labouring under the assumption that we have a multiplicity of options. The pressure of grace gives us no options in the thrust towards the unity of the people of grace. As mission is not an option, so also unity is not an option. We do not have the right to opt for the *disunity* of the church, neither by passively accepting it as a fact of life nor by actively supporting it as a way of life. For all that grace stands for, and all that grace would fashion from a discordant and riven humanity, is summed up in that single overwhelming word -- "You are the Body of Christ" -- the single Body of one Christ, fashioned by one Spirit for one hope, marked by one baptism and one faith in the One Lord Who is the God and Father of all (Eph. 4:4-6).

We all know that traditionally we have had more trouble dealing with this pressure than with the pressure toward mission. There are several reasons for this. The history of our many theological conflicts and struggles over the years has conditioned us to react a little nervously every time we hear the blessed scriptural word "unity." Our own innate tendencies to live ungenerously toward one another (reflecting the continuing burden of our sin) help to clog and rust the channel through which the pressure of grace must flow. The very routineness of our broken ecclesiastical patterns has formed a habit of division. The anxiety to respond fully to the pressure of grace towards truth and to avoid any appearance of wrong-doing in the area of teaching has tended to produce an insensitivity toward the pressure to unity. Have we

stopped hearing or, possibly at times, even hardened ourselves against the pleading voice of Scripture:

By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ I appeal to all of you, my brothers, to agree in what you say, so that there will be no divisions among you. Be completely united, with only one thought and one purpose (1 Cor. 1,10).

You still live as the people of this world live. When there is jealousy among you and you quarrel with one another, doesn't this prove that you belong to this world, living by its standards? When one of you says, I follow Paul, and another, I follow Apollos -- aren't you acting like worldly people? (1 Cor. 3:3-4)

I think that the answer for the Lutheran Church in Canada today to the question of whether we have stopped hearing is "no." It is hearing the voice of God and it is responding to the pressure of grace toward unity. This welcome fact demonstrates two things: one, the power of Spirit-led grace; and two, the convergence of the pressures towards mission and unity. I will say more about the power of grace later. Let me dwell for a moment on the latter point, the inter-relation of the pressures toward mission and unity. It is remarkable how the pressure towards mission has opened hearts to the pressure towards unity again and again in the history of the church. These are proximate truths. As grace presses us on into the waiting world, it presses us toward each other. As the church struggles to carry out the formidable tasks of mission, it rediscovers the need for and blessing of mutual prayer and support.

Thus, it is not surprising that the people of grace at the frontier of mission have been the first to respond to the pressure of grace toward unity. I have certainly experienced that fact in my own life and ministry. Brought up in Neudorf, Saskatchewan, where it was taken for granted that having three Lutheran churches sitting more or less on top of each other was quite right and proper, I was hardly prepared for the plunge into a mission field experience that in some ways paralleled the situation of the early church. How can I tell you what it means to be surrounded day after day by thousands, yes, hundreds of thousands of non-Christians! How can I express to you what it means in that situation to see a Christian face and to feel the hand of a Christian brother! In that moment, the pressures of grace toward mission and unity seem to be surging through the same channel. I make bold to suggest that the Lutheran Church in Canada is a church on the frontier of mission. In some sense, experiencing the same reality as the New Testament church, it is also more and more reflecting an early church sensitivity to the pressure of grace towards unity.

That grace does indeed press towards unity, we see first of all in the heart of God himself -- in the fellowship of the Holy Trinity. Grace, as love-in-motion, is the mark of that relationship. It is in St. John that we see unveiled this inner reality of the nature of God: "The Father loves the Son" (Jn. 3,35). "The

world must know that I love the Father; that is why I do everything as he commands me" (Jn. 14,31).

Rightly understood the doctrine of God which the Scriptures present to us is a doctrine of social unity -- an eternity of personal communion and mutual self-giving in the ineffable love of the Holy Trinity. The unity of God is not simply a mathematical concept; it is a unity of personal love.

That divine and holy love-in-motion becomes the pattern for the life of the Lord's Body in this world. This is nowhere more profoundly expressed than in the high priestly prayer of Jesus. In that great prayer, the pressures of grace towards mission and unity are revealed as inextricably entwined:

I do not pray for thee only, but also for those who are to believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, even as thou Father art in me and I in thee, so that the world may believe that thou has sent me. The glory that thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou has sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me . . . I made known thy name to them, and I will make it known, that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them. (Jn. 17)

As our dear Lord in his final moments lifts up his followers to his Father in prayer, he prays for their unity. Here it is clearly revealed that the very life of God is to be made evident in the life of his people so that the world may believe. The very unity of God is made known by the unity of his people.

As we meet this awesome truth -- or rather, as this awesome pressure plays upon our lives, both individually and corporately, we recognize the inadequacy of our response. There is a resistance to this pressure in us, both natural and acquired. There is a desire to control it, rather than to be controlled by it. There is some despair as to how this pressure of grace is to be actualized in the concrete relationships of ecclesiastical structures. But even as the people of grace confess their very real inadequacies, they discover that grace is not only a pressure toward unity; it is also the power that creates it. Leonard Hodgson has put the matter this way:

The doctrine of the Trinity reminds us that though the capacity to love may not be in human nature as we have it, it is the essence of God's nature. What is Christianity if it be not the message that God has entered the history of the world for the purpose of restoring the image, of re-making our human nature after the pattern of the divine, of changing us beyond our capacity to change ourselves? ³

The pressure of grace toward unity was felt strongly by the New Testament Church. In fact, given the great varieties and differences within the fellowship, it could only have stayed together as it did because it remained open to that

3. *The Doctrine of the Trinity* (London: Nisbet & Co. Ltd., 1955), pp. 186f.

pressure. The pressure of grace toward unity was not an easy experience for a society accustomed to division -- division between Jew and Gentile, between free men and slaves, between male and female. But the implication of grace could not be denied. As grace in the New Testament writings was repeatedly linked with apostleship so it was also linked with fellowship. The fellowship of the church of God broke down all barriers and brought a new form of human relationship that reflected the divine image and intention. The compulsion of grace carried along the first believers so that they were "one in mind and heart," a oneness that was expressed in prayer, in breaking of bread, and in mutual sharing (Acts 4, 33).

This does not by any means imply that the first Christians had solved all the problems within their relationship. There were serious differences of opinion. These were located in the differing perceptions and traditions of Jewish and Gentile believers, in the disagreements between Peter and Paul, in the questions raised by Judaizers, in the disputes regarding mission strategy, in the tendencies to develop and join parties, and in the problems raised by serious lapses in both faith and morality. But that original pressure of grace to which they had opened their hearts worked in them powerfully and held them together as they gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The result was a togetherness -- not perfect but real -- within which they loved each other and forgave each other, edified each other and bore each other's burdens. "Great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4, 33), and the world took notice. "Behold," said Pliny the Roman Governor, "Behold how they love one another."

In the interacting life of the first Christians, how did the grace of God express itself in practical ways? And what does the grace of God do today as it presses us toward each other. In the very simplest terms, it makes us gracious. It makes us gracious, one toward another.

That spirit of graciousness is revealed first of all in our speech. When used in connection with speech, the term "grace" carried the original sense of kindness, comeliness. That is the way it is intended when Paul says: "Let your speech always be gracious" (with *charis*) (Col. 4, 6). In this passage St. Paul was talking about communication with unbelievers. What must we say, then, about communication between members of the household of faith? How compelling this admonition is! All too frequently we are unkind and not comely in our ways and words with each other in the church. Grace presses us to communicate in ways that are both thoughtful and kindly. Paul was both honest and pungent in his statements; but what a spirit of brotherliness and affection undergirded them, so that even his criticisms were words of grace! In this he was but the follower of his Master. For the first thing that produced general wonder about Jesus of Nazareth was "the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth" (Luke 4, 22). It was the Word that was made flesh, and love in motion is love in communication.

Grace pressing towards unity expresses itself also in supportive action. In the New Testament that activity was customarily described as a sharing of the

gifts of grace. The grace of God that was revealed in Christ has not ceased flowing, but continues to pour forth in the giving of the Spirit and the Spirit's gifts. These gifts are intended for mutual edification in the Body of Christ, the church. Whatever gifts we have received are not ours; they are ours for others. Their sharing is not to be harnessed by any man-made controls or barriers. For each limb in the body is to share its talent and gift for the good of the whole body. In the life of the young church which was set down in a dangerous world, it was absolutely imperative that this kind of sharing go on. So Peter said: "As good stewards of God's manifold grace, serve one another, each one as he has received his grace-gift from God" (1 Peter 4, 10).

The concrete nature of this active sharing in the New Testament church is reflected in the special offering that was raised by the *diaspora* congregations on behalf of the famine-stricken and suffering mother church in Jerusalem. The Jerusalem Christians were in deep trouble, and their fellow believers in other areas came to their rescue. They regarded that opportunity to help as a privilege, and the word for privilege is the same as the word for grace. The very opportunity for the people of grace to help each other is itself one of the gifts of grace. Therefore Paul writes these words to the Corinthian believers:

Our brothers, we want you to know that God's grace has accomplished in the churches in Macedonia . . . They begged us and pleaded for the grace (privilege) of having a part in helping God's people in Judea . . . First they gave themselves to the Lord, and then by God's will they gave themselves to us as well. So we urge Titus . . . to help you (also) to complete this special grace-gift of love . . . You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 8:1-9).

The grace of Christ, the grace of an opportunity, and the grace of a gift are all woven together into a beautiful tapestry of love-in-motion.

The same grace that impels the people of grace toward unity and these kinds of expressions of unity, also presses us who are here. It presses the Lutheran Church in Canada to a oneness in mission, to a striving side by side for the faith of the Gospel (Ph. 1, 27), to friendly communication, to supportive sharing of resources, and to any activities that come under the standard of love-in-motion alone. Paul sums it up in this way:

Show your love by being tolerant one with another. Do your best to preserve the unity which the Spirit gives by means of the peace that binds you together. There is one body . . . And everyone of us is given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift . . . He did this to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service, to build up the body of Christ. And so we shall all come together to that oneness in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God; we shall become mature men, reaching to the very height of Christ's full stature (Eph. 4, 7 ff.).

Thus in our fellowship together in Christ we strive for his full stature and, in our striving together, we reveal that stature to the world with the result that

Christ is lifted up before men. As the pressure of grace towards mission and the pressure of grace towards unity converge, they become a mighty stream and force that carries us forward in the service of God and man. As I understand it, the Lutheran Church in Canada has perceived a vision -- the grace of God for each other, and the grace of God for the world. The privilege of being involved in bringing that vision to reality is in itself no mean gift of grace. It requires a hearty "grace-thanks" from us to God in return. Thank you, God, for opening our hearts to the pressures of grace, and for making us part of the movement of grace!

Mission and unity belong together like rice and curry! On the southeast coast of India is a little village called Tranquebar. The name is written large in the history of the church's mission to the world. It was at that place on July 9th, 1706, that Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and Henry Plutschau arrived the first non-Roman Catholic missionaries in India. Ziegenbalg was a combination genius-saint. Although he died in his beloved Tranquebar after less than 14 years of service, he established within that time the foundation for the Lutheran Church in India and blazed the trail for the entire Protestant mission development in India. But perhaps the most interesting thing of all is how it happened.

King Frederick IV of Denmark had been inspired by the example of Roman Catholic missions to concern himself about the spiritual well-being of his subjects in the tiny Danish-ruled enclave of Tranquebar. He tried to find men who would undertake the mission. However, he failed in his effort to find willing and suitable personnel in his own Lutheran Church in Denmark, which at that time was in a stultified spiritual condition. He turned to the Church in Germany for help. There too the church had become moribund to a considerable degree and was marked by an admixture of dead orthodoxy and moral corruption. But there, in the city of Halle, the pressure of grace had produced a rebirth of Christian life under August Francke (1663-1727). In Halle the King of Denmark found the help he needed. Francke supplied the services of Ziegenbalg and Plutschau, and thus the great Lutheran mission in India was born. It was born as the result of grace-conscious Lutherans helping other grace-conscious Lutherans.

There is still much to be born. The kingdom of heaven is waiting to be born among the sons of men. We have the privilege of grace, and the pressure of grace is strong within us. As we together face the task of being God's gracious people in Canada and in the world, to respond to what Visser't Hooft called "the pressure of our common calling,"⁴ we must feel also the power of grace. God will surely use us if we place ourselves into his hands.

4. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, *The Pressure of Our Common Calling* (New York: Double Day & Co., 1959).