

REGNUM EDINBURGH CENTENARY SERIES  
Volume 32

# Evangelism and Diakonia in Context

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## REGNUM EDINBURGH CENTENARY SERIES

The centenary of the World Missionary Conference of 1910, held in Edinburgh, was a suggestive moment for many people seeking direction for Christian mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Several different constituencies within world Christianity held significant events around 2010. From 2005, an international group worked collaboratively to develop an intercontinental and multi-denominational project, known as Edinburgh 2010, based at New College, University of Edinburgh. This initiative brought together representatives of twenty different global Christian bodies, representing all major Christian denominations and confessions, and many different strands of mission and church life, to mark the centenary.

Essential to the work of the Edinburgh 1910 Conference, and of abiding value, were the findings of the eight think-tanks or ‘commissions’. These inspired the idea of a new round of collaborative reflection on Christian mission – but now focused on nine themes identified as being key to mission in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The study process was polycentric, open-ended, and as inclusive as possible of the different genders, regions of the world, and theological and confessional perspectives in today’s church. It was overseen by the Study Process Monitoring Group: Miss Maria Aranzazu Aguado (Spain, The Vatican), Dr Daryl Balia (South Africa, Edinburgh 2010), Mrs Rosemary Dowsett (UK, World Evangelical Alliance), Dr Knud Jørgensen (Norway, Areopagos), Rev John Kafwanka (Zambia, Anglican Communion), Rev Dr Jooseop Keum (Korea, World Council of Churches), Dr Wonsuk Ma (Korea, Oxford Centre for Mission Studies), Rev Dr Kenneth R. Ross (UK, Church of Scotland), Dr Petros Vassiliadis (Greece, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), and co-ordinated by Dr Kirsteen Kim (UK, Edinburgh 2010).

These publications reflect the ethos of Edinburgh 2010 and will make a significant contribution to ongoing studies in mission. It should be clear that material published in this series will inevitably reflect a diverse range of views and positions. These will not necessarily represent those of the series’ editors or of the Edinburgh 2010 General Council, but in publishing them the leadership of Edinburgh 2010 hopes to encourage conversation between Christians and collaboration in mission. All the series’ volumes are commended for study and reflection in both church and academy.

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Volume 32

# **Evangelism and Diakonia in Context**

Edited by  
Rose Dowsett, Isabel Phiri, Doug Birdsall, Dawit Olika  
Terfassa, Hwa Yung and Knud Jørgensen

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## PREFACE

The Edinburgh 2010 Common Call emerged from the Edinburgh 2010 study process and conference marking the centenary of the World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910. The Common Call, cited below, was affirmed in the Church of Scotland Assembly Hall in Edinburgh on 6 June 2010, by representatives of world Christianity, including Catholic, Orthodox, Evangelical, Pentecostal, and other major Protestant churches.

As we gather for the centenary of the World Missionary Conference of Edinburgh 1910, we believe the church, as a sign and symbol of the reign of God, is called to witness to Christ today by sharing in God's mission of love through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

*1. Trusting in the Triune God and with a renewed sense of urgency, we are called to incarnate and proclaim the good news of salvation, of forgiveness of sin, of life in abundance, and of liberation for all poor and oppressed. We are challenged to witness and evangelism in such a way that we are a living demonstration of the love, righteousness and justice that God intends for the whole world.*

*2. Remembering Christ's sacrifice on the Cross and his resurrection for the world's salvation, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are called to authentic dialogue, respectful engagement and humble witness among people of other faiths – and no faith – to the uniqueness of Christ. Our approach is marked with bold confidence in the gospel message; it builds friendship, seeks reconciliation and practises hospitality.*

*3. Knowing the Holy Spirit who blows over the world at will, reconnecting creation and bringing authentic life, we are called to become communities of compassion and healing, where young people are actively participating in mission, and women and men share power and responsibilities fairly, where there is a new zeal for justice, peace and the protection of the environment, and renewed liturgy reflecting the beauties of the Creator and creation.*

*4. Disturbed by the asymmetries and imbalances of power that divide and trouble us in church and world, we are called to repentance, to critical reflection on systems of power, and to accountable use of power structures. We are called to find practical ways to live as members of One Body in full awareness that God resists the proud, Christ welcomes and empowers the poor and afflicted, and the power of the Holy Spirit is manifested in our vulnerability.*

*5. Affirming the importance of the biblical foundations of our missional engagement and valuing the witness of the Apostles and martyrs, we are called to rejoice in the expressions of the gospel in many nations all over the world. We celebrate the renewal experienced through movements of migration and mission in all directions, the way all are equipped for*

*mission by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and God's continual calling of children and young people to further the gospel.*

*6. Recognising the need to shape a new generation of leaders with authenticity for mission in a world of diversities in the twenty-first century, we are called to work together in new forms of theological education. Because we are all made in the image of God, these will draw on one another's unique charisms, challenge each other to grow in faith and understanding, share resources equitably worldwide, involve the entire human being and the whole family of God, and respect the wisdom of our elders while also fostering the participation of children.*

*7. Hearing the call of Jesus to make disciples of all people – poor, wealthy, marginalised, ignored, powerful, living with disability, young, and old – we are called as communities of faith to mission from everywhere to everywhere. In joy we hear the call to receive from one another in our witness by word and action, in streets, fields, offices, homes, and schools, offering reconciliation, showing love, demonstrating grace and speaking out truth.*

*8. Recalling Christ, the host at the banquet, and committed to that unity for which he lived and prayed, we are called to ongoing co-operation, to deal with controversial issues and to work towards a common vision. We are challenged to welcome one another in our diversity, affirm our membership through baptism in the One Body of Christ, and recognise our need for mutuality, partnership, collaboration and networking in mission, so that the world might believe.*

*9. Remembering Jesus' way of witness and service, we believe we are called by God to follow this way joyfully, inspired, anointed, sent and empowered by the Holy Spirit, and nurtured by Christian disciplines in community. As we look to Christ's coming in glory and judgment, we experience his presence with us in the Holy Spirit, and we invite all to join with us as we participate in God's transforming and reconciling mission of love to the whole creation.*

### **Themes Explored**

The 2010 conference was shaped around the following nine study themes:

1. Foundations for mission
2. Christian mission among other faiths
3. Mission and post-modernities
4. Mission and power
5. Forms of missionary engagement
6. Theological education and formation
7. Christian communities in contemporary contexts
8. Mission and unity – ecclesiology and mission
9. Mission spirituality and authentic discipleship

### The Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series to Date

Against this background a series of books was commissioned, with the intention of making a significant contribution to ongoing studies of mission. This series currently includes:<sup>1</sup>

*Edinburgh 2010: Mission Then and Now*, David A. Kerr and Kenneth R. Ross (eds).

*Edinburgh 2010 Volume II: Witnessing to Christ Today*, Daryl Balia and Kirsteen Kim (eds).

*Mission Continues: Global Impulses for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Claudia Wahrisch-Oblau and Fidon Mwombeki (eds).

*Holistic Mission: God's Plan for God's People*, Brian Woolnough and Wonsuk Ma (eds).

*Mission Today and Tomorrow*, Kirsteen Kim and Andrew Anderson (eds).

*The Church Going Local: Mission and Globalization*, Tormod Engelsviken, Erling Lundeby and Dagfinn Solheim (eds).

*Evangelical and Frontier Mission: Perspectives on the Global Progress of the Gospel*, A. Scott Moreau and Beth Snodderly (eds).

*Interfaith Relations after One Hundred Years: Christian Mission among Other Faiths*, Marina Ngursangzeli Behera (ed).

*Witnessing to Christ in a Pluralistic Age: Christian Mission among Other Faiths*, Lalsangkima Pachuau and Knud Jørgensen (eds).

*Mission and Post Modernities*, Rolv Olsen (ed).

*A Learning Missional Church: Reflections from Young Missiologists*, Beate Fagerli, Knud Jørgensen, Rolv Olsen, Kari Storstein Haug and Knut Tveitereid (eds).

*Life-Widening Mission: Global Anglican Perspectives*, Cathy Ross (ed).

*Foundations for Mission*, Emma Wild-Wood and Peniel Rajkumar (eds).

*Mission Spirituality and Authentic Discipleship*, Wonsuk Ma and Kenneth R. Ross (eds).

*A Century of Catholic Missions*, Stephen Bevans (ed).

*Mission as Ministry of Reconciliation*, Robert Schreiter and Knud Jørgensen (eds).

*Orthodox Perspectives on Mission*, Petros Vassiliadis (ed).

*Bible in Mission*, Pauline Hoggarth, Fergus Macdonald, Knud Jørgensen and Bill Mitchell (eds).

*Pentecostal Mission and Global Christianity*, Wonsuk Ma, Veli-Matti Karkkainen and J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu (eds).

*Engaging the World: Christian Communities in Contemporary Global Society*, Afe Adogame, Janice McLean and Anderson Jeremiah (eds).

*Mission At and From the Margins: Patterns, Protagonists and Perspectives*, Peniel Rajkumar, Joseph Dayam, I.P. Asheervadham (eds).

*The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives*, Margunn Serigstad Dahle, Lars Dahle and Knud Jørgensen (eds).

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<sup>1</sup> For an up-to-date list and full publication details, see [www.ocms.ac.uk/regnum/](http://www.ocms.ac.uk/regnum/)

- Global Diasporas and Mission*, Chandler H Im & Amos Yong (eds).
- Theology, Mission and Child: Global Perspectives*, B Prevette, K White, CR Velloso Ewell & DJ Konz (eds).
- Called to Unity for the Sake of Mission*, John Gibaut and Knud Jørgensen (eds).
- Korean Church, God's Mission, Global Christianity*, Wonsuk Ma and Kyo Seong Ahn (eds).
- Reflecting on and Equipping for Christian Mission*, Stephen Bevans, Teresa Chai, J. Nelson Jennings, Knud Jørgensen and Dietrich Werner (eds).
- Freedom of Belief and Christian Mission*, Hans Aage Gravaas, Christof Sauer, Tormod Engelsviken, Maqsood Kamil and Knud Jørgensen (eds).
- Creation Care in Christian Mission*, Kapyia J Kaoma (ed).
- The Reshaping of Mission in Latin America*, Miguel Alvarez (ed).
- Witnessing to Christ in North East India*, Behera Marina (ed).
- Evangelism and Diakonia in Context*, R Dowsett, I Phiri, D Birdsall, DO Terfassa, H Yung and K Jørgensen (eds).
- Mission and Power: History, Relevance and Perils*, Atola Longkumer, Michael Biehl and Jørgen Skov-Sorenson (eds).
- Mission in Central and Eastern Europe: Realities, Perspectives, Trends*, Corneliu Constantineanu, Marcel V. Măcelaru, Anne-Marie Kool and Mihai Himeciński (eds).
- Ecumenical Missiology: Changing Landscapes and New Conceptions of Mission*, KR Ross, J Keum, K Avtzi and RR Hewitt (eds)

## FOREWORD

Christian faith is communicated in *words* and *action*. *Evangelism* and *diakonia* have therefore been closely *interrelated* more or less throughout the history of the Christian church. However, church history also provides examples of practices where the two are *separated*. Christian faith without words is like a herald, a bearer of news, without a message. The gospel of the Kingdom of God must be communicated to those who do not know it, and the doctrinal foundation, history and ethics of the Christian church must be passed on from one generation to the next. This happens through words. Yet, Christian faith without deeds is a dead faith. God expects us to love Him and our neighbor as ourselves. Our neighbor is created in the image of God and cherished by Him. We therefore honor God by looking at our fellow man with His perspective and by loving others as He loves them. God does not need our works for the sake of our salvation, but he needs them to secure the wellbeing of His creation. We are His ambassadors.

Church history also gives us examples of communicating Christian faith through the *wrong words* and *wrong actions*. After all, it is not our own words we are supposed to pass on, but the Word of God. God's thoughts and human thoughts are not always the same. We are not infallible, but are representatives of Him "who does not lie" (Titus 1, 2) and who is "the way and the truth and the life" (John 14, 6). The gospel did not come from our mind, but originated in God's heart. We must also meet our neighbor with actions motivated by and based on the will of God. In retrospect, we admit that the Christian church has a lot to account for. Whenever and wherever the church was confused with specific political agendas or power-seeking leaders or individuals, the Gospel was harmed. Wrong words and wrong action (poor evangelism and poor *diakonia*) should not lead into silence or inaction, but to repentance and changed direction.

The current volume of the Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series gives us important perspectives on the concepts of evangelism and *diakonia* and what they mean, individually and together. *The dual mandate* is not a modern phenomenon, but a Biblical matter, based on the teachings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Similarly, *contextualization* is not a modern matter, although the concept is more recent. Our God, as portrayed in the Bible, always operates in a context. He is our creator, and he acknowledges His creation. He intervened in time and spoke to people in history. He spoke through prophets and apostles and touched people in their daily lives. The various biblical texts were written over a long period of time in the encounter with different cultures, ethnicities, religions, governments and eras.

More than any other religious tradition, Christianity has allowed contextual variations. The God of the Bible is not a tribal God. He is not

western or northern, nor is he a southern or eastern God. The current shift of center of gravity in global Christianity does not indicate that Christian faith is more relevant or true in some places and less relevant or true elsewhere. Our God is a universal God. Christianity keeps breaking new ground by encouraging vernacular expressions and taking on indigenous garbs. Bible translation is one of the main expressions of Christianity's ability to communicate and multiply.

The Bible has been translated into many different languages, and more translations are yet to come. At the outset, some of these languages were oral languages. Bible translation was therefore instrumental in language development, building self-esteem and strengthening cultural identity. The Christian message was communicated in dialogue with local culture, language and worldview. The Word that «became flesh and made his dwelling among us» (John 1, 14) is still present. His presence must be experienced through the «incarnational ministries» of the Christian church.

Just as there are many examples of situations where evangelism and *diakonia* were kept apart, there are also many examples where the intimate interaction with the local context was downplayed, ignored or challenged. The missionary anthropologist Paul Hiebert described the period between 1850 and 1960 as "The Era of Non-contextualization".<sup>1</sup> Christian mission fought not infrequently against "pagan" customs and cultures. The "non-western" was often placed as the first step on an evolutionary process from "primitive" to "developed". Christianity's superiority was often attached to the idea of western culture's superiority. Christianization, civilization and commerce were integral parts of the project of colonization.

Although all cultures are carriers of elements that should be subject to external criticism, a totally "non-contextual approach" involves many negative implications.

The non-contextual approach has been replaced by new approaches. Oftentimes we move from one extreme to the other. Positivist and ethnocentric approaches were often substituted by relativism. This also has its implications. Where contextual interpretations are not challenged by the biblical text, we quickly end up in relativism, syncretism and perceived irrelevance. God wants to speak to us in history and context, but he wants to challenge our perspectives, ignorance and wrongdoings and change our lives. By bringing text and context together in appropriate ways, our ministry (evangelism and *diakonia*) will become both true and relevant.

Church history reflects both bad and good examples of evangelism and *diakonia* across denominations, countries and continents. It is easy to criticize our predecessors. We should remember that we are all children of our time. In fact, we stand on our ancestors' shoulders as we look into the challenges of our time. What seems new is not necessarily new. Some

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Hiebert, *Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994).

people have been where we are and have grappled with the same questions. Yet, we should avoid copying the past. Every era has its own challenges.

The current book represents a rich source of inspiration and reflection. Competent leaders and authors generously share their knowledge and experience. *Evangelism and Diakonia in Context* deserves to be read by teachers and students, theorists and practitioners and everyone committed to serve Christ through evangelism and diakonia in our contemporary world.

Hans Aage Gravaas  
Secretary General of Stefanus Alliance International, Norway

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## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION: EVANGELISM AND DIAKONIA IN CONTEXT

Evangelism and *diakonia* belong together in the perspective of the Great Commission. Evangelism is sharing one's faith and conviction with other people and inviting them to discipleship. *Diakonia* is the gospel and our faith in action and is expressed through loving your neighbour. Evangelism and *diakonia* are like the two blades on a pair of scissors. They give the church identity and they are functions of the church. This is not just a matter of doing evangelism and *diakonia* in balance and alongside each other. Rather, evangelism and proclamation have social and diaconal consequences as we call people to discipleship and to be salt and light in all areas of life. And *diakonia* and social involvement have evangelistic consequences as we demonstrate faith in action and witness to transformation. Therefore the term 'integral mission' has become a common denominator for Christians who previously disagreed about the priority and roles of evangelism and *diakonia*.

The Edinburgh 2010 Common Call talks explicitly about witness and evangelism and links the two with incarnational *diakonia*:

Trusting in the Triune God and with a renewed sense of urgency, we are called to incarnate and proclaim the good news of salvation, of forgiveness of sin, of life in abundance, and of liberation for all poor and oppressed. We are challenged to witness and evangelism in such a way that we are a living demonstration of the love, righteousness and justice that God intends for the whole world.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, the Common Call calls attention to power and vulnerability:

Disturbed by the asymmetries and imbalances of power that divide and trouble us in church and world, we are called to repentance, to critical reflection on systems of power, and to accountable use of power structures. We are called to find practical ways to live as members of One Body in full awareness that God resists the proud, Christ welcomes and empowers the poor and afflicted, and the power of the Holy Spirit is manifested in our vulnerability.

The planning of this volume began as a desire to include a volume on *evangelism* in the Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series. The 35 volumes of the series have dealt with a wide and representative variety of topics within mission and missiology, but there has not been a specific title on evangelism. At a rather late stage, it was furthermore realized that the series so far had also treated the *diakonia* of the church rather inadequately. This was one reason for combining evangelism and *diakonia*. Another and more

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<sup>1</sup> The Edinburgh 2010 Common Call is found in the Preface to this volume.

solid reason was the growing convergence on ‘integral mission’ or ‘holistic mission’.

This topic has been treated in a very early volume in the series: Brian Woolnough and Wonsuk Ma (eds), *Holistic Mission. God’s Plan for God’s People* (Volume 4). This volume did not, however, grow out of Edinburgh 2010. It came into being as an initiative of persons related to the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies. The contributors were largely from the conservative, evangelical, Pentecostal and charismatic wing of the church.

Even so, this late volume in the series may be considered as Volume 2 on holistic mission. It differs from the first volume in having a broader scope: we have aimed at a volume with broad participation and broad perspectives. The book includes both scholarly and practical input on various aspects of the topic and from various parts of the world. There is, as far as we know, no other conceptual treatment of this issue from such a broad ecumenical perspective. Pulling in a diverse team of contributors has served to strengthen the ecumenical and professional focus of the project.

Another difference is probably that this second volume digs deeper in terms of theology, ecclesiology, ecumenism and contextualization. This serves to open up new and larger landscapes and provides missiological insights and reflections that can be relevant to these landscapes. To this, it should be added that the book also includes separate sections on *diakonia* and on evangelism. This is not done in order to separate the two again, but to allow for more space to deal with their particularities and specific trends and developments within the two areas.

The understanding of mission (and of evangelism and *diakonia*) undergirding this book reflects the Edinburgh 2010 Common Call. In addition, we have encouraged the contributors to familiarize themselves with the following recent documents related to evangelism and *diakonia*:

*Evangelii Gaudium* (2014)

[www.vatican.va/evangelii-gaudium/en](http://www.vatican.va/evangelii-gaudium/en)

*The Cape Town Commitment* (2010)

[www.lausanne.org/content/CTC/CTCommitment](http://www.lausanne.org/content/CTC/CTCommitment)

*Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* (2014)

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/publications/together-towards-life-mission-and-evangelism-in-changing-landscapes>

*Theological Perspectives on Diakonia in the 21st Century* (2012)

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/unity-mission-evangelism-and-spirituality/just-and-inclusive-communities/theological-perspectives-on-diakonia-in-21st-century>

*The Church Towards a Common Vision* (2013)

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/the-church-towards-a-common-vision>

*Mission in Context (2004)*

[www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-mission-context-transformation-reconciliation-empowerment](http://www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-mission-context-transformation-reconciliation-empowerment)

*Diakonia in Context (2009)*

[www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-diakonia-context-transformation-reconciliation-empowerment](http://www.lutheranworld.org/content/resource-diakonia-context-transformation-reconciliation-empowerment)

These documents have played a significant role as background and reference material.

We are aware of the larger debate on religion and development. This discourse requires a separate volume. We have, however, kept the debate in mind and included chapters on religion, development, and faith-based and rights-based *diakonia*.

Our aim has been a readable and accessible book, using language and concepts that can open this landscape also to users who do not have a theology or missiology degree.

The book consists of five sections. Section I deals with the biblical, historical, theological and ecclesiological perspectives related to *The Dual Mandate*. In Section II, contributors from various denominational backgrounds unfold *Ecumenical Perspectives* on evangelism and *diakonia*. Then follows Section III on *Diakonia*, its Trinitarian and biblical basis, *diakonia* as faith-based and rights-based, *diakonia* and development, and new trends in the discourse on religion and development. In Section IV on *Evangelism*, the contributors deal with *Together towards Life*, the role of the marginalised, spiritual conflict, and signs and wonders. This section also contains an interview with Stephen Bevans about *Contextualization Revisited*. In the Section V, we have collected a number of case studies on evangelism and *diakonia* in context – from Britain, East Africa, India, migrants in Europe, the United States, Latin America, China, Ethiopia, Philippines and Eastern Europe. In a concluding chapter, Knud Jørgensen sums up some major findings under the heading ‘Obeying the Great Commission and the Great Commandment Now and Tomorrow’.

The list of contributors includes 29 people representing various traditions and differing views and positions. They come from five continents and have been challenged to bring along both their experience and their context. In this broad diversity lies the strength of this volume. We want to thank most sincerely our contributors and colleagues for a year of inspiring co-operation.

**Editorial team:** Rose Dowsett, UK, Isabel Phiri, Malawi, Doug Birdsall, USA, Dawit Olika Terfassa, Ethiopia, Hwa Yung, Malaysia, and Knud Jørgensen, Norway.

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# SECTION ONE

# THE DUAL MANDATE

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# BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON KERYGMA AND DIAKONIA

Knud Jørgensen

## Introduction

My first encounter with these issues was a letter from the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) to the Lutheran World Federation.<sup>1</sup> I was at that time a young missionary in Ethiopia. The 1971 letter was directed at the separation of mission work and development aid. This dichotomy, the letter claimed, was western and a result of the Enlightenment. The letter therefore requested western churches that this artificial division be done away with and provision be made for an integral development of human beings in order to enable them to play their role as agents in the development process. The EECMY wanted to 'serve the whole human being'.

The letter caused major concern within Lutheran churches and their humanitarian agencies worldwide, many of which at that time were captive to the rules and regulations of governmental development aid which emphasized that funds should not be used for evangelistic purposes. The letter changed my world view and has followed me since, so much so that, on occasion, I have even reminded the EECMY leadership of their obligation to adhere to their own principles and not let excessive development funding lead the church astray.

Until 1971, I had subscribed to a theology of two different mandates, the one spiritual and the other social. The first was the commission to proclaim and announce the good news through Jesus Christ (*kerygma*). The second called Christians to responsible participation in human society, including working for human well-being and justice (*diakonia*). And the evangelistic mandate had primacy, I thought. The EECMY letter made me change my view: the Great Commission should be understood to include social as well as evangelistic responsibility. The moment one regards mission as consisting of two separate mandates, one has conceded that each of the two has a life of its own.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The letter has been published in e.g. *Lutheran World*, Vol. IX, 1973, 187-92. The letter and its consequences are described in Megersa Guta's article in this volume. See also Risto A. Ahonen, *Mission in the New Millennium* (Helsinki: The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, 2000), 241-42.

<sup>2</sup> See David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 405.

The following should be read in the light of this change of world view for a young missionary to Ethiopia in the 1970s.

I shall first review some key biblical perspectives on *kerygma* and *diakonia* and then, via various starting-points, discuss their interrelationship. Some years ago, Bryant Myers<sup>3</sup> challenged us to think through ‘a genuinely biblical way to frame our theory and our practice’. The following is my small attempt.

### Biblical Perspectives on Kerygma and Diakonia

*Kerygma* (from the Greek word κήρυγμα / kérugma) is used in the New Testament for ‘preaching’ (Luke 4:18-19, Rom. 10:14, Matt. 3:1). It is related to the verb κηρύσσω / kērússō, meaning ‘to cry or proclaim as a herald’ and is used in the sense of ‘to proclaim, announce, and preach’.

According to the New Testament (Luke 4:17-21), Jesus launched his public ministry when he entered the synagogue in Nazareth, read from the scroll of Isaiah and identified himself as the subject of Isaiah 61. The text is a programmatic statement of Jesus’ ministry to preach or proclaim the *kerygma* – good news to the poor, the blind and the captive.

The key term that encapsulates Jesus’ message and the message about Jesus is *gospel* as we find it both in Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom (Mark 1:14-15) and in the apostles’ preaching of the crucified and risen Jesus. When Paul summarises this message (e.g. Rom. 1:3-4), he views it also as a message of transforming power to those who believe: ‘It is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith...’ (Rom. 1:16).<sup>4</sup>

Christopher Wright suggests that ‘gospel’ and ‘evangelism’ actually have their roots in the Old Testament, specifically in the book of Isaiah. The gospel goes back to the good news that came to the exiles in Babylon.<sup>5</sup> In Isaiah 40-55 we hear about ‘good news’ four times (40:9; 41:27; 52:7; 61:1). The Hebrew word is *basar* which in three cases in the Septuagint is translated with *euangelizomai* – the same word that is used in the New Testament about Jesus’ preaching. *Basar* means to bring or announce good news and the messenger of good news is called *mal’ak*. This is the word used in Isaiah 52:7 about the one who brings good news – news of a victory: ‘It is peace!’ We are saved. Your God reigns. This reign of God means *shalom*, peace, the end of brokenness. God will bring wholeness and fullness when we are at peace with God, ourselves and the world. This will be good news for all creation and all humanity. It will bring deliverance –

<sup>3</sup> Bryant Myers, ‘Holistic Mission: New Frontiers’, in Brian Woolnough and Wonsuk Ma (eds), *Holistic Mission: God’s Plan for God’s People* (Oxford: Regnum, 2010), 121.

<sup>4</sup> Harald Hegstad, *The Real Church: An Ecclesiology of the Visible* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013), 50.

<sup>5</sup> Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Mission of God’s People: A Biblical Theology of the Church’s Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 180ff.

from the captivity of the Israelite exiles. The reign of God breaks the chains of evil, sin and Satan, and leads to salvation. God is returning to his city, bringing his own people back with him. This means comfort and redemption (Is. 40; 52:9-10) – comfort to those who have suffered great loss, and payment of the cost needed to set the captives free. This is accomplished by ‘the arm of the Lord’ (Is. 40:10-11; 51:9; 53:1). In the last Servant Song, the arm of the Lord is identified with the suffering servant who would live a life of rejection and die a death of injustice, but eventually be vindicated and glorified by God.<sup>6</sup> This is ‘good news’ – for the entire world:

The good news of the kingdom of God that is to go out to the ends of the earth, to bring comfort and joy to all nations, is the good news of the living God who reigns, who returns to his rightful inheritance, and who redeems the whole world. And all of these things God will accomplish through his mighty arm – his Arm (Servant), outstretched in gentle compassion, outstretched in suffering love, and outstretched in cosmic victory.<sup>7</sup>

The understanding of Jesus as ‘good news’ is directly linked with the songs of the suffering servant: *Jesus is God reigning*, the reign of God is beginning with his arrival (Mark 1:14-15). Here is the *mal’ak*, the anointed preacher of good news: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to *proclaim good news* to the poor’ (Luke 4:16-17). God was reigning in and through Jesus, through his words and his works. And the reign of God is found among those who make peace, do good and proclaim God’s salvation. *Jesus was God returning*: with Jesus, the day of the Lord has arrived; the king is coming home, riding on a donkey. And the same Jesus will come back ‘in the same way you have seen him go into heaven’ (Acts 1:11). *Jesus was God redeeming*: here is the one who was going to redeem Israel (Luke 24:21) in spite of or because of the apparent ‘defeat’ on the cross. On the cross, God’s arm was stretched out for the redemption of the world. And this defeat turned out to be the victory of the God whose power is hidden under its contradiction – powerlessness and vulnerability (Col. 2:14-15).

Here is the core message of the *kerygma*, ‘that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...’ (1 Cor. 15:3-5). According to Paul, Christ died for us so that we might live with him (1 Thess. 4:14, 5:10). The *kerygma* is an account of the events of Jesus’ death and resurrection, understood in the light of the scriptures. The reign of God has now come – through the person and work of Jesus the Messiah. This good news is for all the nations – ‘in Christ Jesus, you (Gentiles) who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ’ (Eph. 2:13-14). The dividing wall has been demolished and the good news of reconciliation is

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<sup>6</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 185.

<sup>7</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 186.

valid for all, through him who ‘preached peace’ (lit. ‘evangelised peace’ – Is. 52:7). Thus peacemaking seems to be at the heart of the gospel itself. The creation of a new humanity is the good news that Christ came to accomplish. Wright sums up the Pauline understanding of the *kerygma*:

- We are justified
- We are saved
- We are forgiven
- We are redeemed
- We are adopted
- We are made alive
- We have the Spirit.<sup>8</sup>

The early church confessed Jesus as Lord. If Jesus is indeed Lord of all, this reality has to be proclaimed. Nobody who knows about this can remain silent about it. He or she can do only one thing – help others to acknowledge Jesus’ lordship. And this is what mission is all about – the proclamation of the lordship of Christ.

*Diakonia* is the call to participate in God’s caring and liberating action for the poor, the marginalized and the oppressed. The terms deacon/deaconess and diaconate also come from the same root, which refers to the emphasis on service within those vocations. *Diakonia* is used in the Bible with different meanings. Sometimes it refers to the specific kind of help to any people in need. At other times, it means to serve at tables, and in still others, refers to the distribution of financial resources. Also, in contemporary theology, the word *diakonia* presents a variety of connotations..

Throughout the Old Testament, God’s righteous character is exemplified through his care for the poor, the weak and the powerless. Justice (*mishpat*), kindness/faithfulness (*hesed*), and compassion (*rahamin*) are listed as qualities that exemplify a healthy community. Special attention is given to widows, orphans, immigrants and the poor or marginalised. Yahweh is ‘a father to the fatherless, a defender of widows’ (Ps 68:5), and his covenant people are called to be like him: ‘Do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless or the widow’ (Jer. 22:3). When the people are sent into exile, one of the reasons is because of their disregard for the poor and needy in their midst: hence a woe is said of those who ‘deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless’ (Is. 10:2).

Stephanie Dietrich calls attention to the theology of creation and humankind’s inherent dignity in the Old Testament, the need for companionship, the communal aspects of responsibility in society, and the covenant between God and mankind: ‘The concept of covenant is important for our understanding of *diakonia*, because it links mankind’s life to its mission and sending by God, and shows that God has a clear will and

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<sup>8</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God’s People*, 193.

intention for his creation, namely, to follow God's call and to be faithful to God under all conditions.<sup>9</sup>

To this should be added a prophetic *diakonia* that addresses and takes a stand against injustice. Those who oppress the innocent and take bribes and deprive the poor of justice are criticized. Cultic practice is criticized. There can be no true worship of God without service to humankind. Diaconal action should include the task of unmasking injustice and promoting justice.

The starting-point for Jesus' holistic ministry is the Great Command of loving the Lord and your neighbour as yourself. Holistic ministry implies that Jesus tells people what is right, and takes care of them by healing their diseases, offering sinners forgiveness and inclusion into his fellowship. Acts 10:38 tells how Jesus 'went round doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him'.

Luke has a particular interest in the poor and other marginalised groups. Jesus is here described as 'the hope of the poor'. He is concerned with all that deprived women, men and children of dignity and selfhood, of sight and voice and bread. His major starting-point is his programmatic statement in the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:18-19). Here he talks about good news for the poor and about letting the oppressed go free,<sup>10</sup> and proclaims 'a year of the Lord's favour', a Jubilee, but without vengeance (Is. 61:2 – which also talks about defeating their enemies; the verse is not part of Jesus' reading in Nazareth).

Jesus' ministry is the starting-point and model for today's understanding of *diakonia*. The church's *diakonia* should be understood as a continuation of Jesus' healing ministry. *Diakonia* is not just an outworking of creation and the law but *the gospel in action*. The healing of the sick was from the beginning a regular part of both Jesus' own messianic activity and the mission of the apostles. The good deeds are a sign and foretaste of the coming kingdom. Redemption is the renewal of creation. *Diakonia* is done in Jesus' name; and therefore *diakonia* and the gospel cannot be separated from each other:

It does *not* mean that diakonia is nothing more than a tool for preaching the gospel or witness of the gospel, and it also does not mean that the gospel must be taught explicitly in every given situation where diaconal work is in operation. Diaconal works are still diakonia even when the gospel is not

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<sup>9</sup> Stephanie Dietrich, "Mercy and Truth Are Met Together; Righteousness and Peace Have Kissed Each Other" (Psalm 85:10): Biblical and Systematic Theological Perspectives on Diakonia as Advocacy and Fight for Justice', in Stephanie Dietrich, Jørgensen, Korslien and Nordstokke, *Diakonia as Christian Social Practice* (Oxford: Regnum, 2014), 34.

<sup>10</sup> This is actually a reference to Isaiah 58:6 and not to Isaiah 61 which means that Jesus must have inserted this in his reading of Is 61.

explicitly preached. However, the connection to the gospel must always be present.<sup>11</sup>

Just as mission is part of the essence of being church, so *diakonia* is part of the very nature of the church and should therefore permeate and affect the whole of church life. Through its works, the church witnesses to God's kingdom. It is not enough just to *speak* of God's kingdom.

*Diakonia* is not neutral. It grows out of the sacrificial life of Christ. It is therefore this Christ-centredness which makes *diakonia* Christian and gives it motivation and power. Otherwise we might as well leave humanitarian concerns to other bodies, such as the Red Cross.

We are sent into the world, like Jesus, to serve. For this is the natural expression of our love for our neighbours. We love. We go. We serve. And in this we have (or should have) no ulterior motive. True, the gospel lacks visibility if we merely preach it, and lacks credibility if we who preach it are interested only in souls and have no concern about the welfare of people's bodies, situations and communities. Yet the reason for our acceptance of social responsibility is not primarily in order to give the gospel either a visibility or a credibility it would otherwise lack, but rather simple uncomplicated compassion. Love has no need to justify itself. It merely expresses itself in service whenever it sees need.<sup>12</sup>

The gospel is event and action.

Let me add a sentence about how the interpretation of *diakonia* as 'humble service' and 'charity' has been opposed and revised. It is particularly the Australian John Collins<sup>13</sup> who has documented the view that the Greek word does not mean humble service, but rather an important task that is given to somebody by an important authority. In the New Testament, it refers to ministry or leadership, including Jesus' messianic mission, and it includes the understanding of the deacon as a go-between, particularly in relation to the poor and marginalized.

The Anglican Communion has taken to heart five marks of global mission.<sup>14</sup> Two of these marks are: 1. To proclaim the good news of the Kingdom, and 3. To respond to human need by loving service. Here we find expressed the *kerygma* and the *diakonia* of Scripture. As regards *diakonia*, we may even add the fourth and fifth mark: to seek to transform unjust structures of society; to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation,

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<sup>11</sup> Hegstad, *The Real Church*, 91.

<sup>12</sup> John Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (London: Falcon, 1975), 30.

<sup>13</sup> John N. Collins, *Diakonia: Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources* (New York/Oxford: OUP, 1990). See also *Diakonia in Context* (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 2009), 81.

<sup>14</sup> See Andrew Walls and Cathy Ross (eds), *Mission in the 21st Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2008); and Cathy Ross (ed), *Life-Widening Mission: Global Anglican Perspectives* (Oxford: Regnum, 2012). Reference is also made to Brian Woolnough and Wonsuk Ma (eds), *Holistic Mission: God's Plan for God's People*, 11-12.

and sustain and renew the life of the earth. These marks represent holistic mission: when Jesus sent out his disciples, he commanded them to preach and demonstrate the kingdom in the same way. We shall in the following look at how the announcement and demonstration of the kingdom are understood in Scripture.

### Missio Dei as a Starting-Point

Since the early twentieth century and the controversy between Social Gospel and Fundamentalism, and until the 1970s, the question of priority and primacy was high on the missiological agenda. Evangelism, the direct preaching of the gospel, must be the first priority, many said. Everything else was secondary or auxiliary. Others saw the deeds and the implementation of the kingdom here and now as primary.<sup>15</sup> This became very much a debate about *our* role in mission, the role of *our* words and our deeds. But the centre in Scripture is not *our* actions but God's action. This is the primal reality in mission: '... if we place in the centre of our thinking the reality of God's mission, we shall be saved from two wrong concepts of mission which are at present deeply dividing the Christian community,' Lesslie Newbigin said in 1989.<sup>16</sup> He was referring to those who place exclusive emphasis on the winning of individuals to conversion, baptism and church membership and, on the other hand, to those who view the gospel as God's reign over all nations and things. The primary task, they maintained, is to seek the doing of God's will of righteousness and peace in this world. Both parties have hold of an important truth, but they overlook the central reality of Scripture, namely, that mission is primarily not *our* work but the mighty work of God. The overriding biblical perspective is the Trinitarian foundation for mission. We may speak of God's mission as that of Creator, Saviour and Sanctifier. All three divine persons are involved in mission. Guided by the Apostles' Creed, we are to understand God's activities comprehensively and holistically. The basis of mission is the communion and love between the persons of the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Trinity is a communion in mission, empowering and accompanying the One who is sent, the beloved, to impact the world with transformation, reconciliation and empowerment. For the ongoing mission of God, the Father and the Spirit send the Son, the Father and the Son breathe in the Spirit, and the Son and the Spirit reveal the glory of the Father to the far reaches of the universe. This sending, yet accompanying and empowering, of the beloved,

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<sup>15</sup> Ahonen, *Mission in the New Millennium*, 229-36; Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 459-67.

<sup>16</sup> Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, and Geneva: WCC, 1989), 128-41.

this reaching out for others, and thus the acceptance of vulnerability in love, is characteristic of the Trinity. It is this love that unites the Triune God.<sup>17</sup>

I believe that a dynamic understanding of the Trinity will help us overcome a separation or division between word and deed, *kerygma* and *diakonia*. The persons of the Trinity constitute the missional identity of the church as sent, and in this manner help us see that mission is of the essence of the church. In the same manner, the ongoing conversation and interchange (*perichoresis*) within the Trinity mirrors the interchange between the various functions of mission: *kerygma*, *diakonia*, *koinonia*, *leitourgia*,<sup>18</sup> and *martyria*. The understanding of reconciliation may illustrate this: a biblical perspective will include both the vertical and the horizontal dimensions – the relationship between God and human beings, between human beings themselves, and between human beings and creation. If we prioritise or minimize any of these dimensions, we shall end up with a theological reductionism of a Trinitarian understanding of mission. The biblical truth is that God, through *missio Dei*, is acting to create, reconcile and redeem. The debate about two separate tasks is not a biblical debate, but a child of the Enlightenment. This should also, I believe, have consequences for the continued structural separation between spiritual work and socio-economic work.

An essential perspective in a Trinitarian theology is *koinonia* – love between the persons of the Trinity, between God and humanity and between human beings, manifested as communion and participation in one another's life.<sup>19</sup> The term 'sharing' is here central – sharing faith and witness. And it describes very well the nature of *diakonia*, as a readiness to share joys and sorrows and to be a fellow-traveller. In this sense, *diakonia* in Scripture describes a Christian lifestyle.

The New Testament shows no evidence of a contradiction between *kerygma* and *diakonia*. Rather, the gospels show an indissoluble link between deeds and words. The synoptic gospels are occupied with the acts of Jesus – acts of healing, exorcism, feeding the hungry. John's gospel contains more teaching, but quite often the teaching is to explain something Jesus has done, like the healing of a lame person, the feeding of the multitude, the giving of sight to a blind man, or raising Lazarus from the grave. The mission charge to the twelve in Matthew 10 points to the intimate link between acts and words. First, Jesus commands them to heal and exorcise: 'He called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every infirmity.' Then in verse 7 we read: 'Preach as you go, saying "The kingdom of heaven is at hand".' I interpret this to mean that the

<sup>17</sup> *Mission in Context* (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 2004), 24.

<sup>18</sup> Worship or celebration: see the model below with *diakonia*, *leitourgia* and *kerygma* forming a triangle with *koinonia* in the centre.

<sup>19</sup> Ahonen, *Mission in the New Millennium*, 234.

preaching is an explanation of the healings because healings do not explain themselves. Good deeds seldom do. They can be misunderstood or misinterpreted – healings may be attributed to satanic power. So the *kerygma* must interpret the deeds: ‘The kingdom of God is at hand.’ Healings and deeds could be fitted into the existing order. Also today there are healers and exorcists. Therefore the gospel must make it explicit and must include a decisive call to repentance and faith.<sup>20</sup>

The same applies to the *kerygma*. Without healings, it may just be empty words. The words may be brushed aside as mere talk, as often happens in today’s preaching situation. The words are meaningful only in the context of the *diakonia*. They presuppose that something is happening which needs to be explained. Preaching / *kerygma* seems quite often to take the form of response to a question or the explanation of an event. ‘What is this?’ So the *kerygma* is the answering of questions related to diaconal acts or mighty deeds.

### The Reign of God as a Starting-Point

The reign of God (*basileia tou Theou*) is central to the gospels’ and to Jesus’ understanding of his mission.<sup>21</sup> Jesus speaks of the kingdom mainly in parables – parables that indicate that the kingdom is both future and already present – as ‘already and not yet’. The future has invaded the present, but *already* and *not yet* must live in tension. The history of the church and its mission may be studied from this perspective as the struggle to try to solve the tension, but the tension is of the essence of mission. At the centre of this essence stands the attack on the powers of evil in its many forms: pain, sickness, death, demon-possession, personal sin, self-righteousness, and the brokenness of human relationships. This is particularly important for those on the periphery, the marginalized, since the kingdom has come to be among the lowly and despised, tax-collectors and sinners, widows and children. We see the assault on evil particularly in Jesus’ healing miracles and exorcisms. When he drives out the demons, the sign of God has come. In the gospels, this is often described as ‘to save’ (healing and exorcism). This shows that there is no tension between salvation from sin and salvation from physical sickness. The spiritual and the social hang together in one torn tapestry. The same may be said about ‘forgiveness’:

... it includes a wide range of meanings, from the freeing of bonded slaves to the cancellation of monetary debts, eschatological liberation, and the forgiveness of sins. All shades of meaning of these terms give expression to

<sup>20</sup> Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 131ff.

<sup>21</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 31ff.

the all-embracing nature of God's reign; they aim at dissolving all forms of alienation and at breaking down walls of hostility and exclusion.<sup>22</sup>

There is a logic in Jesus' ministry, a logic that challenges his disciples to focus on the reality of God's reign now and to pray for its coming – advocating the cause of the poor and serving those on the periphery whilst at the same time proclaiming the year of the Lord's favour. God's reign implies that God has authority over and is preoccupied with the whole of life. Mission is holistic. Its aim encompasses the whole of creation, the whole of life, and the whole human being. In the same manner, its practice calls for the participation of the whole church.

Jesus preached the kingdom and he demonstrated its reality with signs of the kingdom. These signs served to validate the *kerygma*. In the report from a Lausanne consultation in 1982 on 'Evangelism and Social Responsibility', the following signs of the kingdom are reviewed:

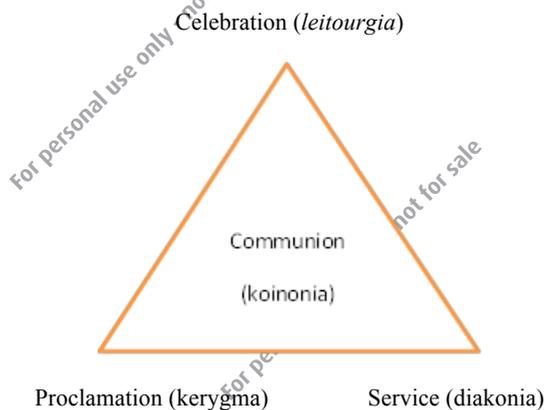
- The first sign of the kingdom was Jesus himself in the midst of his people (Luke 17:21; Matt. 18:20), whose presence brings joy and peace (John 15:11, 16:33; Mark 2:18-20).
- The second is the preaching of the gospel (*kerygma*). The good news came with Jesus and must be preached to all, especially to the poor (Luke 4:18, 19; 7:22).
- The third sign was exorcism. The teaching of Jesus and his apostles should not be demythologized. Demon-possession is a real condition. Deliverance is possible only in a power encounter in which the name of Jesus is invoked.
- The fourth sign was healing and the nature miracles – making the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, the sick well, raising the dead, stilling the storm, and multiplying loaves and fishes. These are also meant as anticipations of the final kingdom from which disease, hunger, disorder and death will be banished. Also, God still performs miracles today, especially in frontier situations where the kingdom is advancing into 'enemy-held territory'.
- A fifth sign of the kingdom is the miracle of conversion and new birth. Whenever people turn to God from idols, to serve the living and true God (1 Thess. 1:9, 10), a power encounter has taken place. God's power for salvation is displayed in the gospel.
- A sixth sign is the people of the kingdom, in whom is manifested that cluster of Christlike qualities which Paul called 'the fruit of the Spirit'. Love issues in good works. If the gospel is good news of the kingdom, good works are the signs of the kingdom. Good news and good works are united.
- The seventh sign is suffering. Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps (1 Pet. 2:21). To suffer for the sake of righteousness or for the sake of our testimony to

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<sup>22</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 33.

Jesus, is a clear sign to all that we have received God's kingdom (Phil. 1:28, 29).<sup>23</sup>

Therefore 'there can be no authentic evangelism apart from a living testimony to the transforming power of the Gospel in action'.<sup>24</sup> Among Protestants, the starting-point to the gospel is often God's justification of the sinner through faith in Jesus Christ. Proclamation aims at leading people to a personal encounter with the living God, inviting them to receive the gift of the forgiveness of sins in baptism and faith, and living a life of discipleship. *Diakonia* is seen as a core component of the gospel itself and as an essential part of discipleship. The foundation for both proclamation and *diakonia* is God's justification of the sinner by grace. Justification is liberating and creative and opens wide the door to forgiveness and justice. Also here there is a coherence of living and speaking, of word and deed. Proclaiming and witnessing through *diakonia* are inseparable. 'Word without deed can be abstract and powerless, and deed without word can be mute and open for any interpretation.'<sup>25</sup>



In the LWF document *Diakonia in Context*,<sup>26</sup> there is a graphic illustration of the three dimensions of celebration, proclamation and service. The triangle underscores that these three dimensions are interrelated in such a way that each one is rooted in the other two, and could not exist without them. This also implies that the church's proclamation and celebration have to be rooted in *diakonia*. All three dimensions point to and stimulate each other.

<sup>23</sup> Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and the World Evangelical Fellowship, *Evangelism and Social Responsibility: An Evangelical Commitment* (Lausanne Occasional Papers No. 21, Grand Rapids Report, 1982), 31-32.

<sup>24</sup> J. Andrew Kirk, *What is Mission? Theological Explorations* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1999), 57.

<sup>25</sup> Lutheran World Federation, *Mission in Context*, 38

<sup>26</sup> *Diakonia in Context*, 29.

## Conclusion

*Kerygma* and *diakonia* are the tasks of the church, but they are not separate tasks. Rather, they are a unified reflection of the holistic ministry of the Old Testament and of Jesus: ‘... if a ministry committed to preaching and evangelism does not demonstrate compassion towards those who are suffering and disenfranchised, then it is not an expression of living faith that honors the full ministry of Jesus Christ.’<sup>27</sup>

I had to learn this from Ethiopian brothers and sisters who reacted strongly to the manner western theology had come to divide the two into separate mandates. I believe that churches in the global South may indeed help the rest of us to break out of the tendency towards the compartmentalization of life and ministry. Travelling in Africa, China and other places, I have come to know churches and Christians that read the Bible from a lower-side perspective of poverty and powerlessness, and Christians who know that evangelism will not result in social transformation unless the Christian community witnesses by its lifestyle.

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<sup>27</sup> Timothy Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2010), 402.

# EVANGELISM, DIAKONIA AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE HISTORY OF MISSION

Larry Nemer

Each of the words in the title of this chapter has a variety of meanings; in this chapter they will be limited to the following. *Evangelism* will mean bringing the good news of Jesus Christ and his teaching, sometimes by preaching, sometimes by working miracles, sometimes by force and violence, but very often by *diakonia*. *Diakonia* will be understood to mean *service* to others as individuals or groups in need. *Social Responsibility* will mean the care and concern of the church and its missionaries for creating or developing the social structures of the people which can support their development as humans/Christians. *Perspectives from the History of Mission* means that choices will be made that hopefully will illustrate, remind the reader of, and highlight the connection between evangelism, *diakonia* and social responsibility. Other historians may choose other examples to illustrate the thesis of this paper, namely: the church in its mission has always been concerned about evangelism, *diakonia* and social responsibility – expressed, however, in a manner appropriate to its time and culture.

*Perspectives* in this chapter will be limited to the European experience of being evangelized and Europeans reaching out to evangelize the world. The experiences of the Eastern and African Churches (e.g. Syrian, Coptic, Ethiopian, Nestorian, Russian Orthodox and others) and their missionary outreach would merit chapters of their own.

There are ambiguities in these missionary activities. Both wonderful things were accomplished and disastrous mistakes (according to today's judgements) were made. Can a historical perspective bring any light and insight to the way these mission activities are carried out today?

## The Early Spread of Christianity

### *From post-Apostolic times until Constantine*

In this period, *diakonia* as an expression of evangelism is evident from the start. 'Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but

everything they owned was held in common... There was not a needy person among them.’<sup>1</sup> This form of community may not have lasted long, but care for the poor was always present at this time. As Paul later wrote, after receiving his commission from James and Cephas to preach to the uncircumcised, ‘They asked only one thing, that we remember the poor, which was actually what I was eager to do.’<sup>2</sup>

In the late 100s, Celsus, the philosopher and opponent to Christians, bore witness to the fact that Christians gave women and slaves a dignity they did not have in Roman society, and this perhaps accounted for the faith’s rapid spread.<sup>3</sup> *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* records the loving care provided by deacons for those about to undergo persecution, even at the risk of being denounced as Christians themselves: ‘Then Tertius and Pomponius, blessed deacons who were ministering to us, arranged by bribery for us to go forth for a few hours and gain refreshment in a better part of the prison.’<sup>4</sup>

The *diakonia* of the early Christian community went beyond the limitations of contemporary social structures. For example, in the middle 200s, Lawrence was appointed Archdeacon of the Roman church. As Archdeacon, he was charged with the responsibility for the material goods of the church and the distribution of alms to the poor. In the late 300s, St Ambrose of Milan relates a popular early legend about Lawrence. He states that, during the persecution of Valerian when Lawrence was asked for the treasures of the church by the Prefect of Rome, he asked for three days to gather together her wealth. He swiftly distributed as much church property to the poor as possible. On the third day, at the head of a small delegation, he presented himself to the Prefect, and when ordered to give up the treasures of the church, he presented the poor, the crippled, the blind and the suffering, and said these were the true treasures of the church – *Hi sunt thesauri ecclesiae*.<sup>5</sup> The fact that this legend persisted for over a hundred years gives an indication that the church remained committed to the poor and marginalized.

*Diakonia* was thus an important evangelizing element in the life of the church, even when the church was not free to preach the Gospel publicly. Its importance in these situations would be recovered by both Protestant and Catholic missionaries in the middle of the twentieth century.

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 4:32, 34.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. 2:10.

<sup>3</sup> Origen and Chadwick, *Contra Celsum*, Bk. 3. N. 55 (Cambridge: CUP, 1980), 165-66. A fuller treatment of this topic can be found in Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970).

<sup>4</sup> *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity*, found in *Four Spiritual Classics*, edited and translated by W.H. Shewing (London: Sheed & Ward; 1931), III.

<sup>5</sup> Mauritii Testard, *Sancti Ambrosii Mediolanensis* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2000 – *Corpus Christianorum Series, 15*), Liber 2, Numero 28, 140

*From the 4th to the 8th century:  
evangelism, diakonia and social responsibility*

As long as Christians remained a minority community not legally tolerated by the Roman Empire, mission carried out in the Mediterranean and European world was limited to *diakonia* with only implied social responsibility. However, after Constantine's conversion, Christianity became not just a tolerated religion but also by the end of the fourth century a favoured religion. This meant that Christian missionaries could not only attend to service but also could express social responsibility for the way in which society was ordered. The monasteries played an important role in this transition.

One of the giants in the early monastic world was Martin of Tours. Historians are careful not to accept everything written in his biography by his secretary, Sulpicius Severus, as historical facts, but some stories appear well-founded. For example,<sup>6</sup> this former hermit/monk, as the bishop of Tours, learned the language (probably Celtic) of the country people and preached and cared for them. The gift he shared with them was his faith. He challenged their beliefs by cutting down their sacred trees and destroying their sacred places. When he discovered that after he left, people would return to their traditional beliefs, he would bring two of his monks with him and would leave them behind to make sure the people remained faithful to their Christian faith. This he saw not only as *diakonia* but also as social responsibility in order to form Christian communities in the countryside.<sup>6</sup>

The monasteries founded by Benedict in Italy, Augustine in England, and Columba in Ireland continued to practice *diakonia* by reaching out to the poor who lived in their area. They provided food in times of famine and healing, especially in times of epidemics. The truly needy were always welcome at their monastery. As stated in the Rule of St Benedict: '*Hospes venit, Christus venit* – Let all guests who arrive be received like Christ, for He is going to say, "I came as a guest, and you received Me" (Matt. 25:35). And to all let due honour be shown, especially to the domestics of the faith and to pilgrims.'<sup>7</sup> This was a rule followed in most monasteries throughout the Middle Ages. They also reached out to convert the neighbouring tribes, believing that the greatest gift they could give them would be the gift of faith in Christ.

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The monasteries also played an important role in preserving ancient secular and Christian learning while embracing new cultural values. This was a type of evangelism not practised earlier. They copied manuscripts of

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<sup>6</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *The Life of St Martin (of Tours)*, found in *The Western Fathers*, translated and edited by F.R. Hoare (London; Sheed & Ward, 1954), 3-44. A more scholarly treatment of Martin of Tours can be found in C. Donaldson's biography, *Martin of Tours* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985).

<sup>7</sup> *Rule of St Benedict*, chap. 53: [www.osb.org/rb/text/toc.html](http://www.osb.org/rb/text/toc.html) (accessed 15th January 2016).

both secular and Christian authors. These provided the basis for the development of Christian medieval culture. This form of evangelism still goes on today in many parts of the world.

Monks and nuns often carried out the church's mission not only by caring for the serfs and slaves who were often oppressed in medieval society but also by trying to form leaders who would be guided by Christian principles as they developed new social structures; this is sometimes overlooked as a form of evangelism. For instance, after his final defeat of the Saxons, Charlemagne (742-814) imposed a rule that demanded baptism, knowledge of Christian prayers, and strict ethical demands.<sup>8</sup>

*From the 9th to the 15th century:  
evangelism and social responsibility in the midst of violence*

When Europe entered into a period of violent feudal wars, church authorities attempted to reduce violence by calling for treaties that would ban fighting on weekends and Holy Days. While these attempts for the most part were unsuccessful, it was of importance that church authority, and not only secular authority, worked for peace and exercised its social responsibility.<sup>9</sup> By the eleventh century, the church itself began to sanction violence and killing in the Crusades which went on for five centuries, at first in the Near East, then in North Africa, Spain, Germany and Poland. Military religious orders were founded. They saw themselves as doing God's will (*Deus vult – God wills it* – was the cry in the First Crusade) by imposing the 'true faith' on those they conquered. To their way of thinking, this was an important form of both *diakonia* and social responsibility.<sup>10</sup>

However, even in the midst of this violence, there were groups in the church that tried to remain faithful to the gospel ideals of loving service. Francis of Assisi (d. 1226) and his followers would be an outstanding example of this faithfulness to non-violence. He himself would visit the Sultan in Egypt, attempting to convert him through dialogue. He did not succeed, but the Sultan was so impressed by his holiness that he allowed the Franciscans to preach in his territory.<sup>11</sup> One Third-Order Franciscan,

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Mission* (London: Penguin, 1990), 67-69.

<sup>9</sup> Friedrich Kemp, 'Renewal and Reform from 900 to 1050', in *The Church in the Age of Feudalism* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1969 – *Handbook of Church History, III*), 345-47.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas P. Madden, *The Concise History of the Crusades* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 8-12. An interesting perspective on this is found in Amin Maalouf, *The Crusade through Arab Eyes* (London: The Folio Society, 2012).

<sup>11</sup> Maurice Carmody, *The Franciscan Story* (London: Athena Press, 2008), 55-57. Cf. also Michael F. Cusato et al, 'Daring to embrace the other: Franciscans and

Raymond Lull (d. 1315), even persuaded the Pope and bishops to pass a law at a council of the church that the universities must have a chair in Arabic Language and Studies for the sake of furthering dialogue with Muslims.<sup>12</sup>

### **Early Colonialism and the Spread of Christianity: From the 16th to the 18th Century**

#### *The Portuguese Padroado: evangelism, diakonia and social responsibility in the New World*

In the late 1400s, the Portuguese explored the coast of Africa and Brazil and eventually reached India, Japan and China. The Spanish, on the other hand, sailed west, reaching the Caribbean Islands, Central and Latin America and the Philippines. Since the belief at that time was that the Pope was the Vicar of Christ and that the world belonged to Christ, the Portuguese and Spanish rulers applied to the Pope for the right to the land and peoples they discovered in their explorations. The Pope granted these rights to the Portuguese (*padroado*) and the Spanish (*patronato*), adding that they were also obliged to bring the faith to these new peoples. Later, when there was a conflict between the Spanish and the Portuguese as to the territories that were entrusted to them, Alexander VI settled the conflict in 1493 by drawing a line in the western hemisphere to separate the two powers, and this was confirmed by the Treaty of Tordesillas between Spain and Portugal in 1494.<sup>13</sup>

The Portuguese were primarily interested in trade and established what were called ‘factories’, i.e. trade centres. They did not bring settlers, and there was no violent imposition of Christianity on these peoples. However, the religious priests and friars that the traders brought with them were interested in bringing the faith to these people – their form of *diakonia* – and at least in one case were successful enough in an area of the Congo to establish a Christian community there.<sup>14</sup>

Their experience in India was different. They set up a trading centre in Goa which lasted for 450 years. It became an enclave where traders lived and married Indian women, living a Christian life similar to that lived in Lisbon. Friars and Jesuits provided the service that was needed. It is

Muslims in Dialogue’, in *Spirit and Life: A Journal of Contemporary Franciscanism*, Vol. II, N. 12 (Ashland, OH: Bookmasters, 2008).

<sup>12</sup> E.A. Peers, *Fool of Love: The Life of Raymond Lull* (London: SCM, 1946), 98-99.

<sup>13</sup> Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Ringwood, VIC: Penguin, 1964), 191.

<sup>14</sup> Luc Croegaert, *L’evangelisation du royaume de Kongo et de l’Angola* (Rome: Pontificia Universita Gregoriana, 1996), 1-5.

striking that when Francis Xavier (1506-1552) arrived in Goa in 1541, his first action was to visit the hospital (today it would be called a 'hospice' since it was a place people brought their loved ones to die). He was assigned to work on the Fishery Coast in south-east India. These were people who had become Christians in order for the Portuguese to protect them against the assaults of the Muslims. Francis arrived to discover that, although these people considered themselves Catholics, many of them had not been baptized and all were ignorant of the Christian faith. For him, the most important service that he could render was to baptize and instruct them in the faith. Young people especially responded to him, and through them he instructed their parents and formed solid Christian communities within two years. He then turned the work over to others.<sup>15</sup>

While the Portuguese traders hesitated to enter further into Hindu/Muslim India, the Jesuits were more enterprising. A mission was established in Madurai, the centre of Tamil culture. Under the leadership of Roberto de Nobili (1577-1656), an attempt was made to change the nature of their evangelization and service so that an Indian who was baptized was not expected to take on Portuguese ways but could remain truly Indian. He himself became a *sannyasi* (i.e. a Brahmin ascetic), adapting their dress and diet, and practising separation from lower castes. He permitted his Brahmin converts to retain their distinctive caste customs. He also studied Hindu literature, philosophy and theology in order to contextualize the faith for his Brahmin converts.<sup>16</sup>

Francis Xavier left his mission in India and eventually reached Japan. Even though he was in Japan only three years, he recognized the need to respect and adapt to Japanese culture and religion. He established a Jesuit mission, whose practice of *diakonia* was built on the Japanese respect for learning, introducing printing and using their books for evangelization; the Japanese also introduced engraving and art into their publications. They brought advanced medical techniques to help the sick and established hospitals (hostels) as early as 1557. Most importantly, they formed strong Christian communities led by Japanese converts (*dojokus*). This explains why Christianity continued to survive in Japan for three hundred years after it was banned, following repeated and intense persecutions.<sup>17</sup> An insight into the persecutions and the strength of the Christian community can be gained from reading Endo's novel *Silence*.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The best biography of Francis Xavier is still the classic by J. Broderick, *St Francis Xavier (1506-1552)* (London: Burns & Oates, 1952), 106-228.

<sup>16</sup> A critical assessment can be found in C.J. Arun, *Interculturation of Religion: Critical Perspectives on Robert de Nobili's Mission in India* (Bangalore, India: Asian Trading Corporation, 2007).

<sup>17</sup> This story is well told in J.P. Moran, *The Japanese and the Jesuits: Alessandro Valignano in Sixteenth-Century Japan* (London: Routledge, 1993).

<sup>18</sup> Shusaku Endo, *Silence* (New York: Taplinger, 1980).

Francis Xavier believed that the Japanese would only fully accept Christianity if it came from China, so he tried to go there. China forbade the entrance of foreigners at that time and so he died on the Island of Sancian off the China coast. However, Jesuits would enter China after Francis's death and establish a successful mission which would continue for almost a hundred years.

The Jesuit who contributed most to a new form of service and social responsibility in the mission in China was Matteo Ricci (1552-1610).<sup>19</sup> Well educated in the sciences as well as in theology, Ricci also had a remarkable memory – a gift highly valued in China since the examinations to become a mandarin depended on the memorization of the writings of Confucius.<sup>20</sup> His service consisted not in reaching out to the poor and marginalized but in making friends with the educated. He would help their sons train their memory so that they could pass their examinations. He learned classical Chinese. He studied Confucius, concluding that his teachings could be harmonized with Christian teaching.<sup>21</sup> He wrote moral treatises in classical Chinese which are still classics today.

### *The Spanish Patronato:*

#### *Mission in the New World of the Americas and the Philippines*

The Spanish Empire grew quickly after Columbus's arrival in the 'New World' in 1492. A strong army, and long-lived rulers, contributed to a golden period in Spain's history. Pope Alexander VI granted patronage (*patronatus*) to the Spanish kings, giving them the land they discovered/conquered, the people, and the church. With this went the responsibility of evangelizing the peoples.

Both in Mexico and Peru, the procedure was the same: conquest, settlement, evangelization. There were problems with the military, guilty of cruelty and enslavement.<sup>22</sup> The settlers exploited the people through the *encomienda* system (grants of land given to the settlers with rights over the population on the land as well). Bartholomew de Las Casas (1484-1566),

<sup>19</sup> A recent biography is that of P. Po-Chia, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci (1552-1610)* (Oxford: OUP, 2010).

<sup>20</sup> Jonathan Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (Ringwood, VIC; Penguin, 1984).

<sup>21</sup> Matteo Ricci, in Edward J. Malatesta (ed), *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven (Tien-chu Shih-i)* (St Louis, MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources in co-operation with the Ricci Institute, 1985).

<sup>22</sup> R. Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico: An essay on the apostolate and the evangelizing methods of the mendicant orders in New Spain, 1523-1572* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1966). A more critical study of this period can be found in P. L. Don, *Bonfires of Culture: Franciscans, Indigenous Leaders, and Inquisition in Early Mexico, 1524-1540* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010).

between 1512 and 1566, tried to get the system changed in the law courts of Spain.<sup>23</sup> In the Philippines, the conquest was not as brutal nor was there an abundance of settlers whose needs had to be met.<sup>24</sup>

The *diakonia* and social responsibility practised by the missionaries in the Spanish territories were very much influenced by the personnel who were monks of various congregations. There were some outstanding individuals who evangelized the people; however, the principal manner of carrying out mission, both in terms of service and social responsibility, was the *convento* model. In the beginning, the friars learned the Indian languages and customs; however, their attitude towards the local religions was hostile, seeing nothing good in them on which they could build; they felt they had to start with a clean slate (*tabula rasa*). For them, service included destroying idols and temples. In terms of social responsibility, the friars tended to settle the people around the *convento*, taught them farming, and established schools in which they taught them Latin, industrial arts, music, etc.<sup>25</sup>

A remarkable expression of service and social responsibility were the Jesuit 'Reductions' (settlements of the local people under the care of Jesuit priests) in Latin America (1609-1768).<sup>26</sup> The Spanish and Portuguese settlers needed a workforce to tend their large plantations. They would enslave the surrounding Guarani Indians, but after a short time the Guarani would disappear again into the forests. The Jesuits reached out to these vulnerable people. They would attract them with music, settle them in Reductions for their protection against the settlers, and teach them farming. These Jesuits learned the Guarani language and respected their customs.

Eventually there were more than thirty settlements with more than 100,000 Indians. The adults were taught farming and various skills. All children between 7 and 12 had to attend school; religion, language, Latin, trades, etc. were all taught. There was a serious conflict with the Spanish/Portuguese forces in 1753-1754, leading to the closing down of the Reductions by the Spanish King. The success of the Reductions would encourage future missionaries, even in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to attempt the same method.

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<sup>23</sup> Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Las Casas: in search of the poor of Jesus Christ* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1993).

<sup>24</sup> John N. Schumacher, *Readings in Philippine Church History* (Quezon City, Philippines: Loyola School of Theology, 1979).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. R. Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest*.

<sup>26</sup> P. Caraman, *The Lost Paradise: An Account of the Jesuits in Paraguay, 1607-1768* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1975).

## The Spread of Christianity in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries: The Great Age of Mission

### *Context*

In Europe, the period from 1880 to 1914 was known as the Age of Nationalism. Germany was formed in 1866 and Italy in 1870. This precipitated a strong nationalism in all the European countries. It also was the Age of the 'New Imperialism' (in contrast with the sixteenth-century imperialism of Spain and Portugal). The competition for colonies/protectorates/spheres of influence was exemplified in the division of Africa by European powers between 1881 and 1914.

It was also a period of great changes in the life of Europe that would affect the way service and social responsibility were carried out by missionaries. New inventions (steam, electricity, railways, etc.) and improved methods of communications (telephone, telegraph, newspapers, etc.) were developed.

The rise of pietism in many of the Protestant churches and of 'devotionalism' in the Catholic Church saw the emergence of many missionary societies in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. To name just a few founded at this time, there were the Baptist Missionary Society, London Missionary Society, Basel Missionary Society, Church Missionary Society, Universities' Mission to Central Africa, China Inland Mission, Marists, Holy Cross, Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Society of African Missions, Society of Africa (White Fathers and Sisters). Both men and women were now engaged in mission work. This changed the kind of service that could be given.

### *Diakonia*

*Diakonia*, or service, in both Protestant and Catholic missions in the nineteenth and early twentieth century took many forms. With some missionary groups, both Protestant and Catholic, serving and caring for others in need were seen to be a 'missionary method', i.e. intended to make converts. Some looked at it as a preparation for people (in Roman Catholic literature often referred to as *praeparatio evangelica*) to receive the Gospel. But when one reads the accounts and journals of the missionaries themselves, one can sense that this was offered as a reason to the people at home to gain their financial support, while they themselves were interested in helping people in need, whether their service led to conversion or not.<sup>27</sup>

One important form of service was providing health care. Whether it was in Africa, India, Asia or the South Pacific, missionaries set up clinics and

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<sup>27</sup> Larry Nemer, *Anglican and Roman Catholic Attitudes on Missions* (Nettetal, Germany: Steyler Verlag, 1981), 121-42.

hospitals, reaching out especially to those who were abandoned by their society, e.g. leprosy sufferers. The work, for example, of Damien De Veuster (1840-1889) on Molokai (Hawaii)<sup>28</sup> would become well known throughout the world. But there were also settlements for leprosy sufferers in many countries. In cultures where women were not allowed to approach a male for medical services, women's organizations were set up by both Protestants and Catholics to care for them.<sup>29</sup>

Another aspect of health care was the establishment of orphanages. Children were sometimes abandoned for cultural reasons (e.g. in China and parts of Africa), for economic reasons, or from superstition, and it was the missionaries who provided them with protection and nourishment. However, the local people would not always understand why they would do this and were sometimes suspicious of their motives and their actions. In one case, this resulted in an attack on those doing it and a massacre of the Sisters of Mercy in Tientsin, China, in 1870.<sup>30</sup>

Missionaries also established schools wherever they went. This was true in German colonies, less true in French and Belgian ones, but especially true in British colonies. African chiefs would invite missionaries to come to their people purely to set up schools. Many missionaries were professional teachers who were anxious to share their learning with the local people at primary, secondary and even university level. In non-English speaking countries, they would learn the local language and teach in it. These schools were for the most part not seen as catechetical schools, but the missionaries hoped that their own Christian living and commitment would have an impact on the students.

Famine relief was also carried out by some missionary agencies, especially in India and China. Before railways were introduced into these countries, some of the people in one part of the country could be starving while others elsewhere had an abundance of food, with no easy way to provide for the distribution of this food. So missionaries organized the provision of food for those who were starving. Because the food was sometimes meant for the Christian community, people sometimes became Christian in order to receive the food and so were called 'rice Christians'.

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<sup>28</sup> Richard Stewart, *Leper priest of Molokai: the Father Damien Story* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2000).

<sup>29</sup> For example, the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society was established in 1880 to serve the women in India. The Society would later extend its work to Japan and China. The story of Protestant women missionaries is well told by R. Pierce Beaver in his work *American Protestant Women in World Mission: A History of the First Feminist Movement in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980).

<sup>30</sup> C. Cary-Elwes, *China and the Cross: Studies in Missionary History* (New York: P J Kennedy, 1957), 2. The Sisters of Mercy opened an orphanage for babies and small children abandoned by their parents. Since many of them died, people believed they were being killed.

The challenges that faced these missionaries in China at this time are wonderfully told in Pearl Buck's novel *The Good Earth*.<sup>31</sup>

### *Social Responsibility*

Social responsibility as part of the missionary task in 'The Great Age of Missions' was complex. Missionaries had to bring together three aspects of their work: their missionary commitment; the power and authority of the colonial powers; and the local structures and cultures they encountered.

Missionaries sometimes worked hand-in-glove with the colonial powers. They would sometimes request the government to change social practices that went against Christian teaching (e.g. the killing of widows and ritual killings in India, killing a twin in some African countries, etc.), or they might ask the government to pacify a territory where tribal wars were going on so they could enter the territory. The government would often respond to these requests. Sometimes the government would even financially support some of the work they were doing, especially in the schools. But sometimes the missionaries needed to oppose the oppression of the colonialists – for example, when it came to the imposition of the Hut Tax in Sierra Leone in West Africa.<sup>32</sup>

In some cases, the missionaries found local structures and cultures solidly established. This was especially true in India, Vietnam, China and Japan. In cases where the missionaries were limited in what they could do, or if they were attacked and killed, they did not hesitate to call on the European powers to intervene and provide for their safety – for example, in the history of the French Religious Protectorate in Vietnam or in the call for a European response to the Boxer Rebellion in China. These interventions sometimes resulted in a deleterious effect on the missionary work itself.<sup>33</sup>

In other countries where the Europeans considered that there was no organized society, missionaries saw it as their task to bring civilization as they understood it. In the popular language of the time they talked about the three Cs: Civilization, Commerce and Christianity. Some missionaries used the model that had been used in Latin America, an attitude of a clean slate (*tabula rasa*), finding nothing in the local culture that could be harmonized with Christian teaching. Such missionaries showed no respect for the local

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<sup>31</sup> A recent release of this Pulitzer Prize-winning novel has been published by Simon & Schuster in UK in 2016 and is available on Amazon.

<sup>32</sup> The military governor had decreed that, to provide for British administration, the Protectorate residents had to pay a tax based on the size of their huts. The missionaries found this unduly severe.

<sup>33</sup> More concrete information about the French Religious Protectorate can be found in the article 'The French Religious Protectorate in China and the Catholic/Moderate Press', in Larry Nemer, *The Great Age of Mission: Some Historical Studies in Mission History* (Nettetal, Germany: Steyler Verlag, 2013), 86-98.

culture and demanded change. This was the way they expressed their social responsibility.<sup>34</sup>

In the second half of the twentieth century, missionaries found themselves challenged to take on different tasks as part of their social responsibility. After World War II there were independence movements in Africa, Asia, the South Pacific, and the Philippines. Missionaries often had to choose between supporting those seeking independence and the colonial powers.<sup>35</sup> Missionaries also found themselves in the forefront of the battle with world powers that were exploiting the resources of the people among whom they worked. They tried to oppose this involving themselves in development work.<sup>36</sup> In the 1960s, the people of Latin America realized that they did not need development but liberation from the structures that were preventing development.<sup>37</sup> Liberation theologies began to develop, not only in Latin America but also in Africa, Asia and the South Pacific.<sup>38</sup> Many missionaries found themselves caught between the dilemma of having to choose whether to focus on *diakonia* or on social responsibility.

### Conclusion

These are just some of the experiences and challenges that faced missionaries down through the centuries with regard to evangelism, *diakonia* and social responsibility. Hopefully these brief remarks will help the reader to understand how complex the question is.

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<sup>34</sup> Lawrence Nemer, *Anglican and Roman Catholic Attitudes on Missions* (Nettetal, Germany: Steyler Verlag, 1981), 121-62.

<sup>35</sup> For example, Camilo Torres Restrepo, a Colombian socialist Roman Catholic priest and a predecessor of liberation theology, became a member of the National Liberation Army and died on the battlefield in 1966. Cf. Walter J. Broderick, *Camilo Torres* (New York: Doubleday, 1975).

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Aylward Shorter, *Theology of Mission* (Cork, Irish Republic: The Mercier Press: 1972), 37-43.

<sup>37</sup> Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973).

<sup>38</sup> For example, Aloysius Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988).

# DIAKONIA AND EVANGELISM AS FUNCTIONS OF MISSION: THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

David S. Lim

How has world Christianity perceived and performed its mission in the light of 21st-century realities? These include living in a global village, the communications revolution, and global challenges such as climate change, a massive gap between the poorest and the richest, drug and people trafficking, religious extremism, and many more. Part I of this reflection shows the apparent global Christian consensus on the theology of mission, particularly in the missiology of holistic mission which consists of *diakonia* and evangelism.<sup>1</sup> Part II depicts the six mission paradigms which holistic missiologists and practitioners are using in the world today, integrating the task of evangelization and transformation.

## Theological Consensus on Holistic Mission

The concept of *missio Dei*, introduced in 1952 by the International Mission Council (which merged in 1961 with the World Council of Churches), is usually now expressed in the language of realizing or extending ‘the kingdom (or reign) of God’ on earth. Official documents of various global church bodies formulate this as holistic mission. This common understanding was already shared in the early 1980s by the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), the Roman Catholic Church, and the Conciliar Protestant and Eastern Orthodox churches in the World Council of Churches. Some of these bodies issued joint statements then, and other joint or individual statements since.

Holistic mission is understood to be founded on the very nature of the Triune God, perhaps best summarized recently in *Evangelii Gaudium*:

To believe in a Father who loves all men and women with an infinite love means realizing that ‘he thereby confers upon them an infinite dignity’. To believe that the Son of God assumed our human flesh means that each human person has been taken up into the very heart of God. To believe that Jesus shed his blood for us removes any doubt about the boundless love which ennobles each human being. Our redemption has a social dimension because ‘God, in Christ, redeems not only the individual person, but also the social relations existing between men’. To believe that the Holy Spirit is at work in

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<sup>1</sup> Though ‘transformational’ and ‘integral’ are also used, ‘holistic’ is preferred here because it has the connotation of the whole being more than the sum of its parts.

everyone means realizing that he seeks to penetrate every human situation and all social bonds... Evangelization is meant to co-operate with this liberating work of the Spirit.<sup>2</sup>

The World Council of Churches (WCC) in its 2013 statement *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* also elaborates this holistic mission as 'The Church as Sign and Servant of God's Design for the World'.<sup>3</sup> This is affirmed in the evangelical *The Cape Town Commitment* too: 'God commands us to reflect his own character through compassionate care for the needy, and to demonstrate the values and the power of the kingdom of God in striving for justice and peace and in caring for God's creation.'<sup>4</sup> This fits into the creation-fall-redemption-new creation thematic scheme or the worldview of biblical revelation.

This missiological consensus identifies at least six major characteristics of holistic mission: bifocal, integral, evangelistic, diaconal, liberative and contextual.

### *Holistic mission is bifocal*

World Christianity's common understanding of holistic mission has two foci: evangelism and *diakonia* (service), or *word* and *deed*, or 'evangelism and socio-political action'.<sup>5</sup> The Edinburgh 2010 'Common Call' links both *diakonia* and evangelism to the incarnational mission of the church in the world.<sup>6</sup>

Trusting in the Triune God and with a renewed sense of urgency, we are called to incarnate and proclaim the good news of salvation, of forgiveness of sin, of life in abundance, and of liberation for all poor and oppressed. We are challenged to witness and evangelism in such a way that we are a living demonstration of the love, righteousness and justice that God intends for the whole world.<sup>7</sup>

This dual formulation may just be the simplest way to describe a complex concept. Historical theologizing developed in the West with its Greek dual 'mind and matter' philosophical roots, particularly with the Neo-Platonism of Augustine of Hippo, its main theologian, and its

<sup>2</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, Sec. 178 (Vatican, 2014), 139-40.

<sup>3</sup> WCC, *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (Geneva: WCC, 2013), Sec. C, No. 25-32, 15-19.

<sup>4</sup> *The Cape Town Commitment* (Peabody, MS: Hendrickson, 2011), Part I.10, 29.

<sup>5</sup> The last terms (evangelism and socio-political action) are used in the *Lausanne Covenant* para 5. Evangelicals from the global South promoted this as 'mission as transformation' mainly through the International Fellowship of Mission as Transformation (INFEMIT), of which I have been a member since 1982.

<sup>6</sup> The concise two-page 'Common Call' was drafted and approved by representatives of world Christianity, including Catholic, Evangelical, Orthodox, Pentecostal and Protestant churches.

<sup>7</sup> 'Common Call': [www.edinburgh2010.org](http://www.edinburgh2010.org) – Sec. 1, 1.

distinction between ‘spiritual and material’ and ‘eternal and temporal’. Yet this dualism which became a dichotomy between reason and imagination, and also a clash between rationalism and romanticism in recent centuries, arose from the Enlightenment. What if Christianity had grown in the East with the monism of Hindu philosophy and ‘harmony of *yin-yang*’ of the Chinese worldview? There may be new developments towards more integrative formulations since the majority of global Christianity has shifted East.<sup>8</sup>

### *Holistic mission is integral*

The tendency of humans to value either evangelism or social action, the one over the other, or even to reject the other altogether, has helped the various strands of world Christianity to emphasize that these two functions belong together: to share Christ holistically has one integration point – the sharing of our whole being so that all can enjoy life on earth and for eternity. The WCC states that it seeks ‘vision, concepts and directions for a renewed understanding and practice of mission and evangelism... so that we can commit ourselves together to fullness of life for all, led by the God of Life!’<sup>9</sup>

*Evangelii Gaudium* also affirms that being or living a full life is the integral point of holistic mission:

The Gospel offers us the chance to live life on a higher plane, but with no less intensity: ‘Life grows by being given away, and it weakens in isolation and comfort...’ When the Church summons Christians to take up the task of evangelization, she is simply pointing to the source of authentic personal fulfillment. For ‘here we discover a profound law of reality: that life is attained and matures in the measure that it is offered up in order to give life to others. This is certainly what mission means.’<sup>10</sup>

*Diakonia* and evangelism are depicted as two wings of a bird or parallel tracks of a railway.<sup>11</sup> Other metaphors may include the blades of a pair of scissors, the two wings of a plane, and the like. David Bosch highlights the model as that of the incarnation: ‘The word became flesh’, and states: ‘The deed without the word is dumb; the word without the deed is empty. The words interpret the deeds and the deeds validate the words. For Paul,

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<sup>8</sup> On theological development in Asia, see A.G. Honig, ‘Asia: The Search for Identity as a Source of Renewal’, in F.J. Verstraelen et al (eds), *Missiology: An Ecumenical Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 306-22.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes’, in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 38:2 (April 2014), 68.

<sup>10</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, Sec. 10, 9-10. The quotes are taken from the Fifth General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops, *Aparecida Document*, 29th June 2007, 360.

<sup>11</sup> Vinay Samuel, ‘Mission as Transformation’, in V. Samuel and C. Sugden (eds), *Mission as Transformation* (Oxford: Regnum, 1999), 228.

evangelism was a way of life that involved his total being.<sup>12</sup> Though distinct, they are inseparable and mutually enhancing.

Perhaps the simple but clear formulation of the unity (not uniformity) of the two functions is:

Integral mission is the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other. Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. If we ignore the world, we betray the Word of God which sends us out to serve the world. If we ignore the Word of God, we have nothing to bring to the world.<sup>13</sup>

### *Holistic mission is evangelistic*

Yet, though integrated, *diakonia* and evangelism are distinct from each other. In practice, *diakonia* as witness to show the reality of the gospel of the kingdom comes first and dominantly.<sup>14</sup> Yet theologically, especially for Evangelicals and Catholics (and Orthodox), ‘proclaiming Christ’ in words comes first, for it concerns eternal destiny. The *Lausanne Covenant*, Paragraph 6, states: ‘In the church’s mission of sacrificial service, evangelism is primary.’

The WCC also affirms the essential importance of evangelism in the church’s witness:

All Christians, churches and congregations are called to be vibrant messengers of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the good news of salvation. Evangelism is a confident but humble sharing of our faith and conviction with other people. Such sharing is a gift to others which announces the love, grace and mercy of God in Christ. It is the inevitable fruit of genuine faith. Therefore, in each generation, the church must renew its commitment to evangelism as an essential part of the way we convey God’s love to the world.<sup>15</sup>

The oft-quoted dictum of St Francis of Assisi may best be reworded: ‘Preach Christ always: *when* (not *if*) necessary, use words’ – or perhaps better: ‘When *proper* (or appropriate), use words.’ Words are needed to evangelize, teach, train and disciple people. The gospel has to be communicated, Christ has to be introduced, and the invitation to confess and worship him as King/Lord of the universe and in one’s own life has to

<sup>12</sup> ‘Toward Evangelism in Context’, in V. Samuel and C. Sugden (eds), *The Church in Response to Human Need* (Oxford: Regnum, 1987), 189.

<sup>13</sup> *The Micah Declaration* on Integral Mission is quoted in *The Cape Town Commitment*, Part I, Sec.10, 29.

<sup>14</sup> Hence the priority of *diakonia* in this chapter’s title.

<sup>15</sup> ‘Together towards Life,’ Sec. 8, 69.

be delivered.<sup>16</sup> The best is to live such a life as will elicit the request for us to give witness and expound on Christ and the blessings of his kingdom with the promise of eternal life (cf. 1 Pet. 3:15).

Evangelism bears fruit: 'Evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God... The results of evangelism include obedience to Christ, incorporation into his Church and responsible service in the world,'<sup>17</sup> and: 'God commands us to make known to all nations the truth of God's revelation and the gospel of God's saving grace through Jesus Christ, calling all people to repentance, faith, baptism and obedient discipleship.'<sup>18</sup>

### *Holistic mission is diaconal*

The other function of integral mission is *diakonia*, which includes works of mercy as well as works of justice. In his keynote address at the 2000 Iguassu Mission Conference, held by the Mission Commission of WEA, Samuel Escobar raised the 'need to form disciples for a new style of missionary presence. Mission requires orthopraxis as well as orthodoxy'.<sup>19</sup>

Orthopraxis or *diakonia* includes 'justice, peace and integrity of creation' (WCC, 1968). The 'Common Call' states:

Disturbed by the asymmetries and imbalances of power that divide and trouble us in church and world, we are called to repentance, to critical reflection on systems of power, and to accountable use of power structures. We are called to find practical ways to live as members of One Body in full awareness that God resists the proud, Christ welcomes and empowers the poor and afflicted, and the power of the Holy Spirit is manifested in our vulnerability.<sup>20</sup>

Care for nature is also part of the Christian mission agenda: 'Together with all people of goodwill, the church seeks to care for creation, which groans to share in the freedom of the children of God (cf. Rom. 8:20-22), by opposing the abuse and destruction of the earth and participating in God's healing of broken relationships between creation and humanity.'<sup>21</sup>

*Evangelii Gaudium* also affirms:

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<sup>16</sup> An excellent exposition of the gospel message from a holistic perspective is found in Bryant Myers, *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 20-56.

<sup>17</sup> *Lausanne Covenant*, Sec. 4 and 5 are fully quoted in *The Cape Town Commitment*, Part I, Sec. 10, 28.

<sup>18</sup> *The Cape Town Commitment*, Part I, Sec. 10, 29.

<sup>19</sup> 'The Global Scenario at the Turn of the Century', in William Taylor (ed), *Global Missiology for the 21st Century: The Iguassu Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), 43.

<sup>20</sup> 'Common Call', Sec. 4, 1.

<sup>21</sup> *The Church in Society*, Sec. C, No. 66, 37.

Our mandate is to ‘go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation’ (Mark 16:15), for ‘the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God’ (Rom. 8:19). Here, ‘the creation’ refers to every aspect of human life; consequently, the mission of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ has a universal destination. Its mandate of charity encompasses all dimensions of existence, all individuals, all areas of community life, and all peoples. Nothing human can be alien to it.<sup>22</sup>

Similarly, *The Cape Town Commitment’s* ‘Call to Action’ highlights the biblical challenge to address the needs of the poor, particularly *victims of human trafficking, people with disabilities and those living with HIV*, to engage with the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals through advocacy before governments, to participate in ventures, like the Micah Challenge (now expanded to Micah Global), and to challenge excessive wealth, greed and the idolatry of rampant consumerism.<sup>23</sup>

The dominant capitalist market economic order also comes in for criticism by many:

We are living in a world in which faith in mammon threatens the credibility of the gospel. Market ideology is spreading the propaganda that the global market will save the world through unlimited growth. This myth is a threat not only to economic life but also to the spiritual life of people, and not only to humanity but also to the whole creation. How can we proclaim the good news and values of God’s kingdom in the global market or win over the spirit of the market? What kind of missional action can the church take in the midst of economic and ecological injustice and crisis on a global scale?<sup>24</sup>

Pope Francis called for such a new social order on the basis of good morality:

Ethics – a non-ideological ethics – would make it possible to bring about balance and a more humane social order. With this in mind, I encourage financial experts and political leaders to ponder the words of one of the sages of antiquity: ‘Not to share one’s wealth with the poor is to steal from them and to take away their livelihood. It is not our own goods which we hold, but theirs.’<sup>25</sup>

The main discordant voice in world Christianity which continues to hesitate to accept the diaconal aspect of holistic mission are the adherents of Dispensationalism who hold onto the ‘postponed kingdom’ theology, which has a pessimistic eschatology, and thus focuses merely on ‘evangelism and church planting’ to ‘save souls’. There are attempts by Neo-dispensationalists to incorporate *diakonia* into their understanding of

<sup>22</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, Sec. 181, 142-43.

<sup>23</sup> *The Cape Town Commitment*, Part IIB, Sec. 3, 42-46.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Together towards Life’, Sec. 7, 6.

<sup>25</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, Sec. 57, 48, which quotes St John Chrysostom, *De Lazaro Concio*, II, 6: PG 48, 992D.

the church's mission. Their best way forward is to consider the biblical theological framework of historic pre-millenarian eschatology.<sup>26</sup>

### *Holistic mission is liberative*

Holistic mission must be participative and liberative by empowering the poor to be the agents of transformation from the bottom up. Mission must be done by the poor, for the poor; hence the motto: 'Preferential option for the poor' – through the influence of liberation Theology in the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church. Representative of the latter is Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*:

If the whole Church takes up this missionary impulse, she has to go forth to everyone without exception. But to whom should she go first? When we read the Gospel we find a clear indication: not so much our friends and wealthy neighbours, but above all the poor and the sick, those who are usually despised and overlooked, 'those who cannot repay you' (Luke 14:14). Today and always, 'the poor are the privileged recipients of the Gospel', and the fact that it is freely preached to them is a sign of the kingdom that Jesus came to establish. We have to state, without mincing words, that there is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor. May we never abandon them.<sup>27</sup>

*The Cape Town Commitment* has also included this perspective: 'The Bible tells us that the Lord is loving toward all he has made, upholds the cause of the oppressed, loves the foreigner, feeds the hungry, sustains the fatherless and widow... God holds responsible especially those who are appointed to political or judicial leadership in society, but all God's people are commanded... to reflect the love and justice of God in practical love and justice for the needy.'<sup>28</sup>

Such 'preferential option' has been developed consistently in the WCC, which has repeatedly raised the challenge, and most recently:

Mission has been understood as a movement taking place from the centre to the periphery, and from the privileged to the marginalized of society. Now people at the margins are claiming their key role as agents of mission and affirming mission as transformation. This reversal of roles in the envisioning

<sup>26</sup> E.g. Christopher Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2007); and *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010); N.T. Wright, 'Imagining the Kingdom: Mission and Theology in Early Christianity', Inaugural Lecture, Research Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity, St Mary's College, University of St Andrews, UK, 2015: [http://ntwrightpage.com/Wright\\_StAndrews\\_Inaugural.htm](http://ntwrightpage.com/Wright_StAndrews_Inaugural.htm)

<sup>27</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, Sec. 48, 41, with the quote from Benedict XVI, Address to the Brazilian Bishops in the Cathedral of São Paulo, Brazil (11th May 2007), 3: AAS 99 (2007), 428. This 'preferential option for poor' is further elaborated in *EG*, Sec. 186-201, 147-58.

<sup>28</sup> *The Cape Town Commitment*, Part I, Sec. 7C, 21.

of mission has strong biblical foundations because God chose the poor, the foolish and the powerless (1 Cor. 1:18-31) to further God's mission of justice and peace so that life may flourish. If there is a shift of the mission concept from 'mission *to* the margins' to 'mission *from* the margins', what then is the distinctive contribution of the people from the margins?<sup>29</sup>

It proceeds to answer the question thus:

We affirm that marginalized people are agents of mission and exercise a prophetic role which emphasizes that fullness of life is for all. The marginalized in society are the main partners in God's mission. Marginalized, oppressed and suffering people have a special gift to distinguish what news is good for them and what news is bad for their endangered life. In order to commit ourselves to God's life-giving mission, we have to listen to the voices from the margins to hear what is life-affirming and what is life-destroying. We must turn our direction of mission to the actions that the marginalized are taking. Justice, solidarity and inclusivity are key expressions of mission from the margins.<sup>30</sup>

Thus, in the prophetic statements of the three bodies, the challenge of holistic mission is to serve the poor in such a way that they are liberated and empowered to be the agents and determinants of their own life and destiny.

### *Holistic mission is contextual*

The last mark of holistic mission is its dialogic nature, mainly being in a listening mode, preferring to build or develop and transform things from the 'inside out' rather from 'outside in'. Hence it should be very sensitive to and highly appreciative of people's identities as well as their indigenous cultures. This realizes not just the cruciform shape of the incarnation, but also the kenotic (self-emptying) nature of the 'way of the cross'.<sup>31</sup> The WCC has stated: 'The Spirit which was in Christ Jesus inspires us to a self-emptying and cross-bearing lifestyle and accompanies God's people as we seek to bear witness to the love of God in word and deed.'<sup>32</sup>

Yet most of world Christianity, even in the global South, has been remiss in using simple lifestyle in their witness, mainly due to human weakness and sinfulness (yielding to the temptations of greed and pride), but also due to the dominant (often Western) models of evangelism, discipleship and church life that has prevailed since the colonial era. Yet the *Lausanne Covenant*, Paragraph 6, has affirmed: 'A church which preaches the cross must itself be marked by the cross, lest we become a

<sup>29</sup>'Together towards Life,' Sec. 6, 5.

<sup>30</sup>'Together towards Life,' Sec. 107, 69.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. David Lim, 'The Servant Nature of the Church in the Pauline Corpus', PhD Dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1987).

<sup>32</sup>'Together towards Life,' Sec. 103, 69.

stumbling-block to our evangelism.’<sup>33</sup> This is an attractive witness in the world as seen in the media’s fascination with Mother Teresa, Pope John Paul II and, most recently, Pope Francis.

Each context is different, and the response to each should be different as the Spirit leads. The ideal of holistic mission is to facilitate transformation from the inside out, with as little external influence as possible, except for ‘prayer and the word’ (cf. 1 Tim. 4:4-5). The *Lausanne Covenant*, Paragraph 10, states: ‘Missions have all too frequently exported with the gospel also alien culture, and churches have sometimes been in bondage to culture rather than to the Scriptures. Christ’s evangelists must humbly seek to empty themselves of all but their personal authenticity in order to become the servants to others, and churches must seek to transform and enrich their culture, all for the glory of God.’ Yet, in 2000, Escobar still had to raise the ‘danger of missionary dynamism of churches being stifled and misdirected by an imitation of expensive Western models of missionary organization’.<sup>34</sup>

In this world, full of hardened ideological and religious loyalties, the contextual call for the church may be to model identification with the poor and the powerless in order to manifest the power of God in its witness following the incarnational example of her Lord Jesus. This is a big challenge indeed, for world Christianity is one of the most wealthy and most powerful institutions on earth today.

### **Mission Paradigms of Holistic Missiology**

How has this holistic missiology been implemented and developed in the world today? There seem to be six key mission paradigms which have developed from its praxes (reflective action), each with their own distinct vision, strategic patterns and structural outcomes. These mission paradigms may intermix – they are distinct but not mutually exclusive. They are: organizational development, transformational development, liberation movements, Neo-Pentecostal ministry, disciple-making movements and insider movements. Some theological issues for future missiology and mission practice from each mission paradigm will also be raised.

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#### *Organizational Development*

Most denominational churches engage in mission by setting up and maintaining church structures and their related diaconal and evangelistic agencies. For most such churches, evangelism leads to church growth, meaning increasing church membership and building church-led and

<sup>33</sup> See also *The Cape Town Commitment*, Part IIE, Sec. 5, 63-65: ‘Walk in simplicity, rejecting the idolatry of greed.’

<sup>34</sup> ‘The Global Scenario at the Turn of the Century’, 44.

church-related institutions, like chapels, schools, hospitals, orphanages, etc.<sup>35</sup> The basic unit, called the local church, is defined as ‘a community of baptized believers in which the word of God is preached, the apostolic faith is confessed, the sacraments are celebrated, the redemptive work of Christ for the world is witnessed to, and a ministry of *episkopé* exercised by bishops or other ministers in serving the community’.<sup>36</sup> The success of holistic mission programmes can be seen in the association of churches that constitute the denominations, the largest of which is the Roman Catholic Church.

Then *diakonia* denotes involvement in and support of church-initiated and church-related ministry programmes to help the poor, specifically in relief and rehabilitation, community and economic development, as well as justice advocacy. The Roman Catholic Church, for instance, has invested strongly in the academic diaconate, through universities and schools.<sup>37</sup> *The Cape Town Commitment* likewise called for support for ‘Christ-centred schools and universities that are committed to academic excellence and biblical truth’, and encouraged young Christians ‘to consider a long-term career in the secular university, to teach and develop their discipline from a biblical worldview, thereby to influence their subject field’.<sup>38</sup>

Though these institutions are expensive to develop and maintain, and their evangelistic output may be minimal, their projection of the diaconal nature of the church is invaluable. Church buildings project the church’s (and God’s) presence, but their clergy-centred hierarchical structure as well as their closed doors and high walls with minimal programmes for the poor in their neighbourhood may be the biggest challenges for this kind of mission paradigm.

### *Transformational Development*

A second mission paradigm is community development, especially among the poor. This initiative – usually called ‘transformational development’ – comes from Christian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or Christian development organizations (CDOs), and mission agencies with holistic orientation. These are usually lay-initiated and non- or inter-denominational in nature, and work in partnership with church-based CDOs, like Caritas, Church World Service, Mennonite Central Committee, etc. For evangelism, they work towards planting churches among the poor through incarnational

<sup>35</sup> Perhaps the only major denomination that integrates holistic mission in its structure (‘the church itself is holistic mission’), is the Salvation Army; its limited numerical growth may be due mainly to its lack of contextuality.

<sup>36</sup> From the report of the Joint Working Group of the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, ‘The Church: Local and Universal’, Sec.15, in *Growth in Agreement II*, 866, cited in *The Church*, Sec. E, No.31, 17.

<sup>37</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, Sec. 134, 107.

<sup>38</sup> *The Cape Town Commitment*, Part IIA, Sec. 7, 39.

workers (usually lay, with community development training) who will eventually pass on the leadership of the new church to another church or denomination.

In a world of increasing climactic and systemic challenges, these CDOs have specialized in responding to the perennial attacks of natural forces (like typhoons, floods, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions) and structural evils (like malnutrition, poverty, corruption, violence, etc.), through the participative or dialogic approach which have been developed in actual mission praxes. By promoting child-based development through child sponsorships, most of the largest CDOs, led by World Vision which has grown since 1953 to be the biggest NGO in the world today,<sup>39</sup> have been in the forefront of tackling global issues side-by-side with governments, United Nations, corporate foundations and private initiatives. They welcome partnership with churches and church-based CDOs in empowering people by setting up programmes which tackle and overcome their local problems assertively yet non-violently.

Most of the global South, especially Africa,<sup>40</sup> has remained poor in spite of billions of foreign development aid and rich national resources,<sup>41</sup> and despite many good initiatives. Some programmes experience problems if they receive governmental funding, depend on foreign resources, or are not fully 'owned' by the community.

### *Liberation Movements*

The third mission paradigm has been developed among and by the poor, originally from the oppressed contexts of Latin America in the 1950s. Though liberation theology used Marxist materialistic dialectics as its framework in interpreting the Scriptures and social realities, its inter-class conflictive and militant stance has been tempered by the reconciliatory and non-violent posture of peace/*shalom* in world Christianity,<sup>42</sup> particularly in the Anabaptist tradition.

Liberationists have led the call for the 'preferential option for the poor' and a new ecclesiology where the basic unit of the church are the basic ecclesial communities. Parishes are decentralized into small groups of a maximum of twenty adults, as 'the new way of being church'.<sup>43</sup> The poor

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<sup>39</sup> For its best practices, see Myers, *Walking with the Poor*. Cf. T. Yamamori et al (eds), *Serving with the Poor in Asia* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1995); and T. Yamamori et al (eds), *Serving with the Urban Poor* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1998).

<sup>40</sup> E.g. William Easterly, *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good* (New York: Penguin, 2006).

<sup>41</sup> S. Corbett and B. Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor and Yourself* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2009).

<sup>42</sup> Most church traditions have historically adhered to the 'just war' ethic, with violent fight for justice as the last option under some conditions.

<sup>43</sup> On BECs, see Leonardo Boff, *Ecclesiogenesis* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books,

are empowered through prayer and interactive reflection on their situation in the light of Scripture, and through other activities, to change social relationships and structures that keep the poor poor. This diaconal witness has led in the prophetic struggle for human rights and socio-political change.<sup>44</sup> This includes challenging global multinational corporations, whose actions disproportionately harm the poor, and degrade the environment.

This highlights a missiological challenge: is world Christianity really ready to do mission from the periphery and the underside, just as it has aimed to do theology from the bottom up, through grassroots or vernacular theologizing?<sup>45</sup> Is the church willing to identify with the poor and divest herself of her wealth and property?

### *Neo-Pentecostal Ministries*

The growing number of independent churches, often called the ‘third wave of Pentecostalism’,<sup>46</sup> or Neo-Pentecostal, has popularized the concept of truly autonomous indigenous churches, with each setting their own policies and owning their own properties. Members share their faith effectively, with witness often combined with power encounters, like healings (physical, emotional, and social) and deliverance from demonic oppression, which results in effective holistic mission, transformation of the whole person, challenging traditional religion and bad cultural practices. Hence, ‘Neo-Pentecostal churches are embedded institutions that change people and their narratives, alter social behavior and create new meaning, vision and hope for the future’.<sup>47</sup> Through their Pentecostal theology and active

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1986); Pablo Richard, *Death of Christendoms, Birth of the Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987); Michael Okyerefo, ‘Spirituality and Historic Mission Christianity in Africa: Ghanaization in Roman Catholicism’, in W. Ma and K. Ross (eds), *Mission Spirituality and Authentic Discipleship* (Oxford: Regnum, 2013), 38-46; and Clemens Mendorca, ‘Mission According to the Catholic Church in Asia: A New Way of Being Church’, in W. Ma and K. Ross (eds), *Mission Spirituality and Authentic Discipleship* (Oxford: Regnum, 2013), 127-38.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Leroy Rouser, *Human Rights and the World’s Religions* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

<sup>45</sup> E.g. Lode Wostyn, *Doing Ecclesiology: Church and Mission Today* (Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian Publications, 1990); and Simon Chan, *Grassroots Asian Theology: Thinking the Faith from the Ground Up* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2014).

<sup>46</sup> Pentecostalism’s ‘first wave’ developed into evangelical denominations, while the ‘second wave’ emerged from and remained within the established denominations, quite significantly in the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion. The leadership and constituency of these two waves belong mainly to the educated middle class.

<sup>47</sup> Dena Freeman (ed), *Pentecostalism and Development: Churches, NGOs and Social Change in Africa* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 24-25.

laity, these churches have been able to break the sacred-secular dichotomy and resist its harmful effects.<sup>48</sup>

Moreover, unlike CDOs, the Neo-Pentecostal leadership, programmes and finances are indigenous rather than from the outside,<sup>49</sup> often with hardly any need for training in basic holistic mission.<sup>50</sup> Yet they also need to learn from modern science and technology, as well as the social critique of structural issues that sustain poverty and corruption in the world.<sup>51</sup>

### *Disciple Multiplication*

In contrast to the hierarchical or clergy-led model of traditional churches, the disciple multiplication mission paradigm calls for a decentralized and flat structure of the church, which is often labelled ‘house (or simple or organic) church movements’. Those who discovered this church model theologially point to the ‘priesthood of all believers’ as their doctrinal linchpin. Every Christ-follower<sup>52</sup> can be equipped to be a disciple-maker (anywhere) and tentmaker (in cross-cultural contexts).

The simplicity of house church networks, especially in the Maoist era, resulted in spontaneous and rapid expansion of the church in China and demonstrated that there was a better way of being church holistically.<sup>53</sup> Globally, most of this mission paradigm’s practitioners came out of the Neo-Pentecostal renewal, hence they might be labelled the ‘fourth wave of the Spirit’.<sup>54</sup> They call for the church to be transformed into networks of small groups and in all sectors (e.g. in the workplace), especially among the

<sup>48</sup> *The Cape Town Commitment*, Part IIA, Sec. 3, 35-36.

<sup>49</sup> Freeman, *Pentecostalism and Development*, 24; and Bryant Myers, ‘Progressive Pentecostalism’, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 39:3 (2015), 119.

<sup>50</sup> On holism in Pentecostal theology, see Myers, *Walking with the Poor*, 61-81; and Al Tizon, *Transformation After Lausanne: Radical Evangelical Mission in Global-Local Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 92-97, 141-48.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Nimi Wariboko, ‘Pentecostal Paradigms of National Economic Prosperity in Africa’, in Amos Yong and K. Atanasi (eds), *Pentecostalism and Prosperity: The Socioeconomics of the Global Charismatic Movement* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 35-59.

<sup>52</sup> This is the popular substitute term for those who hesitate to use ‘Christian’, due to its historical association, especially with Christendom.

<sup>53</sup> Samuel Escobar, ‘Evangelical Missiology: Peering into the Future at the 21st Century’, in W. Taylor (ed), *Global Missiology for the 21st Century: The Iguassu Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), 115, called for ‘pre-Constantinian church and mission’.

<sup>54</sup> David Lim, ‘The House Church Movements in Asia’, in *Asian Missions Advance* 35 (January 2013), 3-7; and ‘Asian Mission Movements in Asia Today’, in *Asian Missions Advance* 41 (October 2013), 29-36. Cf. Nicta Lubaale, ‘Doing Mission at the Margins of Society: Harnessing Resources of Local Visions’, in Wonsuk Ma and K. Ross (eds), *Mission Spirituality and Authentic Discipleship* (Oxford: Regnum, 2013), 30-32.

poor.<sup>55</sup> Every believer can be mobilized for active service and mutual ministry. *Diakonia* and evangelism take place naturally. Missiologically, disciple multiplication through house churches fulfils all the elements of being indigenous: self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating, and recently added, self-theologizing, as they reflect on the relevance of the Scriptures by themselves (cf. Acts 17:11; 20:32).

### *Insider Movements*

The Insider Movement mission paradigm may prove to be the most effective of all in crossing religious and ideological boundaries as it aims to establish Christ-centred communities where all Christ-followers love and serve their neighbours holistically in Jesus' name.<sup>56</sup> Religious buildings (like mosques and temples) are transformed into community ministry centres, managed by a local network of house churches or basic ecclesial communities, each with their own missional projects, and contextually (locally and cross-culturally) – without extracting people from their socio-religious identities, thereby transforming their cultures not just from the bottom up but also from the inside out.

This mission paradigm lives out and bears witness to the cruciform and kenotic approach of holistic mission to the full. This is most appropriate in contexts where the churches are small and insignificant minorities in relation to their society, dominated by other faiths and ideologies that are even anti-Christian. Christ-followers just need to appreciate each community's environment, culture and religion, and implant faith in the form of prayer to God in Jesus' name and reflection on God's word (1 Tim. 4:4-5). Jesus Christ and his kingdom must be fully incarnated anew in each religion and ideology. Converts to Christ should remain in their community and seek to enhance and enrich their socio-religious traditions by prayerfully reflecting on and applying the Scriptures (cf. 1 Cor. 7:18-19) from within. In the language of Frontier Missiology, this is to 'liberate Christ from Christianity', for 'only Christ saves, not Christianity'.<sup>57</sup> Advocates and supporters of this mission paradigm are called 'alongsiders', for the key actors in this holistic mission are the 'insiders'. There has been considerable debate about the authenticity or syncretism of some insider movement practice.

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<sup>55</sup> Wolfgang Simson, *Houses That Change the World* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2001); and Rad Zdero, *The Global House Church Movement* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2004). Cf. David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements* (Midlothian, VA: WIGTake Resources, 2004).

<sup>56</sup> David Lim, 'Catalyzing 'Insider Movements' Among the Unreached', in *Journal of Asian Mission* 10:1-2 (March-September 2008), 125-45.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Harley Talman and J.J. Travis (eds), *Understanding Insider Movements: Disciples of Jesus Within Diverse Religious Communities* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2015).

## **Conclusion**

As we face the rest of the 21st century, holistic missiology has yet to make a significant diaconal impact in setting up a coherent alternative to the oppressive global market system and a significant evangelistic impact among people of other faiths and cultures. Which of the six holistic mission paradigms will be most effective in fulfilling *missio Dei* today and will bear fruit and even much fruit in our post-modern world? Our missional efforts have not been wanting in zeal, dedication, prayer and even sacrifice. The problem seems to be with the mission paradigms that have been used: which of them can maximize our faithfulness to the holistic mission that has been articulated clearly by world Christianity, even if it may mean breaking with our favoured missiology and mission paradigm? Does the future lie with house churches and insider movements?

Our prayer remains, 'Lord, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' Amen.

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# A MISSIOLOGY OF SHARING FOR THE EVANGELIZING AND SERVING CHURCH

Mogens S. Mogensen

## Mission Metaphors

In 2000 a group of evangelical missiologists and missionaries convened in California for a 'Consultation on Mission Language and Metaphors'. Their purpose was to reflect together 'about the words, metaphors and images evangelicals use to communicate about the missionary mandate and endeavour to the world at large'. They expressed regrets that there had been a tendency to use metaphors – to inspire involvement and action – that were military in nature, such as 'target', 'conquer', 'army', 'crusade', 'mobilize', 'beachhead', 'advance', 'enemy', 'battle'.

Metaphors and the mindsets and attitudes behind them are potent in shaping thought and compelling action. Positive metaphors are essential tools of missions and evangelism. When twisted or taken too far, however, they distort God's purposes. 'Warfare' metaphors and terminology, while biblical in the cosmic/spiritual sense, have been misused in Christian mission communications. They have become increasingly counter-productive to mission work, sometimes endangering the lives of local believers, and are being used by opponents of the church to indict and impede its work. We therefore advocate an immediate end to the inappropriate use of such words.

The use of military metaphors is seen to have become increasingly counter-productive to mission since it does not reflect the Christian message of love, forgiveness, reconciliation and blessing. The use of military metaphors may even endanger the lives of local believers. And the consultation therefore advocated an immediate end to the inappropriate use of military metaphors. Instead of military metaphors, they 'call for the use of alternative metaphors such as "blessing, healing, inviting, sowing and reaping, fishing, restoring family relationships, becoming reconcilers, peacemakers and ambassadors"'<sup>1</sup>.

The statement by this consultation might be interpreted as a call for a more up-to-date and less military terminology in mission, but I view the concern of the participants of the consultation as going much deeper. What is at stake here is not just a matter of effective communication, but of the metaphors through which the missionaries view the world, their missionary task and their relationship to people of other faiths. In his ground-breaking

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<sup>1</sup> Consultation on Mission Language and Metaphors, held at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, 1st-3rd June 2000, Summary Statement (2000).

book from 1980, *Metaphors We Live by*, George Lakoff introduced his now famous metaphor thesis that the lives of individuals are in a very significant way influenced by the central metaphors they use to explain complex phenomena.

Metaphors are not only a matter of words, linguistic constructs. ‘Rather, metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature... Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people.’<sup>2</sup>

In his analysis of dominant metaphors in American and Chinese language, Dilin Liu has, in his book *Metaphor, Culture, and Worldview*, explored the close connection between metaphor, culture and worldview. He sees central metaphors used in languages as key windows into the worldview of people and shows how metaphors at one and the same time are shaped by the culture and worldview of the people who use these metaphors and is shaping their culture and worldview. Liu argues that, in American language, sport and business metaphors are the dominant metaphors whereas, in Chinese language, family and eating are the dominant metaphors.<sup>3</sup>

The metaphors that missionaries use about their mission work among people of other faiths, on the one hand, reflect the view of their relationship with other people and, on the other hand, inform or format their relationship. It is of course a matter of the worldview of the missionaries. Is the relationship between Christianity and other religions, and the relationship between Christians and adherents of other faiths, conceived as a military battle where the other is seen as the enemy to be conquered and his territory to be occupied? Or is the relationship seen in terms of blessing, reconciliation, sowing seed? The dominant metaphors used in talking about the relationship of missionaries to people of other faiths may reflect the worldview of missionaries and contribute to form their worldview and thereby also influence their actions. Metaphors are not innocent linguistic constructs.

When we talk about the dual mandate of mission, i.e. the evangelism and *diakonia* of the church, and the relationship between the two, it is therefore of the utmost importance which metaphors we employ. The same applies to all aspects of the mission of the church. It is of critical importance for us to identify some biblically based, theologically central and contextually relevant mission metaphors, and the mission practices that follow from them that may inspire members of the church to engage actively in mission and guide people in this engagement.

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<sup>2</sup> George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live by* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, E-book, 2003), 3.

<sup>3</sup> Dilin Liu, *Metaphor, Culture, and Worldview: The Case of American English and the Chinese Language* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002).

In the process of developing a metaphor and practice-based missiology that may be relevant in a post-Christendom and post-modern multi-religious western context, I will in this article explore and analyse the metaphor of ‘sharing’. Sharing is a word that may have many different connotations, but here I want to focus on the type of sharing that takes place at a meal round the table.

The sharing at the table as a metaphor in mission discourse is not new. We find it, among other places, in the Lutheran World Federation document on *Diakonia in Context*, where it is stated that:

Sharing is another profound diaconal dimension of table communion. Not only are words, stories and experiences shared at the table, but often also what is eaten and drunk. Here we are not talking about table as a kind of furniture, but more as a metaphor for that space where people sit together round a meal, sharing the gifts of belonging together.<sup>4</sup>

And here we also see how sharing at the table is a metaphor that may overcome the duality between *diakonia* and evangelism. What is shared is not only ‘what is eaten and drunk’, but also ‘words, stories and experiences’ – in short, at the table we are sharing all ‘the gifts of belonging together’.

### Sharing in the New Testament

The New Testament, and in particular Luke’s Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles,<sup>5</sup> are full of stories about meals where people share food with each other, and where Jesus participates in the sharing: ‘... throughout his public ministry, Jesus as the recipient of hospitality is at the same time the one who heralds and personifies the redemptive hospitality of God. Those who welcome Jesus into their homes become, in turn, guests of the redemptive hospitality of God.’<sup>6</sup> This is seen when the two disciples walking to Emmaus invited Jesus to stay with them. He was not only their guest, but ‘took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them’ (Luke 24:29) as the host would do. This seems to imply that, whenever Jesus is present at a meal, he is there as the host and gives us whatever we eat.

Furthermore, when Jesus is invited to be present at a meal, Jesus tends to break the traditional social conventions of meal fellowship and also establishes a fellowship, representing the inclusive hospitality of the

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<sup>4</sup> Lutheran World Federation, *Diakonia in Context: Transformation. Reconciliation. Empowerment* (Lutheran World Federation: Geneva, 2009), 33.

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. Robert Karris, *Eating Your Way through Luke’s Gospel* (Greenville, MN: Liturgical Press 2006); and Amos Yong, *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices, and the Neighbor* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 100-07.

<sup>6</sup> Yong, 102.

Kingdom of God where all are welcome, irrespective of sex, age or social status.<sup>7</sup>

At the Last Supper, on the night before his crucifixion, Jesus turned his meal with his disciples into a metaphor of the church – the church as communion, the church as disciples sharing the bread and the bread of life, where Jesus is present as their host. This Holy Communion that Christians continue to share with Christ and one another points back to the ‘Last Supper’ and all the other meals with Jesus, and it points forward eschatologically to the coming of the Kingdom of God.

In a summary of the life and ministry of the first church, Luke writes that:

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:42-47 NIV).

When looking at this passage through the lens of the metaphor of sharing (the sharing characteristic of a meal fellowship), it becomes clear that this first Christian community was a community of sharing, a sharing of spiritual and material gifts of God, a sharing which included not only those who were already disciples of Jesus but also others. What we see here may be described as a *diakonia* of sharing and an evangelism of sharing.

The eschatological vision of the mission of God is the messianic banquet in the Kingdom. In Matthew 8:11, when Jesus responds to the faith of the Roman centurion, he says, ‘I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.’

Referring to the story of creation where God asked Adam and Eve to eat of the fruits of the earth, the theologian Alexander Schneemann writes:

And this image of the banquet remains, throughout the Bible, the central image of life. It is the image of life at its creation and also the image of life at its end and fulfilment: ‘... that you eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.’<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Yong, 102-03.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Alan J. Roxburgh, *Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, E-book, 2011), 141-42.

### Theological Reflections on Sharing

The metaphor of sharing may also be used as a lens through which we look at and reflect on key elements in theology. What is the role of sharing in our understanding of God, the church, humanity?

The foundation of all our concepts of communion – where mutual sharing is a key component – is to be found in the Holy Trinity. As Greg Haslam has said, ‘The Trinity is the origin of human relationships. This is the essence of our being made in God’s image. The Trinity models an image of mutuality, reciprocity and a totally shared life.’

The communion – and sharing – among the disciples reflects the communion of the Holy Trinity. What constitutes communion (*koinonia*) is sharing. The communion of the church is expressed in the Holy Communion, where the body and blood of Christ is shared, but also in the understanding of the church as the body of Christ. All members share the unity of the church and all members share the life and ministry of the church (as it was expressed in Acts 4:42-47). The same understanding is reflected in the Faith and Order document, *The Church. Towards a Common Vision*, from 2013:

The biblical notion of *koinonia* has become central in the ecumenical quest for a common understanding of the life and unity of the Church. This quest presupposes that communion is not simply the union of existing churches in their current form. The noun *koinonia* (communion, participation, fellowship, sharing) which derives from a verb meaning ‘to have something in common’, ‘to share’, ‘to participate’, ‘to have part in’ or ‘to act together’, appears in passages recounting the sharing in the Lord’s Supper (cf. 1 Cor. 10:16-17), the reconciliation of Paul with Peter, James and John (cf. Gal. 2:7-10), the collection for the poor (cf. Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 8:3-4) and the experience and witness of the Church (cf. Acts 2:42-45).

The local church is not a self-contained or self-serving club that caters only to the needs of its own members. With reference to ‘the need to shape a new generation of leaders’, it is stated: ‘As a divinely established communion, the Church belongs to God and does not exist for itself. It is by its very nature missionary, called and sent to witness in its own life to that communion which God intends for all humanity and for all creation in the kingdom’ (World Council of Churches 2013:10).

The church is called to share in God’s mission of drawing all humanity into the divine communion, by extending its table of sharing into all the world. ‘In love, God has also shared God’s mission in creation with all people, created in God’s own image to be God’s co-workers’.<sup>9</sup>

Being created in the image of the Trinitarian God, all humanity is created for communion, mutual sharing with one another. And the ultimate

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<sup>9</sup> Lutheran World Federation, *Mission in Context. Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment* (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 2004), 24.

purpose of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is to draw us into the divine Trinitarian life of sharing.

Western culture has a strong focus on individualism. Here, African theology may help us regain a proper biblical understanding of humanity that resonates with the Trinitarian life of sharing. The Kenyan theologian John Mbiti summarizes an African understanding of the relationship of the individual to the community in this way: ‘I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am. *Ubuntu* gives us the insight that human life is meant to be shared.’ The South African Anglican bishop Desmond Tutu, who made *Ubuntu* theology known worldwide, writes that the human person

... is not basically an independent solitary entity. He is human precisely in being enveloped in the community of other human beings, in being caught up in the bundle of life. To be is to participate. The *summum bonum* here is not independence but sharing interdependence. And what is true of the human person is surely true of human aggregations.<sup>10</sup>

As we have seen in this section, sharing is a central dimension in our understanding of God as a triune God, in our understanding of the church as the body of Christ, and in our understanding of humanity informed by *Ubuntu*.

### Missiological Reflections on Sharing

The question is whether and how the metaphor of sharing can help inform missiology in a way that addresses the challenges facing mission today? Can it contribute towards overcoming the problematic dichotomy between *diakonia* and evangelism, and some problematic relationships between *diakonia* and evangelism? Can it contribute to developing a more authentic understanding and practice of evangelism as well as *diakonia*?

#### *Sharing in the mission of God*

The missiological basis for the metaphor of mission as sharing is to be found in the now prevalent understanding of *missio Dei*. Mission is not rooted in mission organisations or in mission-oriented churches but in the triune God, in *missio Dei*. Mission is being invited by God to participate in, to share in, his mission in the world, and this invitation extends to all churches and all Christians. We are called together from all corners of the world by God to share the Lord’s Supper – where Christ shares his life with us by giving us his body and blood. From this table we are sent out to share in Christ’s mission in the world by sharing the good news in word and deed

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<sup>10</sup> Desmond Tutu, ‘Viability’, in K. Kirkwood (ed), *Relevant Theology for Africa: Report on a Consultation of the Missiological Institute at Lutheran Theological College, September 12-21, 1972* (1973), 38, quoted in Michael Battle, *Ubuntu: I in You and You in Me* (New York: Seabury Books, 2009, E-book), loc. 1257.

to all the world. The apostle Paul emphasizes this link between the sharing of the Lord's Supper and the sharing of the Gospel in 1 Corinthians 11:26: 'For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes' (NIV).

We are all called to share in the totality of God's mission, which Jesus inaugurated when he said, 'The Kingdom of God is at hand.' The Kingdom-mission of Jesus – which we are called to share in – is an integral mission with no dichotomy between word and deed, material and spiritual work – as is seen in the response by Jesus to John the Baptist where he points to the signs of the coming of the kingdom: 'The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor' (Matthew 11:5 NIV).

Sharing in the mission of Christ involves sharing in all that he did and freely sharing all his blessings with others. This means that we are not free to make receiving one blessing (the gift of the gospel) the condition for receiving another blessing (the gift of diaconal services), or to instrumentalize one of the blessings (e.g. the gift of diaconal services) in an attempt to make way for receiving another of the blessings (e.g. the gift of the gospel). Just as all the blessings Jesus mentioned to John the Baptist are equally a witness to the Kingdom of God, in the same way the preaching of the gospel and diaconal services are equally a witness to the Kingdom.

### *Sharing God's gifts that belong to all of us*

The metaphor of sharing, in the sense of sharing of a meal at the table, as it has been developed here, presupposes an understanding that all that we are sharing are gifts from God. Ultimately all that we have, does not belong to any individual or any group of people, but is God's gift entrusted to all of us in common as a communion.

At the table where we gather, none of us is the host, but the host is ultimately Jesus Christ. Whenever he invites us to dine with him, he is the host, and whenever we 'invite' him to be present as a guest at our table, he will invariably become the host. Whatever we share with each other, Christians and non-Christians, whether it be material things or other resources, knowledge or education, medical services or healing or the story of the gospel, worship or theological training, are gifts of God, God's blessings, given to all humanity to be shared and enjoyed.

This understanding is also expressed in a number of WCC documents. In 'Mission and Evangelism' (1982) it is stated that 'Christians owe the message of God's salvation in Jesus Christ to every person and every people'.<sup>11</sup> And at the Geneva Consultation on 'Contemporary Understandings of Diakonia', issued the same year (1982), *diakonia* was

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<sup>11</sup> World Council of Churches, *Mission and Evangelism* (Geneva: WCC, 1982), para 41.

characterized as an ecumenical resource-sharing system.<sup>12</sup> In the new mission document *Together towards Life* (2013), the understanding of mission as sharing also features prominently, a sharing that takes its starting-point when we ‘share life at God’s table rather than satisfy individual greed’.<sup>13</sup> And similarly in the message *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis in 2013 stated that, ‘Not to share one’s wealth with the poor is to steal from them and to take away their livelihood. It is not our own goods which we hold, but theirs.’<sup>14</sup>

In this sense of gift and sharing, and of Jesus being the host at all our tables, whether at meal tables or board tables, there cannot be any dichotomy between acts of *diakonia* and acts of evangelism. Whether we as Christians are involved in *diakonia* or evangelism, we are not distributing or communicating something which is ours and belongs to us alone, but we are sharing with others what is already theirs. And conversely, whenever we act as if our diaconal resources and our evangelistic message are ours alone, and whenever we at the table in this context claim to be the host that distributes to others what belongs to him or her, we betray the gospel of grace.

### Sharing as Equality in Mission

Another challenge we have become conscious of in mission today is that we may easily make other people the object of our mission. By making other people objects of our mission we may diminish their humanity, and we may end up with approaches that are similar to the militaristic rhetoric of mission mentioned above. This problem has previously been addressed through the metaphor of ‘accompaniment’ which, by the way, has in it an element of sharing bread together. Through the metaphor of sharing the equality among those involved becomes more explicit. Because what they share at the table already belongs to both parties.

Equality in mission is also underlined through the metaphor of sharing at the table in another way. All are seated round the same table, where all share in the same meal. None is the object of the mission of the other; there is no distinction between givers and receivers; all human beings are at the same time givers and receivers (or: all human beings at the table are ultimately the receivers of gifts from God), sharing the joy of the meal together. Each (Christian or church) has a seat at the table, each has a voice

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<sup>12</sup> Referred to in Lutheran World Federation, *Diakonia in Context*, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> World Council of Churches *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* (Geneva: WCC, 2013), para 30.

<sup>14</sup> Pope Francis, *Apostolic Exhortation: Evangelii Gaudium of the Holy Father Francis to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2013), para 57.

in the conversation round the table, each has a share in the meal, just as each has a share in the mission of Christ.

### Sharing as Mission from Below

During the modern mission period – which has initially coincided with the period of western colonialism and domination – the danger was always that mission – whether evangelism or *diakonia* – turned into a mission from above, a mission from the powerful to the powerless. The same situation might obtain when the dominant Christendom churches engage in mission at home and their mission is perceived as a mission from above. During the latest decades the so-called new churches in the South have grown in strength to the extent that Philip Jenkins talks about them in terms of the ‘the next Christendom’ while the old sending churches in the North are constantly being weakened to the extent that they are losing their dominant position in society.<sup>15</sup> The churches in the North are therefore challenged – both in relation to their partner churches in the South and to the populations in their own countries – to learn to do mission from below, from a position of vulnerability.

Here the metaphor of sharing may prove helpful. We in the churches in the West no longer have all the resources and answers that we may offer to those who lack them. We have a shared experience of being in a position of vulnerability. The Sri Lankan theologian, D.T. Niles, is known to have said that ‘evangelism is one beggar telling other beggars where to find bread’. David Bosch, when commenting on this in his article ‘The Vulnerability of Mission’, states: ‘The point is that we are as dependent on the bread as those to whom we go. And it is only as we share it with them that we experience its true taste and nutritious value.’<sup>16</sup>

### Sharing as mutuality in mission

Often partnerships in mission, e.g. between a mission organisation from a materially rich church in the West and a materially poor church in the South, have been poisoned by a lack of mutuality. The one-way traffic from the giver to the receiver may often lead to an unhealthy feeling of superiority on the part of the giver and an equally unhealthy feeling on the part of the receiver of being indebted to the giver.

It is however true, as the late Tanzanian bishop Josia Kibira said many years ago about partnership between churches where all are giving and

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<sup>15</sup> Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: OUP, 2002), 79ff.

<sup>16</sup> David Bosch, ‘The Vulnerability of Mission’, in James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans (eds), *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization: 2. Theological Foundations* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books), 75-86, 84.

receiving, ‘There is no church that has nothing to give – as small as the church may be. And there is no church that needs nothing – as big and rich as the church may be. We need each other.’<sup>17</sup> As Philip Jenkins<sup>18</sup> and others have pointed out, over the last decades significant demographic changes have taken place within Christianity, so that the global South now houses about two thirds of all Christians in the world. This significant shift of gravity within the Christian world will of course increasingly influence the global missiological discussion. While we in the West have been used to setting the agenda, there is no doubt that we will experience a much higher level of mutuality in mission and missiology. Furthermore, in its relations with the church in the South, the church in the West will no longer be only a teaching church but also ‘Learning Missional Church’, as the title of one of the books in the Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series has it.<sup>19</sup>

The metaphor of sharing at the table, however, may help deepen and solidify the still much-needed understanding of the mutuality in mission. Mutuality means that everybody brings his or her gifts and resources to the common table – where Jesus is the host – to be shared. All have something to give, however different our gifts may be, but the perspective of Jesus on our different gifts and how we give, challenges our perspective as is seen in the story of ‘the widow’s offering’ (Mark 12:41-44).

A main point here is that all that we have to give are God-given gifts and resources – that is, gifts that have been given by God, and now we bring some of them back to God to be shared as it was originally the intention of the giver. The gifts and resources that each brings to the table, however, are not handed over directly from the giver to the receiver, but are brought to the table, where Christ is the host who shares the gifts among us according to our needs and his will.

### Missional Practices of Sharing

As quoted in the introduction to this article, ‘Metaphors and the mindsets and attitudes behind them are potent in shaping thought and compelling action. Positive metaphors are essential tools of missions and evangelism.’ This invites the question, how this metaphor of sharing may be translated into concrete action or practices. Alan Roxburgh, who has played a key role in developing a missional ecclesiology, defines practices as ‘shared actions that, when taken together, weave a way of life amongst a people... They are routinized actions shaping our lives in a certain direction... Practices are patterns of communal action that open up the presence of God and

<sup>17</sup> Quoted from Church of Norway, *Making Friends: A Handbook on Partnership Relations between Congregations* (Oslo, 2008), 2.

<sup>18</sup> Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 15ff.

<sup>19</sup> Beate Fagerli, Knud Jørgensen, Rolv Olsen, Kari Storstein and Knut Tveitred (eds), *Learning Missional Church: Reflections from Young Missiologists* (Oxford: Regnum, 2012).

make God known among us'.<sup>20</sup> In order for the metaphor of sharing to affect the mission of the church, it has to be translated into missional practices to be applied to mission in the context by members of the church so as to inspire members of the church to engage actively in mission and guide them in this engagement.

When we look at the text in Luke 10:1-12 about Jesus' sending out seventy disciples in mission through the metaphor of sharing, we may get a glimpse of some missional practices of sharing.

The mission of the church must always be seen as sharing in the mission of God. The mission field ('harvest field') belongs to God and it is his mission ('harvest'). Jesus is the one inviting us to share in his mission which he has planned beforehand, and he will himself be involved in this mission together with us, his present-day disciples ('sent them... ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go'). Mission as sharing requires a high degree of sensitivity to the guidance of the Spirit of God and we have to learn to listen to God to discern his guidance and his will when we enter into our neighbourhood or engage in mission globally.

The fact that mission is never an individual project but always a venture shared with other Christians is reflected in the text where it is emphasised that Jesus sends out his disciples two by two ('sent them two by two'). Mission as sharing requires that we as individuals and organisations in mission learn to discover the way together and serve together. We have to work at overcoming our western preference for individualism and independence in favour of togetherness and interdependence by always asking – with whom should we be working and walking together as we consider getting involved in mission?

And it is not only sharing between the Christians sent out in mission, but also a sharing between the Christians and those they are sent to. When Jesus told his disciples, 'Do not take a purse or bag or sandal', he was making sure that they would be vulnerable as they would have to depend on the hospitality and generosity in the neighbourhoods they entered – and the willingness of the villagers to share with them. They are furthermore intentionally sent out 'like lambs among wolves' for them to act out of vulnerability so that they are forced to minister to people from below.

In his sending speech to the disciples, Jesus asks them to enter into a new context as guests ('When you enter a house... stay in that house, eating and drinking'). This makes another type of interaction possible from what obtains when you are the host, welcoming people into your home. The power dynamics change and a new type of sharing becomes possible, a mission which does not take place from a position of power, but from a position of vulnerability. Often it is much easier to be the host welcoming

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<sup>20</sup> Alan J. Roxburgh, *Joining God, Remaking Church, Changing the World: The New Shape of the Church in Our Time* (New York: Morehouse Publishing, E-book, 2014), loc. 1133-52.

strangers as guests, than being the stranger who is welcomed by the host as a guest in his or her home. As host, you are in charge and set the agenda, whereas, as a guest, you need to be humble and follow the rules laid down by the host. The type of sharing you experience as the host is quite different from the type of sharing you experience as the guest.<sup>21</sup>

Just as Jesus was incarnated into a specific cultural context and shared the life-situation of those he ministered to, in the same way the mission of the church and of Christians is never a mission to people at a distance but involves sharing the daily life of those to whom we are sent. In the instruction of Jesus, the disciples are sent, not only to be guests in the homes of people but to enter into their daily lives. The sentence, ‘Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages’, seems to indicate that the disciples are supposed to share the life of the villagers by participating in their work, and therefore also receiving their wages for their work. Mission as sharing requires the practice of entering into the daily life of others where ‘sitting at the table together would be an opportunity for shared lives and deep communion’.<sup>22</sup>

For the mission of the church and groups of Christians to be authentic, it must take place in the midst of the interconnectedness of human beings and therefore be characterised by mutuality. In the text, the villagers in their homes offer the disciples the gifts of hospitality and generosity by sharing with them their food and drink, and the disciples offer the villagers their gifts (‘eating and drinking whatever they give you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, “The Kingdom of God is near you”’). Being involved in evangelism and *diakonia* involves offering gifts to others, but we ourselves must also be ready to receive gifts from those we minister to. Sometimes it is easier to be the giver than the receiver, but mission as sharing requires that we learn the practice of giving and receiving gifts.

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<sup>21</sup> Read more about mission as ‘gusting’ in Mogens S. Mogensen, ‘A Gusting and Listening Approach to Being Church in a Danish Post-Christendom Context. Toward a “Practical Missiology for a Post-Christendom Context”’. Paper presented at European Region’s Meeting, Lutheran World Federation in Rome, on ‘Listening, Serving, Empowering – Being Church in a Transforming Europe’, 27th-29th October 2014: [www.intercultural.dk/images/stories/A\\_Listening\\_and\\_Gusting\\_Approach\\_to\\_Being\\_Church\\_in\\_a\\_Danish\\_Post.pdf](http://www.intercultural.dk/images/stories/A_Listening_and_Gusting_Approach_to_Being_Church_in_a_Danish_Post.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Roxburgh, *Missional*, 142-43: ‘What if these seventy, when they entered into towns and villages, actually spent time doing manual labor among, with, and beside the people? This was certainly part of the way Paul functioned during many of his journeys across the empire... If this group of seventy were sent out, not as traveling prophets or religious emissaries but, like Paul, to work among the townspeople, we must read this story differently. We have disciples entering into every aspect of the life of the townspeople – working and eating together...’

## Conclusion

As David Bosch pointed out in his magisterial work, *Transforming Mission*, in each period in church and mission history a certain paradigm of mission has been dominant and this paradigm has been undergirded by a specific text. In the modern mission movement, THE mission text was the so-called Great Commission, in Matthew 28:18-20, which was interpreted in a way that focused on evangelism and often with an unresolved relationship between evangelism and *diakonia*.

Today it seems as if Luke 10:1-12 very often is referred to as an important mission text for our time. Maybe because it lends itself to a broader and more integrated understanding of mission which, among other things, overcomes the dichotomy between evangelism and *diakonia*. A shorthand way to describe mission today is that mission is what the church, in line with the sending of Jesus into the world, is sent by the triune God to be (*koinonia* and *leiturgia*), to do (*diakonia*) and to say (*kerygma*) as a witness (*marturia*) to the kingdom of God. This understanding of mission may be a reflection of the story about Jesus' sending of the seventy disciples to the villages. The metaphor of mission as sharing may help overcome the problematic dichotomy between evangelism and *diakonia* and may contribute to underlining an important dimension in this new understanding of mission. And hopefully the missional practices related to this metaphor may help to inspire members of the church to engage actively in mission and give practical guidance in this engagement.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> It is noteworthy that economists and town planners are now beginning to talk about sharing as a basis for sustainable cities – and even whole societies. They talk about ‘the sharing economy’ that is part of ‘the sharing paradigm’. A critical difference between the understanding of sharing in their sharing paradigm and the understanding of sharing in the metaphor or sharing in this article, of course, is, that in a theological perspective what is shared ultimately belongs to God, whereas sharing in this economic perspective means that we allow others to enjoy things that ultimately belong to the individual: see McLaren, Duncan and Julian Agyeman, *Sharing Cities. A Case for Truly Smart and Sustainable Cities* (Cambridge, MS and London: The MIT Press, 2015), 7ff.

# SECTION TWO

## ECUMENICAL PERSPECTIVES

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# PROCLAIM CHRIST UNTIL HE COMES, IN WORD AND DEED: WORLD EVANGELICAL PERSPECTIVES

Rose Dowsett

## Introduction

The evangelical movement is usually considered to have its roots in the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century, associated with John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards. This common assertion is not entirely accurate. At every stage of church history there have been those whose lives, theology, ministries and perspectives would be largely indistinguishable from the evangelicals of the past three centuries. Sometimes widely accepted labels and assumptions can be misleading. However, for practicality's sake, this essay will accept the customary interpretation.

It must be stated that there is considerable diversity among those who would call themselves evangelical today, just as there is more diversity within those of other streams of the world church family than is often admitted by their members. Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Pentecostal and many more – all these embrace considerable variations. Generalisations can often distort the truth. In the case of evangelicals, there was a measure of diversity from the earliest days, but that has accelerated hugely during the past fifty years as the church has exploded into life across the global South, now the numerical base of Christianity. With no overarching controlling ecclesiastical structure, though with shared commitment to the Scriptures as the final arbiter of faith and life, there can be plenty of variety! Trying to articulate 'world evangelical perspectives' may be presumptuous.

Evangelicalism is in fact particularly complex because it is multi-denominational, includes sub-sets of some wider denominations, and embraces both church and voluntary organization structures. This makes it different in nature from some of the familiar church streams. It also makes it harder to draw on formal statements that might carry any authoritative weight for the whole community who self-identify as evangelicals.

Against that background, there are nonetheless two main overarching global bodies that link the majority of evangelicals together: the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) and the Lausanne Movement. In very broad terms, WEA *primarily* (but not exclusively) links local churches and church denominations while Lausanne *primarily* links individuals and mission agencies. However, each has a number of exceptions, including commissions (e.g. WEA's Mission Commission) that blur those distinctions.

Within, and sometimes beyond, these global structures, there are a number of international evangelical organisations (e.g. many missionary societies), and also significant networks, continent by continent. Any of these bodies, local churches or whole denominations may align with both the WEA and Lausanne, with one or the other, or with neither. This means that convictions and praxis concerning the relationship between evangelism and *diakonia* may vary widely among evangelicals. Additionally, there are some parts of the whole that focus primarily on evangelism, and others that focus primarily on *diakonia*, whose ministries are complementary, and none complete alone.

Lastly, historic western alignments, reflecting western church history, are not always (and quite rightly!) adopted in the non-western world, leading to different joint ventures. This varied pattern can make it harder to identify what is specifically evangelical in evangelism and *diakonia*.

### Some Historical Foundations

Despite all that variety, there are some trajectories from the beginning of the evangelical movement of the eighteenth century to the present that will help our study. Nobody, I think, would disagree with the claim that John Wesley was a passionate evangelist, pleading with men and women to make their peace with God. In the enormous social disruption of the early stages of the industrial revolution, many of the degraded poor to whom Wesley mostly preached were often outside the traditional parochial system of the church, and at best only hazily aware of the Christian message. Yet it was also through that same parochial system that any provision for education, medical care and welfare for the poor, largely lay. It may have been extremely limited in its scope, but it was all that there was, and to be outside its reach was a humanitarian disaster. Wesley was acutely aware of the hunger, sickness and ignorance of those to whom he preached. As well as urging his listeners to ‘flee from the wrath that is to come’, he constantly pointed to the transformation of life – holy living – that must follow. Inevitably, this must include love and service to those around. Those affected by his ministry swiftly became engaged in loving service to others, both within and beyond their own fellowships.

The evangelical revival (on both sides of the Atlantic) not only dealt with people’s souls, but immediately unleashed a strong movement of philanthropy from those in an economic position to engage in it – sometimes leading to large-scale initiatives, such as establishing Sierra Leone as a safe haven for repatriated slaves. Alongside it, came an astonishing outpouring of practical service in countless humble small-scale ways by those, themselves in the most challenging of circumstances. Such ministry was generally gender-blind, so that women as well as men could engage in the liberating service of others, despite formal church structures still being overpoweringly in the hands of men. Responding to the gospel

was the inspiration; *diakonia* was the outflow. That service was not restricted to fellow-believers, but reached into the whole of society.

In fact, this is simply the result of the emphasis on making disciples, an essential ingredient of true evangelism, as opposed to some kind of superficial or emotional decision. Biblical discipleship is essentially holistic in nature. It affects every dimension of life. Loving your neighbour is inseparable from truly loving God.

This was exemplified by many of the evangelicals of the past. Some brought pressure to bear on political leaders and public opinion in some great cause: for instance, William Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect in their protracted fight to outlaw any British involvement in the slave trade; Lord Shaftesbury in his battle to prevent exploitation of workers, especially powerless women and children, by greedy employers and factory owners; James Hudson Taylor of the China Inland Mission, along with others, in shaming the British government over its profiting from the iniquitous opium trade; and many more. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, evangelicals were at the forefront of establishing schools for all, medical and health care, campaigns to improve housing, tackling poverty and suffering, improving agriculture and food production: this both domestically and overseas. Many got deeply involved in justice issues. This was not for personal profit or prestige: on the contrary, such service was deeply costly financially, emotionally and socially, and frequently involved hard battles fought against powerful vested interests.<sup>1</sup>

Did they always get things right? No. They, like us, were fallen human beings, who sometimes made bad choices, or worked with imperialist attitudes. Sometimes philanthropy did not lead to social reform, or evangelism to true discipleship. They were children of their generations, with their own blind spots. Yet in general they combined their desire to see men and women and children come to faith in Christ, with compassion and hard labour to improve the conditions of millions, whose own political and social leaders often did little to care for them. Even many ecclesiastical leaders in the traditional churches were frequently complicit in the exploitation and abuse of countless people. It was often evangelicals who raised a prophetic voice, and sought to right wrongs.

Sadly, there was a shadowy period from the 1910s and 1920s when some evangelicals in the northern/western world, in North America more than in Europe, separated evangelism from social action. Sometimes this was a reaction to those parts of the world church that had become so preoccupied with social welfare that, in the process, they appeared to turn their backs on the central story of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, and on

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<sup>1</sup> For a study of social impact of evangelicals in Britain, see John Wolffe (ed), *Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal: Evangelicals and Society in Britain 1780-1980* (London: SPCK, 1995). See also David Hilborn (ed), *Movement for Change: Evangelical Perspectives on Social Transformation* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2004).

anything supernatural or miraculous, emasculating both Scripture and gospel. Sometimes it was a reaction against the growing confidence of the secular humanist and Marxist movements, both of which were (and are) deeply opposed to belief in God. Sometimes, especially as the twentieth century unfolded, it seemed there was neither time nor energy to spare for anything other than evangelism in its narrowest form. In the face of worldwide instability and war, the belief became widespread – particularly after, first, the Soviet world and, then, the Chinese world became crusading Communist powers – that the opportunity for mission would very soon be closed down in most of the world, or alternatively that such tumultuous events presaged the imminent return of Christ and the end of the world. Such reactions – shrinking mission to a narrow sense of evangelism – were (and are) understandable, but deeply flawed. However urgent the times, the authentic gospel is about more, much more than individuals being ‘saved for heaven’. At the same time, it is never less than that either.

It would be mistaken to claim (as some have) that evangelicals during this period were never engaged in holistic mission. Both at home and in overseas mission, there are many examples of evangelism and *diakonia* being firmly integrated. But there have always been tensions over the order in which things happen: do you focus on ‘saving people’ who will then change their communities (for which there is plenty of both biblical and historical precedent), or do you keep evangelism and *diakonia* firmly in tandem (for which also there is plenty of both biblical and historical precedent)?

We turn now, first to the WEA story, and then to that of the Lausanne Movement.

### The WEA Story

In 1846, 915 churchmen gathered in London to consider how to constitute a worldwide alliance of evangelicals. Almost all the delegates were from Britain, continental Europe and America, with a very small number from Africa and Asia. They represented more than fifty different denominations. Protestantism had repeatedly fractured since the sixteenth-century Reformation, and many evangelicals were becoming increasingly troubled about that. For more than fifty years, they had cautiously been finding ways of working across denominational boundaries in a variety of gospel initiatives. Now, as the world became increasingly interconnected, many desired to take this a step forward, and on an international level.

Sadly, the full vision could not be realized. As the delegates worked on spelling out the grounds on which alliance could operate, they had no problem agreeing a doctrinal basis that would be acceptable to all, despite significantly differing convictions in some areas of belief and church ordinance, such as how to administer baptism. The sticking-point came over the issue of slave-holding. For the Europeans, especially the British

who had so recently fought a long, hard battle to outlaw any British involvement in the slave trade, and had already required emancipation of slaves working on British-owned estates, it was unthinkable that anyone still involved in the slave trade or the use of slave labour should be welcome in an evangelical alliance. For the Americans, it was more complex. While the American delegates themselves were deeply troubled over the slave trade, they were unwilling to disenfranchise fellow-Christians in the southern states who believed the Bible permitted slavery as an institution, and where estates and the economy depended on slave labour. It was an extremely sensitive matter for them; before long, it would lead to tragic civil war between north and south.

As a result of this profound disagreement, the proposed international nature of the alliance was greatly curtailed, although a number of national alliances emerged which kept in touch with one another informally. It was to be another century before the original vision of a fully-formed World Evangelical Fellowship came to birth: in 1951, 21 national alliances were founding-members. Today there are 129 national Evangelical Alliances, and over 100 international organisations in membership.<sup>2</sup> However, the events of 1846 are a powerful reminder that matters of social justice were very important to most evangelicals at the time. They have remained so. Today, both the World Evangelical Alliance and its constituent national alliances are engaged in a wide range of advocacy, action and service of every kind, along with a deep commitment to spreading the story and claims of Jesus Christ.

So, for instance, a recent (2014-15) major survey project conducted by the EA-UK (*21st Century Evangelicals*: [www.eauk.org](http://www.eauk.org)), under the section 'Are we good neighbours?', found that 82% of respondents said that their churches partnered with other churches for projects serving their communities, 34% partnered with secular (voluntary) projects, and 75% with churches and missions overseas. This is considerably higher than the proportion of the overall population engaged in service (other than in state employment). There is also a high level of political engagement, involving both advocacy and direct action on behalf of the poor, the marginalized and those in special need. The EA-UK strongly promotes and encourages such service, alongside equally promoting and encouraging bold evangelism. Other national alliances round the world would tell a similar story, with the specifics of their service being contextualized to each situation. Such service is offered to any in the community, regardless of the faith of the recipients, though wherever possible it will be made clear that it is offered 'in Jesus' Name'.

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<sup>2</sup> For current information about WEA, see: [www.wea.org](http://www.wea.org)

See also W. Harold Fuller, *People of the Mandate: The story of the World Evangelical Fellowship* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, and WEF, 1996); and Ian Randall and David Hilborn, *One body in Christ: The History and Significance of the Evangelical Alliance* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2001).

WEA acts globally through some of its Commissions, such as the Religious Liberty Commission, its Commission on Women's Concerns, and initiatives such as the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church (which in turn leads to increased pressure on bodies such as the United Nations to address offending powers). Individual EAs have given birth to numerous organisations dedicated to particular areas of service, where proclamation and *diakonia* are inseparable. For instance, in 1968 EA-UK created The Evangelical Alliance Relief Fund, devoted to relief and development amongst the world's poorest and neediest; today, as Tearfund ([www.tearfund.org](http://www.tearfund.org)), it is a major international player in serving those in some of the most challenging places in the world, working usually alongside and through local churches so that delivery of help both proclaims and embodies the gospel. Most national EAs could tell a similar story.

### The Lausanne Movement

In the 1950s and 1960s, Billy Graham had become well known in many parts of the world for his highly effective evangelistic crusades. Conducted primarily in countries where the Christian story was already familiar, and mostly not where there was a strong history of another world religion, Graham followed a pattern popularized by men such as D.L. Moody and other so-called revivalist preachers in the latter part of the nineteenth century, preaching a very simple message, followed by an appeal to trust in Christ for personal salvation. By the early 1970s, Graham had established a small but gifted team round him, and a far-reaching organization, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, which networked with evangelicals in many countries.

Nobody could question Graham's passion for evangelism, and his longing to see the gospel taken to every person on earth. At the time, it was computed that there were about two billion people who had never heard the message of Jesus Christ. Graham was not oblivious to, or uncaring about, the social needs of so many in the world, but his driving concern was telling as many people as possible, as quickly as possible, about Jesus Christ and his invitation to them.

Graham's reputation and standing enabled him to call together a large international gathering, held in July 1974 at Lausanne, Switzerland. There were 'some 2,500 members from 150 countries (though missing the USSR and mainland China), some 1,300 other participants such as observers, consultants or guests, and several hundred journalists. As with the planning committee, something like half the speakers and participants were from the Third World'.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Timothy Dudley-Smith, *John Stott: A Global Ministry* (Leicester, UK: IVP, 2001), 209.

In his opening address, Graham ‘underlined the single focus of the gathering: “Here at Lausanne, let’s make sure that evangelism is the one task which we are unitedly determined to do”’.<sup>4</sup> Yet John Stott, Rector of All Souls in London – in his gracious study on the nature of biblical evangelism, and then later some of the delegates from the global South, such as Rene Padilla and Samuel Escobar from Latin America, together with African and Asian speakers – insisted that evangelism without attention to social action was less than the gospel, and indeed discredited it. For them, this was not simply biblical truth but also the essence of true and historic evangelicalism.

Under John Stott’s gifted pen, the mood and convictions of the Congress were encapsulated in the *Lausanne Covenant*, a document that was to prove to be of immense influence for generations to come. Among the fifteen substantial paragraphs, there are repeated references to the biblical intertwining of evangelism and social action. At the same time, they are clearly not the same as each other. So, in Section 5, entitled ‘Christian Social Responsibility’, we find this:

‘... we express penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social action as mutually exclusive. Although reconciliation with other people is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbor and our obedience to Jesus Christ. The message of salvation implies also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression, and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist. When people receive Christ, they are born into his kingdom and must seek not only to exhibit but also to spread its righteousness in the midst of an unrighteous world. The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead.’<sup>5</sup>

Inevitably, not everybody could wholeheartedly embrace this statement, and some continued to feel that evangelism, often combined with church planting, should be the sole business of mission. After all, the reasoning went, evangelism is concerned with eternal welfare while social action is only concerned with temporal matters, so the former is far more urgent – and indeed loving. Since only Christians could engage in evangelism, while anyone of any faith or none could engage in humanitarian activity, let the Christians do what only they could do and let everyone else do the rest. On the other hand, probably the great majority of evangelicals were excited to recover the holism that had marked the earlier generations of their tradition. Once again, there was a steady growth of attention to compassionate

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<sup>4</sup> Dudley-Smith, *John Stott*, 210.

<sup>5</sup> The *Lausanne Covenant* in its entirety can be found in many places, including the Lausanne website: [www.lausanne.org](http://www.lausanne.org)

service as an integral part of authentic witness, to the world, of the love of God. Further consultations,<sup>6</sup> theological and missiological reflection, and many publications fed a variety of initiatives.

Over the years following Lausanne 1, evangelicals paid increasing attention to issues such as contextualization, and of how sensitive evangelism must take into account the specifics of culture and context of those to whom the gospel is being addressed. That included socio-economic and political realities. John Stott was later to call this ‘double listening’: listening to the unchanging Scriptures and simultaneously listening to the changing world, and finding the way to build bridges between them. His humble but profound wisdom was crucial in enabling different parts of the evangelical family to listen to one another and to work together, and to recover the integration of evangelism and *diakonia* that had been sidelined in some circles for a while. The gospel of the kingdom of God includes more (but not less) than a message of individual repentance and faith.

In 1989, the Lausanne Movement convened a second Congress, this time in Manila, Philippines.<sup>7</sup> Once again, it was apparent that there was some divergence in convictions over the relationship between evangelism and social action, as well as over what kinds of human-devised strategies might be appropriate in mission, how to identify ‘unreached people’, and so on. However, the *Manila Manifesto* includes the following Affirmations (among 21):

8. We affirm that we must demonstrate God’s love visibly by caring for those who are deprived of justice, dignity, food, and shelter.

9. We affirm that the proclamation of God’s kingdom of justice and peace demands the denunciation of all injustice and oppression, both personal and structural; we will not shrink from this prophetic witness.

19. We affirm that world evangelization is urgent and that the reaching of unreached peoples is possible. So we resolve during the last decade of the twentieth century to give ourselves to these tasks with fresh determination.

In the extended statements that follow, we find sentences such as these:

‘We have again been confronted with Luke’s emphasis that the gospel is Good News for the poor and have asked ourselves what this means to the majority of the world’s population who are destitute, suffering, or oppressed. We have been reminded that the law, the or, and the wisdom books, and the teaching and ministry of Jesus, all stress God’s concern for the materially poor and our consequent duty to defend and care for them. Scripture also refers to the spiritually poor who look to God alone for mercy. The gospel

<sup>6</sup> For instance, C. Rene Padilla (ed), *The New Faces of Evangelicalism: An International Symposium on the Lausanne Covenant* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1976).

<sup>7</sup> The text of many papers, and of the *Manila Manifesto*, were published in J.D. Douglas (ed), *Proclaim Christ Until He Comes: Calling the Whole Church to Take the Whole Gospel to the Whole World* (Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1990).

comes as Good News to both... The authentic gospel must become visible in the transformed lives of men and women. As we proclaim the love of God, we must be involved in loving service, and as we preach the kingdom of God, we must be committed to its demands of justice and peace. Evangelism is primary because our chief concern is with the gospel, that all people may have the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Yet, Jesus not only proclaimed the kingdom of God, he also demonstrated its arrival by works of mercy and power. We are called today to a similar integration of words and deeds... Good News and good works are inseparable.'

Later there is expression of deep repentance that Christians have often discredited the gospel by the way we live, by our fractured relationships, by our selfishness and failure to love others. There is also deep shame that two millennia after the events of Christ, two thirds of the world's population have not acknowledged him, most of them because they have not heard and seen credible gospel witness. If all Christian believers were mobilized, would it not be possible to change that situation radically, so that by the turn of the millennium all living people might have seen and heard the good news?

While the desire to accelerate commitment to Christian mission was good, some of the schemes devised to achieve that were more ambiguous. It is sadly all too possible to create strategies that owe more to modern marketing techniques than to the incarnational imperatives of the gospel. It is possible to use analysis and data helpfully, but it is also possible to deduce formulae for mission that reduce mission to something akin to mathematics, and which leave out the sovereign Spirit of God – that life-creating Person who cannot be controlled by human logic.

At Manila, it was clear that some parts of the evangelical constituency still believed that engagement in social action was a distraction from the central calling of evangelism and church growth. The Lausanne's Strategy Working Group often fostered this view, while the Theology Working Group developed the integral mission encapsulated in both the *Lausanne Covenant* and the *Manila Manifesto*. This undoubtedly led to robust disagreements, and some initiatives that seemed to pit evangelism against integral mission once again. Yet, ironically, it was in Latin America and Africa that church growth was strongest at this time – and on both continents, commitment to integral mission is profound (though not always with the blessing of more fundamentalist western missionaries), and is indeed the reason why that growth has been so marked. By contrast, those who wished to take a much narrower view of evangelism tended to come from those areas of the world where church growth had either stalled (North America) or gone into deep reverse (Europe). There were, of course, exceptions.

### Into the 21st Century

The Lausanne Movement's third Congress took place in Cape Town, South Africa, in 2010, marking the centenary of the Edinburgh 1910 world mission conference. The shape of the world church, and indeed of the world within which it lived, had changed beyond recognition in those hundred years. Edinburgh 1910 adopted the Student Volunteer Movement slogan, 'The evangelization of the world in this generation', but for a variety of reasons this did not happen. Perhaps it never can, at least fully. However, under the theme for Cape Town, *God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself*, those gathered undoubtedly longed to see the whole world of the 21st century given the opportunity to be embodied and to hear the gospel. Further, it was clear that 'the world' encompassed not only humanity but also the whole created universe. Christ's lordship over it all must be both proclaimed and demonstrated.

The tension between proclamation only and integral mission proved to be still alive and kicking. Brazilian Valdir Steuernagel commented:

This could sound like an old story, and it is, but not without reverberations in the present chapter of Lausanne, as seen in the biblical expositions on Ephesians... There the Latin American voice coming through Ruth Padilla DeBorst's exposition affirmed the holistic dimension of the Gospel, while the North American John Piper, in his exposition, made an effort to affirm the priority of evangelism as it refers to eternal salvation, vis-à-vis our engagement in more historic dimensions of life. The old difficulties were on stage again, calling back the divisions within the evangelical family while at the same time inviting a historic Lausanne position: to embrace the whole spectrum of the evangelical family while affirming the holistic dimension of mission as expressed in the *Lausanne Covenant*.<sup>8</sup>

The programme of the Congress included 21 large seminars and numerous smaller ones relating to the six plenary themes, covering a vast array of topics which illustrated Lausanne's commitment to integral mission, and the keeping together of evangelism and social action, proclamation and *diakonia*. *The Cape Town Commitment (CTC)*,<sup>9</sup> under the gifted leadership of Chris Wright, captures this in both parts, *Part I: For the Lord we love: The Cape Town Confession of Faith*, and *Part II: For the world we serve: The Cape Town Call to Action*. The themes were identified through extensive international consultation, and clearly reflected the global evangelical community's concern for holistic engagement with the world around them.

So the *CTC* includes passages such as these:

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<sup>8</sup> Valdir Steuernagel, 'A Latin-American Evangelical Perspective on the Cape Town Congress', in Margunn Serigstad Dahle, Lars Dahle and Knud Jørgensen (eds), *The Lausanne Movement: A range of perspectives* (Oxford: Regnum, 2014), 313.

<sup>9</sup> *CTC* is freely downloadable, in a number of different languages: [www.lausanne.org](http://www.lausanne.org)

‘Our love for the whole gospel, as God’s glorious good news in Christ, for every dimension of his creation, for it has all been ravaged by sin and evil...’

‘Integral mission is the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other. Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. If we ignore the world, we betray the Word of God which sends us out to serve the world. If we ignore the Word of God, we have nothing to bring to the world’ (quoted from The Micah Declaration).

‘We must *live* the truth... We must *proclaim* the truth...’

‘Our calling is to live and serve among people of other faiths in a way that is so saturated with the fragrance of God’s grace that they smell Christ, that they come to taste and see that God is good. By such embodied love, we are to make the gospel attractive in every cultural and religious setting.’

‘Let us renew our commitment to go to those who have not yet heard the gospel, to engage deeply with their language and culture, to live the gospel among them with incarnational love and sacrificial service, to communicate the light and truth of the Lord Jesus Christ in word and deed, awakening them through the Holy Spirit’s power to the surprising grace of God.’

‘Let us keep evangelism at the centre of the fully-integrated scope of all our mission, inasmuch as the gospel itself is the source, content and authority of all biblically valid mission. All we do should be both an embodiment and a declaration of the love and grace of God and his saving work through Jesus Christ.’

The CTC shows us that evangelism and *diakonia* are inextricably linked, in integral mission, and that is the testimony of both Scripture and praxis.

## Conclusion

Do all evangelicals agree on the exact relationship between evangelism and *diakonia*? No! Perhaps we all need to hear and respect the single-minded passion to reach the lost of those for whom integral mission is a distraction. The world does most urgently need to hear the love and claims of Christ. Nonetheless, both the history and documents of the two global networks, the World Evangelical Alliance and the Lausanne Movement, tell us that, for the majority of evangelicals, past and present, proclamation and service, belong firmly together – and that will remain our calling till Christ returns.

# A CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE ON EVANGELISM AND DIAKONIA

Clemens Sedmak

‘There is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves,’ we read in Matthew 14:16. This is a key passage for understanding the connection between evangelism and *diakonia*, between preaching the good news and doing the good works, between serving the word of God and serving our disadvantaged sisters and brothers. ‘There is no need for them to go away’: they do not have to look for bread outside the context of evangelization; they do not have to leave the gospel to be fed. ‘Give them some food yourselves’: Jesus exhorts the disciples to feed the people after he had offered them his word and healing. They have to assume a challenging responsibility but – as we know from the further unfolding of the passage – they can shoulder this responsibility (i) by identifying and using local resources (five loaves, two fish), (ii) by creating order (‘tell the crowds to sit down on the grass’), (iii) by offering the available resources to God in a grateful way, and (iv) by making people enter a spirit of sharing (‘he broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds’). Against this background, the words about ‘bread of life’ (John 6:35: ‘I am the bread of life’ – see also John 6:48 and 6:51) take on a deeper, more incarnated meaning.

I would like to show that this unity of ‘giving the bread of life’ as bread for body and soul is at the heart of Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. I will proceed in three stages: first, I will make a few remarks about the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* by Pope Paul VI, a document quoted seven times in *Evangelii Gaudium*; secondly, in the main part, I will present key ideas on evangelization in *Evangelii Gaudium*; and thirdly, I will offer some final reflections on the topic.

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## I

Pope Paul VI published his apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN) in 1975; it was issued on the tenth anniversary of the closing of Vatican II. It is a pontifical endorsement of major statements of the 1974 Synod of Bishops on ‘Evangelization of the Modern World’ which proposed that evangelization is committed to social justice and called to be responsive to the concerns of our time (including social, political and economic concerns). The document has been called ‘Paul VI’s “Pastoral Testament”’

to the church, as a ‘summary and synthesis’ of his entire pontificate.<sup>1</sup> One of the key concerns of the influential document is the fact that ‘*Evangelii Nuntiandi* links evangelization to the struggle for a just society and presents a papal theology of Christian liberation’.<sup>2</sup> The document reconstructs salvation as ‘this great gift of God which is liberation from everything that oppresses man’ (EN 9). We read in paragraph 29 that evangelization is incomplete if it does not take into account ‘the unceasing interplay of the Gospel and of man’s concrete life, both personal and social’. Paragraph 30 reconstructs affirmatively the Bishops’ synodal position and claims that the church ‘has the duty to proclaim the liberation of millions of human beings, many of whom are her own children – the duty of assisting the birth of this liberation, of giving witness to it, of ensuring that it is complete. This is not foreign to evangelization’ (EN 30). And paragraph 31 is clear on a key point on the relationship between mission and development: between evangelization and *diakonia* there is no contradiction, ‘between evangelization and human advancement – development and liberation – there are in fact profound links’ (EN 31). This statement can be seen as a consistent continuation of Paul VI’s teachings on development, as developed in his 1967 encyclical *Populorum Progressio* where he developed a concept of development as the integral development of the human person.<sup>3</sup> Development has to consider the inner dimension of a person, and this inner state of a person includes the moral and the spiritual dimension. There are bridges between development and the gospel from the end of the hermeneutics of development, and there are bridges between evangelization and development from the end of the kerygmatic dimension of the church: since evangelization is about transformation and renewing the face of the earth, a deep and deeply rooted transformation has to affect all dimensions of human life. The good news has to be brought ‘into all the strata of humanity’ (EN 18). This also means a commitment to inculturation.<sup>4</sup> And it means an understanding of *metanoia*, of ‘a total interior renewal’ (EN 10).<sup>5</sup> The document makes it clear that the church’s

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted after Stephen Bevans, ‘Witness to the Gospel in Modern Australia: Celebrating Thirty Years of *Evangelii Nuntiandi*’, in *Australian eJournal of Theology*, 6 (February 2006), 1-22, at 1.

<sup>2</sup> Richey Hogg, ‘Vatican II’s *Ad Gentes*: A Twenty-Year Retrospective’, in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 9, 4 (1985), 146-53, at 149.

<sup>3</sup> *Populorum Progressio*, 6, 14; cf. Thomas W. Jodziewicz, ‘Reflections on *Evangelii Nuntiandi*’, in *The Way*, 53/2 (April 2014), 81-93, at 90-91.

<sup>4</sup> John Romus, ‘Evangelization on the Contemporary Roman Catholic Thought’, in *International Journal Indian Journal of Theology*, 43/1 & 2 (2001), 8-22,

<sup>5</sup> EN 19 connects renewal and an experience of disruption in the sense of a true *metanoia*: ‘Strata of humanity which are transformed: for the church it is a question not only of preaching the Gospel in ever-wider geographic areas or to ever-greater numbers of people, but also of affecting and as it were upsetting, through the power of the Gospel, mankind’s criteria of judgement, determining values, points of

mission is not restricted to the religious field and is not dissociated from temporal problems – however, there is ‘the primacy of her spiritual vocation’ (EN 34). Without conversion of the heart, there cannot be humane structures and humane structural reforms in the long run (EN 36). We could read this as a statement about the roots of the diaconal dimension of the church; this dimension is founded on the encounter with Christ. Early Christian writers have made it clear that the ‘revolution in the social imagination’ because of Christianity is based on Matthew 25.<sup>6</sup>

*Evangelii Nuntiandi* underlines the preferential concern for the most disadvantaged members of society by reminding the readers of Jesus’ ministry as preaching to the poorest (EN 6). The primary way of communicating the gospel is through witness (EN 21). You have to live what you preach (EN 76). How can you say that you preach the good news to the poor if you do not turn to the poor and be with them? Witness is based on a particular way of life which gives us yet another link between a commitment to understanding material needs and an understanding of spiritual needs. ‘Evangelization must touch life’ (EN 47). It has to ‘take into consideration the actual people to whom it is addressed’ (EN 63). Evangelization happens in a diaconal way in the sense of a turn to the other since ‘the person who has been evangelized goes on to evangelize others. Here lies the test of truth, the touchstone of evangelization: it is unthinkable that a person should accept the Word and give himself to the kingdom without becoming a person who bears witness to it and proclaims it in his turn’ (EN 24).

## II

We proclaim the good news based on the joy of the gospel – ‘*Evangelii Gaudium*’ is the basis even though the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* preceded the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. The apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* is not the ‘Testament’ but rather the ‘programmatically declaration’ of a pontificate. Pope Francis had mentioned some key concerns in his pre-conclave speech: Cardinal Bergoglio, now Pope Francis, had mentioned four main concerns in this four-minute speech that impressed the Cardinals profoundly: the church needs to come out of herself and go to the peripheries; a self-referential church falls sick; she then gives way to the serious evil of spiritual worldliness; the next Pope must help the church to go out, to gain life from the joy of evangelizing.

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interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life, which are in contrast with the Word of God and the plan of salvation.’

<sup>6</sup> Peter Brown, *Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2002), 1.

*Evangelii Gaudium* develops these concerns more fully. The document is an Apostolic Exhortation that intends to encourage the addressees to live in a particular manner. An ‘exhortation’ is an exercise in *paraklesis*, a summons for help, an encouragement, an admonition. An exhortation is an act that intends to bridge the gap between thinking and doing, between principles and application, between epistemic universe and pragmatic horizon. An exhortation entails both a message about the direction and a message about the motivation to move in this direction. It confirms ‘courage’, the virtue of holding onto the good in spite of challenges, difficulties and adversities.<sup>7</sup> It can be read as an exhortation to mission based on the experience of the joy of the gospel.

### *Evangelii Gaudium: A missionary document*

The key concept in *Evangelii Gaudium* is the notion of joy: joy is an antidote to cynicism. The first disciples, ‘immediately after encountering the gaze of Jesus, went forth to proclaim him joyfully: “We have found the Messiah!” (John 1:41)’ (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 120). This discovery is the beginning of a journey; transformation is the ongoing process of being transformed (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 160). It is a transformation based on the joy of a person who has encountered Christ. *Evangelii Gaudium* is a reminder of the original experience of joy in Christ, it talks about the joy that ‘fills the heart’, thus overcoming ‘inner emptiness’ (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 1); it is not platonic ‘awe’ or Cartesian ‘doubt’, but the Joy of the Gospel that constitutes the basis of being disciples of Jesus Christ. This is significant. Doubt and awe lead to asking questions, motivate an attitude of exploration and curiosity, a sense of not being epistemically content with the current order. But what about joy? Joy is a strong affirmation of (some aspect of) reality with at the same time the energy to transform reality; the joy of the Gospel as the joy about being created and being saved is the source of motivation to transform the world.

Joy leads to a ‘More’ of energy and vitality. Joy is an overflowing, co-operative good, a good that people wish to share (cf. EG 15), it is a ‘missionary joy’ (EG 21, 271) and a good that is multiplied and increased through sharing. It offers, we could say, a sense of a ‘More’ of life; the joy of the Gospel is energizing, it gives strength to embrace sacrifices joyfully (EG 76). Because of the missionary nature of this fundamental joy, Pope Francis’ text is a missiologically relevant document; in Section 27 on his vision of ecclesial renewal, he shares a vision: ‘I dream of a ‘missionary option’, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures, can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation’ (EG 27). Pope

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<sup>7</sup> Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 123, 2.

Francis clearly resists any ‘attempts to construct a church that ‘opts for rigidity’<sup>8</sup> or ‘closes itself off’: ‘I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and which then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures’ (EG 49). Here we have an understanding of ‘church’ that is not primarily concerned with self-preservation, i.e. maintaining its own status or the administration of propositions of doctrine. It is a church that goes out to the peripheries, that overcomes the temptation to be closed in on itself. Pope Francis exhorts the church to become missionary by turning to the other.

The task of evangelization ‘implies and demands the integral promotion of each human being’ (EG 182), the desire to change the world; to ‘leave this earth somehow better than we found it’ (EG 183) is part of this deep experience. In this spirit, Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si* (LS), had asked the question: ‘What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?’ (LS 160; cf. LS 179, 183). This is a deep question that makes people think about the good life and about ways of looking at life as a whole. It is a deep question that invites us to think about our concern for the weakest members of society.

#### *A vision of a church of the poor*

This ‘turn to the other’ has been most explicitly expressed in Pope Francis’ vision of a ‘Church of the Poor’. This motif gives us the vision of a connection between evangelizing and *kenosis*. The concept of a ‘Church of the Poor’ has been a defining feature in Pope Francis’ pontificate from the very beginning. Pope Francis has expressed his vision for a ‘poor church’ and a ‘Church of the Poor’ on a number of occasions. In his first encounter with newspaper journalists and TV reporters on 16th March 2013, he underlined his deep desire to construct a ‘poor church’ as envisaged by Francis of Assisi: ‘How I would like a church which is poor and for the poor!’ In his interview with Antonio Spadaro, Francis talked about the central importance of discernment with special consideration of the poor: ‘Discernment is always done in the presence of the Lord, looking at the

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. para 45: ‘We see then that the task of evangelization operates within the limits of language and of circumstances. It constantly seeks to communicate more effectively the truth of the Gospel in a specific context, without renouncing the truth, the goodness and the light which it can bring whenever perfection is not possible. A missionary heart is aware of these limits and makes itself ‘weak with the weak... everything for everyone’ (1 Cor. 9:22). ‘It never closes itself off, never retreats into its own security, never opts for rigidity and defensiveness. It realizes that it has to grow in its own understanding of the Gospel and in discerning the paths of the Spirit, and so it always does what good it can, even if in the process its shoes get soiled by the mud of the street’.

signs, listening to the things that happen, the feeling of the people, especially the poor.<sup>9</sup>

Francis emphasized this idea of a poor church on 4th October 2013 in the deeply symbolic *Sala della Spoliazione* (Room of Renunciation) of the Archbishop's Residence, Assisi. He focuses on the image and, indeed, concept of divesting self of material goods, renunciation, and following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ; in other words, casting off the trappings of this world – the spirit of worldliness. He has mentioned this spirit of worldliness in his pre-conclave speech citing Henri de Lubac. Lubac had written in his *Méditation sur L'Eglise* ('The Splendour of the Church') of 'the greatest temptation to the Church' ('the most subversive, the ever-recurrent, reappearing insidiously when all the rest are overcome') – namely the temptation of a *worldliness of the mind* which Henri de Lubac takes to be 'the practical relinquishing of other-worldliness, so that moral and even spiritual standards should be based, not on the glory of the Lord, but on what is the profit of man'.<sup>10</sup> Hence, worldliness of the mind means an anthropocentric orientation that would be disastrous if it were to invade the church. Nobody is 'wholly immune from this sort of evil'. Even humanism can be a form of worldliness of the mind.

Pope Francis links this theological concept of spiritual worldliness with the motif of a fundamental, an existential decision. It is the basic choice between an anthropocentric and a theocentric church. The Gospel teaches us that we cannot serve two masters at the same time (Matt. 6, 24). A Church of the Poor is an emptied one, maybe even an empty one. It is in an empty church that the Spirit can dwell, it is with empty hands that human beings can receive the grace of God. A theocentric church, then, is a kenotic church, a church that is stripped of a spirit of power and wealth. It is a poor church and a Church of the Poor. This church does not allow for a split between witnessing the gospel and concern for the other, especially the poor.

*Evangelii Gaudium* develops a clear vision of a Church of the Poor;<sup>11</sup> here Pope Francis underlines the 'special place of the poor in God's people', and in paragraph 198 reminds us of the testimony of Christ who lived his life among the poor, a sign that they would always have a special place in God's heart: 'This is why I want a Church which is poor and for

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<sup>9</sup> Pope Francis and Antonio Spadaro, 'The Heart of a Jesuit Pope: Interview with Pope Francis', in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 102, 407 (2013), 255-78, at 258-59.

<sup>10</sup> Henri de Lubac, *The Splendour of the Church*, trans. Michael Mason (Glen Rock, NJ: Paulist Press 1963), 234.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Stephen B. Bevans, 'The Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World', in *International Review of Mission*, 103, 2 (2014), 297-308, at 305-06; see also Ursula Notelle-Wildfeuer, 'Eine Frage der Authentizität. Arme Kirche – Kirche der Armen', in *Stimmen der Zeit*, 232 (2014), 579-90.

the poor. They have much to teach us. Not only do they share in the *sensus fidei*, but in their difficulties they know the suffering of Christ.’ As agents of *sensus fidelium*, the poor are the subjects of the evangelizing spirit in their bringing us all nearer to Christ in a way only they can do. They are teachers and evangelizers. ‘We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them.’

The poor are not to be seen as recipients of charitable acts, but agents and teachers. It is in this encounter that a poor church has a duty to invite those people outlined in Matthew 25, who recognise Christ in their own singular way and who need to be given space and the possibility of receiving the Gospel God has sent them. Poor people as those depending on God without the illusion of self-sufficiency have, generally, ‘a special openness to the faith; they need God’ (EG 200). If a church fails not only to see and feel the suffering of the poor who have to fight to physically survive, and if the poor also have to suffer the discrimination of not being given the spiritual care they need (EG 200), may this not also demand a switch from perfectly polished ‘prepared’ phrases to a rougher and less polished approach and mode of expression? The poor can teach the church because of their deep sense of vulnerability. A person who suffers, a person with wounds, has insights to offer.

### *Vulnerability and mission*

Let me offer an illustration: British philosopher Havi Carel was diagnosed with a rare form of lung cancer; she reflects on her situation of vulnerability and woundedness as a philosopher as well as a patient. She now sees the possibilities of comprehending for patients in a newer light than before she was told she too was a ‘patient’ who was ‘terminally ill’.<sup>12</sup> Just as disease changes epistemic status, so too does poverty. Overnight, things – like disease – sometimes take on new meaning or lose their significance completely in the new spectrum of things; questions suddenly rear their ugly heads about which neighbours have no idea or experience: if you do not live in poverty, you cannot even begin to guess what it must be like. Linda Tirado who experienced a life in poverty in the United States, is very clear about the epistemic deficits of those outside the peripheries: ‘We, all of us who spend our lives worrying about making rent and buying our kids new crayons when the old ones have been crushed into wax dust, need better representation... The truth is, there isn’t a millionaire in the world who could craft a coherent welfare policy. Programs that require you to quit your job to attend job training courses to get benefits, because nobody remembered to write in an exception, or misunderstandings about the differences in generational vs. situational poverty – those exist because the wealthy tried to imagine what poverty must be like. And they guessed

<sup>12</sup> Havi Carel, *Illness: The Cry of the Flesh* (Durham, NC: Acumen, 2013).

wrong.<sup>13</sup> Living in poverty gives a person knowledge that a privileged life will not give access to. The experience of poverty will give access to a particular reading of the gospels as well as access to deep insights into vulnerability and dependence. And deep insights into vulnerability can provide deep insights into the relationship between God and human beings.

Evangelization has to respond to these wounds; *Evangelii Gaudium* emphasises that the mission of teaching is therapeutic since the message preached is a reminder that the church is like a mother who wants the best for her children in all she does and says: ‘... knowing that the child trusts that what she is teaching is for his or her benefit, for children know that they are loved’ (EG 139). This notion of mission suggests more than conveying a message; it calls for human closeness, sharing and human care. ‘We need to remember that all religious teaching ultimately has to be reflected in the teacher’s way of life, which awakens the assent of the heart by its nearness, love and witness’ (EG 42). If we want to proclaim the good news, we need a conversion based on a deep sense of vulnerability and filled with deep joy. This conversion has to be deep.

A change in behaviour must be based on a change of heart.<sup>14</sup> And a ‘change of heart’ (‘heart’ to be taken as the core of the person or the person in every dimension) is what we call ‘conversion’. Efforts for the planet may not find a deep enough motivation without a deep conversion: ‘The ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion’ (LS 217).<sup>15</sup> Without this deep conversion, efforts may not have the patience, passion and persistence to bring about real and sustainable change (and change towards sustainability). It will not do to find technological solutions without moral change; it will not do to reduce the burdens of the planet with the intention of enabling us to continue with our way of life; it will not do to introduce some external changes without spiritual transformation.

This insight is well in line with the deep commitments of the Christian Social Tradition – no proper development without moral development, no sustainable social change without a change of heart.<sup>16</sup> And on the basis of this change of heart, people ‘go out’; they go out to the peripheries to proclaim the gospel. A missionary heart ‘never closes itself off, never retreats into its own security, never opts for rigidity and defensiveness’ (EG 45). A missionary spirit is a spirit of openness, openness towards surprises.

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<sup>13</sup> Linda Tirado, ‘What a Real Anti-Poverty Movement Looks Like’ – posted 28th May 2015 at: talkpoverty.org (<http://talkpoverty.org/2015/05/28/anti-poverty-movement>).

<sup>14</sup> ‘The world will never be the dwelling place of peace, till peace has found a home in the heart of each and every man’ (*Pacem in Terris*, 165); see also *Caritas in Veritate*, 9 and 16.

<sup>15</sup> The concern with too shallow an engagement with these issues has already been expressed in Arne Naess’ concept of ‘deep ecology’: Arne Naess, ‘The shallow and the deep, long-range ecology movement’, in *Inquiry*, 16, 1-4 (1973), 95-100.

<sup>16</sup> *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 29, 38.

‘Let us not stifle or presume to control this missionary power!’ (EG 124); an authentic faith ‘is never comfortable or completely personal – it always involves a deep desire to change the world’ (EG 183); there is a social dimension of orthodoxy, a deep sense of having to engage with the world. We are committed to building a new world ‘not as a burdensome duty, but as the result of a personal decision which brings us joy and gives meaning to our lives’ (EG 269).<sup>17</sup>

### III

*Diakonia* means a turn to the other – this is precisely what mission is all about; a missionary conversion is a turn to the other. Conversion (*metanoia*) is a response to the invitation to think beyond the *nous*, to think beyond the established ways of thinking; conversion is an expression of the experience of transfiguration; conversion is the ongoing process of dedicating oneself to reality even if it is costly. Conversion is a process with identifiable events, but still a process; it leads to a fundamental decision which is translated into habits.

*Diakonia* responds to poverty – poverty is primarily a deprivation of identity resources; the experience of the difficulty to find a rightful place, materially, socially, culturally. ‘Good news for the poor’ is the news (i) that God became poor himself, forgoing divine privileges to share the human condition; (ii) that Jesus, human and divine, proclaimed the news of the Kingdom with its different order, an order not based on power and privilege, but on childlike trust and the experience of being a child of God; (iii) that this invitation to enter and build the Kingdom was especially preached to the poor; (iv) that everybody has a responsibility for the disadvantaged and those without privileges.

*Evangelii Gaudium* is a strong reminder of this connection between ‘turning to God’ and ‘turning to the other’ – no conversion without a turning to the other; ‘for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen’ (1 John 4:20).

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<sup>17</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium* has clearly a social dimension and a commitment to the poor – cf. Ginés García Beltrán, ‘La dimensión social de la evangelización en la Exhortación Apostólica *Evangelii Gaudium*’, in *Scripta Theologica*, 46 (2014), 461-80; Joseph Loic Mben, ‘The concept of “poor” in *Evangelii gaudium*’, in *Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft*, 98, 1 (2014), 133-38.

# MISSION AS EVANGELIZATION

Kirsteen Kim<sup>1</sup>

Evangelization is a biblical term. To evangelize means to announce or even bring about ‘good news’. The noun – ‘gospel’ in English and *euangelion* in Greek – is used in the New Testament particularly by Paul and the synoptic writers to refer to the whole message of salvation that was embodied in Jesus Christ. The verb is used most often by Luke, for whom it becomes almost a technical term to describe the chief activity of the apostles that was interchangeable with ‘proclaim’ and ‘teach’. The good news was used to refer to glad tidings about the emperor so it could signal a Christian alternative or opposition to that, but the verb was also used to render the announcement of God’s reign in the Hebrew Bible. The latter connection is especially strong in Isaiah 61:1-2, and Jesus’ rendering of it at the outset of his ministry in his sermon at Nazareth (Luke 4:18). As he expands on the content of the good news as liberation, enlightenment and justice, Jesus’ words cement the connection between the message and the mission.<sup>2</sup>

The New Testament refers to certain individuals as evangelists (Philip – Acts 21:8; Timothy – 2 Tim. 4:5) and ranks the gift after those of apostle and prophet (Eph. 4:11). From the second century, the four Gospel writers became known as ‘evangelists’ and their works as ‘Gospels’, and gradually the separate office of evangelist and ministry of evangelism dropped out of the western tradition.<sup>3</sup> The verb to ‘evangelize’ fell out of use soon after New Testament times. However, since the nineteenth century, the terms ‘evangelization’ and ‘evangelism’ have been revived and used by different traditions in varied ways. These differ in the scope given to the terms and in the ways they are related to ‘mission’. In this chapter, we will analyse some of this variety to clarify some of the points at issue and then argue that ‘evangelization’ is a synonym for ‘mission’ and should be preferred today.

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<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this paper was published in the series of the (Catholic) Institute of Missiology, Aachen: One World Theology, Vol. IX, *Evangelisierung*, December 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Ulrich Becker, ‘Gospel, Evangelize, Evangelist’, in Colin Brown (ed), *New International Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. II (Exeter, UK: Paternoster, 1976), 107-15; Christopher R. Matthews, ‘Gospel’, in Donald E. Gowan (ed), *The Westminster Theological Wordbook of the Bible* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 182-84.

<sup>3</sup> A. Casarella, ‘Gospel’, in Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (eds), *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments* (Leicester, UK: IVP, 1997), 431-33.

### Evangelicals, Evangelization and Evangelism

After the Reformation, Protestants used the term ‘evangelical’ to describe their churches as under gospel authority, but the ‘Evangelical Awakening’ which began in the eighteenth century in the Church of England used the term more narrowly to refer to a particular pietistic expression of faith. This movement spawned ‘Evangelicalism’. One of the main characteristics of this form of Protestantism is activism to bring about the evangelization of whole societies and the whole world. This was the particular vision of the Puritans and it became a major goal of churches as the USA expanded.<sup>4</sup> The appropriate response to the gospel was understood as personal conversion – or being ‘born again’ – from a life of sin, and including belief in the Bible as the only authority for faith and conduct, and a focus on Christ’s death on the cross as of central significance for human salvation.<sup>5</sup>

Being an activist grouping, Evangelicals have tended to focus on the method of evangelizing. From the eighteenth-century revivals onwards, there have been famous ‘evangelists’ who have used the latest forms of persuasion and communication to reach mass audiences with such a message.<sup>6</sup> By the mid-twentieth century, because of the struggle with liberal theology, the evidence of conversion was most commonly the confession of a particular creed or statement of faith as well as a changed moral life. Evangelical leaders expressed their alarm at an apparent lack of concern in the ecumenical movement to preach the distinctive message of the gospel and call for conversion – for example, at the conference on mission and evangelism in Bangkok in 1972-73, when ‘salvation today’ was redefined as consisting of economic justice, human dignity, solidarity and ‘hope in personal life’, without any explicit reference to Jesus Christ or eternal life.<sup>7</sup> At their own conferences, Evangelicals condemned such

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<sup>4</sup> Martin E. Marty, ‘What is Ahead for Evangelism?’, in Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky (eds), *Evangelization, Mission Trends 2* (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), 76-83.

<sup>5</sup> D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 1989), 2-17.

<sup>6</sup> Marty, ‘What is Ahead for Evangelism?’

<sup>7</sup> World Council of Churches, *Bangkok Assembly 1973: Minutes and Report of the Assembly of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches* (Geneva: WCC, 1973), 98. For examples of evangelical reaction, see John R.W. Stott, ‘The Biblical Basis of Evangelism’, in Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky (eds), *Evangelization, Mission Trends 2* (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), 4-23; Harvey T. Hoekstra, *The World Council of Churches and the Demise of Evangelism* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1979). See also David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 382-86; J. Andrew Kirk, *What is Mission? Theological Explorations* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1999), 56-60.

language and some accused the World Council of Churches of ‘betraying’ those who had never heard the message of Jesus Christ.<sup>8</sup>

It was with the aim of ‘world evangelization’ in the sense of spreading an explicitly Christian message that famous US evangelist Billy Graham and the Anglican Evangelical John Stott organised a conference in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1974, which became a landmark in Evangelical understanding of world evangelization.<sup>9</sup> In the post-war period, Graham had pioneered an evangelistic method of mass meetings based on personal invitation to commitment to Christ. Graham gained celebrity profile and an unprecedented global reach.<sup>10</sup> An important background to Graham’s work was the Cold War and the desire to prevent the spread of Communism.<sup>11</sup> In this context, the priority for mission became Christian or church growth, especially numerical growth. Sociological methods were used to discover the most effective ways of bringing this about.<sup>12</sup> Use of ‘evangelism’ rather than ‘evangelization’ further contributed to the impression that this was the ideological alternative or antidote to communism. ‘Evangelism’ in this narrow sense had become almost the whole of the agenda of mission.

Although Billy Graham favoured the focus on evangelism,<sup>13</sup> Stott and others in the Lausanne Movement resisted this development. Stott made a particular contribution in developing the theology of evangelization and

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<sup>8</sup> For example, Billy Graham, ‘Why the Berlin Congress?’, presented at the World Congress on Evangelism, Berlin, 1966: [www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives](http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives); Donald McGavran, ‘Will Uppsala Betray the Two Billion?’, *Church Growth Bulletin*, 4/5 (May 1968), 292-97.

<sup>9</sup> In this brief article, we will focus on the Lausanne Movement as the chief representative of evangelical understanding of evangelism and evangelization. This is not to belittle the contribution of the World Evangelical Alliance and other such bodies.

<sup>10</sup> Brian Stanley, *The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2013), 65-71.

<sup>11</sup> Dianne Kirby and others have drawn attention to the relationship between religion and the Cold War. See for example, Dianne Kirby (ed), *Religion and the Cold War*, 2nd edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). Graham, as the leading US evangelist, was explicit in promoting Christianity in opposition to Communism. The choice, in 1966, of Berlin for the World Congress on Evangelism, the precursor of the Lausanne Congress, was a deliberate statement that world evangelization, and the evangelization of Europe, were the key to overcoming the communist threat. Uta Andrea Balbier, ‘Billy Graham in West Germany: German Protestantism between Americanization and Rechristianization, 1954-70’, in *Zeithistorische Forschungen*, 7/3 (October 2010), 343-63, 357.

<sup>12</sup> The chief theorists of church growth were Donald McGavran and Peter Wagner. See, for example, Donald A. McGavran and C. Peter Wagner, *Understanding Church Growth*, 3rd edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990).

<sup>13</sup> Darrell Jackson, ‘“Love of God, Love of Neighbour”: Is This Really Evangelical Theology?’, in Mark Oxbrow and Tim Grass (eds), *The Mission of God: Studies in Orthodox and Evangelical Mission* (Oxford: Regnum, 2015), 30-50, 37-39.

drafting the *Lausanne Covenant* (LC).<sup>14</sup> Stott found it necessary to remind Evangelicals that, biblically, ‘evangelizing’ simply means to announce the good news. It does not mean to win converts and it does not presuppose a particular method.<sup>15</sup> The Covenant defines evangelism as ‘the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God’ (LC, paragraph 4). It makes clear that evangelism should always be sensitive (LC 4), compassionate (LC 5) and consistent with the message proclaimed (LC 6). Furthermore, the biblical reflections of the congress on evangelization broadened it by including themes such as the kingdom of God, reconciliation, making disciples and service. The most significant development in widening the evangelization agenda came from what was known at the time as the ‘Third World’. Seeing that the Lausanne Congress was largely a North Atlantic initiative, some theologians from outside the West felt strongly that its focus on verbal proclamation and belief in a particular statement of faith represented a particular ‘culture Christianity’ which neglected social justice as an important component of the gospel. This concern was felt particularly among Latin American theologians because of the challenge in that context of liberation theology, which was making a convincing biblical case for a more integral understanding of mission.<sup>16</sup> This influenced Stott and the other drafters of the covenant to include ‘social responsibility’ as part of evangelization. It affirmed that ‘socio-political involvement’ is part of the Christian duty to love one’s neighbour, and that God’s kingdom begins in this world (LC 5).

In the post-war and Cold War periods, the churches were also engaged in reconstruction in Europe and elsewhere and were encouraged to support what President Harry S. Truman described as ‘development’. The Evangelical movement found itself divided over how much to focus on specifically religious concerns, which were attached to ‘evangelism’, and the more general needs of the world or ‘social action’. Church and mission agencies became divided in their specialisms.<sup>17</sup> The second Lausanne congress, which met in Manila in 1989, struggled over the relationship between these before reaffirming that evangelism was ‘primary’ as stated in the *Lausanne Covenant* (6). The rationale behind this included the following reasons: that the conversion of individuals will change behaviour and improve society; the belief that faith in Christ not only helps a person

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<sup>14</sup> See John R.W. Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (London: Falcon, 1975); Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, *The Lausanne Covenant* (1974). All Lausanne documents downloaded from: [www.lausanne.org](http://www.lausanne.org)

<sup>15</sup> Stott, ‘The Biblical Basis of Evangelism’, 10.

<sup>16</sup> Ross Langmead, *The Word Made Flesh* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2004), 94. See, for example, René Padilla, ‘Evangelization and the World’, in Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky (eds), *Evangelization, Mission Trends 2* (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), 46-55.

<sup>17</sup> Stanley, *The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism*, 62-65, 151-55.

temporally but secures an eternal destiny; and that, whereas any human being may engage in social action, evangelism is a uniquely Christian activity.<sup>18</sup> However, the *Manila Manifesto* stressed the partnership of mission and evangelism in the one mission of God and an ‘integral’ understanding of mission which keeps together good words and good deeds.<sup>19</sup> ‘Evangelism’ was seen as a particular, and uniquely Christian, activity within the wider concept of mission or evangelization.<sup>20</sup>

A further tension in the Lausanne Movement is between the more ethically and the more eschatologically driven Evangelicals. The colonial missionary movement tended to understand and prioritise the ‘Great Commission’ of Matthew 28:18-20 as the overriding justification for missions.<sup>21</sup> However, Evangelicalism has always included some pre-millennialists for whom Matthew 24:14 has been used to give urgency to completing world evangelization because it is understood this would hasten the second coming of Christ.<sup>22</sup> In the 1970s, particular attention was given to the ‘all nations’ of Matthew 28:19. Rather than being interpreted as ‘the whole inhabited earth’, it was understood to refer to distinct ‘people groups’ or ethno-linguistic groups, while the aim of ‘missions’ became to evangelise – or at least plant a church among – each of them. This view reached its height in the decade leading up to the millennium in the ‘AD 2000 and Beyond’ movement. It remains a powerful motivator within the movement, and reaching ‘people groups’ has the advantage in a target-driven age of being a measurable goal.<sup>23</sup> In the focus on evangelism, social action may be regarded as a distraction or only a means to an end.

The breadth of evangelization was expressed clearly in the *Lausanne Covenant*: ‘World evangelization requires the whole Church to take the whole gospel to the whole world’ (6), and reaffirmed in the same terms in the 2011 *Cape Town Commitment* (preamble). At Cape Town, evangelism was clearly defined as the more limited activity of proclamation within a broader understanding of the Christian mandate (I 10 B).<sup>24</sup> However, because the tendency to reduce evangelization to evangelism persists

<sup>18</sup> *Evangelism and Social Responsibility*, Lausanne Occasional Paper 21 (1982), 24-25.

<sup>19</sup> Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, *Manila Manifesto* (1989), affirmation 17; para 4; Timothy Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), 221-23.

<sup>20</sup> Tormod Engelsviken, ‘Mission, Evangelism and Evangelization – from the Perspective of the Lausanne Movement’, in *International Review of Mission*, 96/382-83 (July-October 2007), 204-09.

<sup>21</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 347-49.

<sup>22</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 429-30.

<sup>23</sup> For a recent expression of this approach, see Beth Snodderly and A. Scott Moreau (eds), *Evangelical and Frontier Mission: Perspectives on the Global Progress of the Gospel* (Oxford: Regnum, 2011).

<sup>24</sup> Lausanne Movement, *The Cape Town Commitment* (2011).

among Evangelicals, the Commitment much more frequently described the mandate as ‘mission’ rather than ‘evangelization’.<sup>25</sup>

### Protestants, Orthodox, Proselytism and Prophecy

Use of ‘evangelization’ had been revived by late nineteenth-century English-speaking Protestants to refer to Christian mission, particularly through the Student Volunteer Movement from the 1880s.<sup>26</sup> In Edinburgh, Andrew Duff occupied a chair in ‘evangelistic theology’, which Andrew Walls argues had the same scope as ‘missiology’ today.<sup>27</sup> The proceedings of the ‘Conference on Missions’ in Liverpool in 1860<sup>28</sup> – the first of a number of English-medium gatherings of western missionaries – did not use the term but the reports of the Ecumenical Missionary Conference in New York in 1900 referred frequently to the goal of missions as ‘the world’s evangelization’, to the role of ‘evangelists’ (usually local people) and to various forms of ‘evangelistic agency’ or method.<sup>29</sup> The World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910 also used the terminology of ‘evangelization’ but rather less frequently, preferring instead to discuss ‘carrying the gospel to all the non-Christian World’, which included an agenda of societal transformation as well as proclamation.<sup>30</sup>

The World Council of Churches (WCC) traces its history to the Edinburgh 1910 conference, although its continuation committee, the International Missionary Council, was not part of the Council when it was constituted in 1948. The WCC included from the beginning a desk for ‘evangelism’ that understood the term primarily as the part of the ‘home mission’ activity of the churches concerned with presenting the Christian message.<sup>31</sup> In 1961, when the International Missionary Council was merged into the WCC, world mission and evangelism were put together in a new ‘division’ – later ‘commission’ – as part of an agenda to overcome the dichotomy of home and overseas mission and recognise that participation

<sup>25</sup> ‘Evangelization’ occurs only nine times in the *Cape Town Commitment* whereas ‘mission’ is used 154 times.

<sup>26</sup> Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 88.

<sup>27</sup> Andrew Walls, ‘Missiological Education in Historical Perspective’, in J. Dudley Woodberry, Charles Van Engen and Edgar J. Elliston (eds), *Missiological Education for the 21st Century: The Book, the Circles and the Sandals* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 11-17, 12-13.

<sup>28</sup> *Conference on Mission Held in 1860 at Liverpool* (revised; London: James Nisbet, 1860).

<sup>29</sup> *Ecumenical Missionary Conference, New York, 1900*, Vols. I and II (New York: American Tract Society, 1900).

<sup>30</sup> *Report of Commission I* (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910).

<sup>31</sup> Stephen C. Neill, ‘Evangelism and the World Council’, in *Christian Century*, 66/15 (April 1949), 460-62.

in the mission of God (*missio Dei*) is the responsibility of all churches everywhere in their own locality as much as overseas.<sup>32</sup> But between the New Delhi and Canberra (1991) assemblies, although the proclamation and call of the gospel, confession and witness, and the meaning of conversion and salvation were discussed, the word ‘evangelism’ was rarely used in WCC assemblies, which provided a basis for Evangelical accusations that the WCC was not addressing it.<sup>33</sup>

From the beginning, the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), as the successor of the IMC, tended to focus on ‘mission’ rather than ‘evangelism’. It redefined mission in a broad sense as the mission of God or *missio Dei*.<sup>34</sup> *Missio Dei* recognised that mission was not primarily sending overseas, as it had been understood in the colonial period, but the participation by all churches everywhere in God’s saving work in the world.<sup>35</sup> ‘Evangelization’ could also be understood in this new light as broadly equivalent to ‘mission’.<sup>36</sup> In its first statement on mission and evangelism (1982), the WCC preferred to use the verb ‘witness’ rather than ‘evangelize’.<sup>37</sup> This decision was partly due to the influence of the Orthodox churches which joined the WCC from 1961. The Orthodox complained their people had been subjected historically by western missions to an ‘evangelism’ that amounted to ‘proselytism’. As a condition of their joining, the WCC condemned proselytism as a ‘corruption of Christian witness’ in which ‘cajolery, bribery, and undue pressure or intimidation is used – subtly or openly – to bring about seeming conversion’.<sup>38</sup> The WCC use of ‘witness’ made it clear that the active agent in any conversion was Christ, and it implied an activity that was consistent with Jesus’ own ministry. It was understood holistically and, since witness was to Christ and not any particular confession, it could be done ecumenically (‘common witness’).<sup>39</sup> Orthodox continue to challenge other

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, A. Dale Fiers, ‘The Delhi Assembly of the World Council of Churches’, in *Midstream* 1/2 (May 1962), 22-25.

<sup>33</sup> Priscilla Pope-Levison, ‘Evangelism in the WCC’, in James A. Scherer and Stephen B. Bevans (eds), *New Directions in Mission and Evangelization, 2: Theological Foundations* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 126-40.

<sup>34</sup> See John G. Flett, *The Witness of God: The Trinity, Missio Dei, Karl Barth, and the Nature of Christian Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010).

<sup>35</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 398-402.

<sup>36</sup> Philip A. Potter, ‘Evangelization and the Modern World’, in Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky (eds), *Evangelization, Mission Trends 2* (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), 162-75.

<sup>37</sup> World Council of Churches, *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation* (1982). All WCC documents downloaded from: [www.oikoumene.org](http://www.oikoumene.org)

<sup>38</sup> World Council of Churches, ‘Christian Witness, Proselytism and Religious Liberty in the Setting of the World Council of Churches’, in *Ecumenical Review*, 9/1 (October 1956), 48-56.

<sup>39</sup> For example, Joint Theological Commission (of the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC), ‘Common Witness and Proselytism’, in Gerald H. Anderson and

Christians, especially Evangelicals, to distinguish evangelism from proselytism.<sup>40</sup>

There were other reasons for WCC reluctance to address the 'evangelism' part of its mandate. One was that contemporary practice of 'evangelism' looked too much like self-promotion by the church, a commodifying of the gospel for sale in the market-place, or an aggressive targeting of 'non-Christians'. Another was that post-colonial theologians saw evangelizing as damaging to the Christian cause – for example, in Latin America where people had been baptized at the point of a sword or in India where anti-conversion laws had been passed in several states.<sup>41</sup> A third reason was the misuse of evangelism to promote conservative ideology and support right-wing regimes.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, the WCC evangelism desk produced a regular 'Letter on Evangelism' until the 1990s. Under Raymond Fung, the letter dealt mainly with the holistic witness of local congregations and issues of gospel and society or culture.<sup>43</sup> A major contribution of WCC understanding of evangelism during the 1960s and 1970s was to see evangelism as the activity of the prophets and therefore link it to social justice as well as to divine righteousness. This is shown, for example, in one of the rare references to evangelism in the 1982 statement: 'There is no evangelism without solidarity... a proclamation that does not hold forth the promises of the justice of the kingdom to the poor of the earth is a caricature of the gospel' (34).

Only in 2012 did the WCC approve a second policy statement on mission and evangelism, and this included an extended statement on evangelism. The final main section of *Together towards Life* (TTL) focuses specifically on evangelism as bringing 'good news for all'.<sup>44</sup> The document understands that evangelism is a part of the broader mission of the church. 'Evangelism is mission activity which makes explicit and unambiguous the centrality of the incarnation, suffering and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but without setting limits to the saving grace of God. It seeks to share this good news with all who have not yet heard it and invites them to an experience of life in Christ' (TTL, paragraph 80). The document states clearly that 'Evangelism is not proselytism' because 'it is only God's Spirit who creates new life and brings about rebirth' (TTL 82). Rather, 'evangelism is the outflow of hearts that are filled with the love of God for those who do not yet know him' (TTL 81). Evangelism takes place in the context of

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Thomas F. Stransky (eds), *Evangelization, Mission Trends 2* (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), 176-87.

<sup>40</sup> See, for example, Oxbrow and Tim Grass (eds), *The Mission of God*.

<sup>41</sup> For India, see Sebastian C.H. Kim, *In Search of Identity* (New York: OUP, 2002).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Kirk, *What is Mission?*, 57-60.

<sup>43</sup> For example, Raymond Fung, *Evangelistically Yours: Ecumenical Letters on Contemporary Evangelism* (Geneva: WCC, 1992).

<sup>44</sup> World Council of Churches, *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* (2013).

dialogue and ‘with the expectation of meeting God who has preceded us and has been present with people within their own contexts’ (TTL 94). It involves not only announcing good news in Christ but also affirming and discerning the wider presence and activity of the Holy Spirit ‘wherever life in its fullness is affirmed’ (TTL 24). The document continues the WCC stress on evangelism as ‘a prophetic vocation which involves speaking truth to power in hope and in love’ and denouncing the idols of wealth, consumerism and similar life-negating forces (TTL 91).

The WCC statement drew on *Christian Witness in a Multi-religious World* (CWMRW), which was adopted in 2011 jointly by the WCC, the World Evangelical Alliance and the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>45</sup> This document moves beyond the condemnation of proselytism by making positive statements about how Christians can proclaim the word of God ‘according to gospel principles, with full respect and love for all human beings’ (CWMRW, preamble). Because it is ‘communicating the truth in love’ (cf. Eph. 4:15), ‘authentic evangelism’ is both by word and by deed – and ‘love for one another is a demonstration of the gospel we proclaim’ (CWMRW, paragraph 86). Evangelism requires self-emptying (*kenosis*; Phil. 2:7) and vulnerability on the part of the evangelizer, and simultaneously being filled with ‘power from on high’ in order to be a witness to Christ in different contexts today (TTL 62, 92; 2, *passim*). In TTL, and in post-war Ecumenical missiology in general, ‘evangelization’ is not used (except of other bodies). Instead ‘evangelism’ is understood as narrower than ‘mission’ but as a central and integral part of it.<sup>46</sup>

### Catholics, Mission and Evangelization

In the early twentieth century, the Catholic Church was influenced by Protestant usage and used the term ‘evangelization’ particularly to refer to the work of preaching to and teaching people outside Christendom and bringing them into the church.<sup>47</sup> In 1951, Pope Pius XII chose to use

<sup>45</sup> *Christian Witness in a Multi-religious World: Recommendations for Conduct* (2011): [www.oikoumene.org](http://www.oikoumene.org)

<sup>46</sup> For a more extensive discussion of ecumenical missiology, see David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 2nd edition (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 418-30. Note also the use of ‘evangelism’ as the first of the ‘five marks of mission’ in the Anglican Communion. See Andrew F. Walls and Cathy Ross (eds), *Mission in the Twenty-first Century* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2008).

<sup>47</sup> See Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 171-238. *Evangelismo* in Italian and *evangelisme* in French had been used in the sixteenth century to refer to Catholics with Protestant leanings (see William V. Hudon, ‘Religion and Society in Early Modern Italy – Old Questions, New Insights’, in *American Historical Review*, 101/3 (June 1996), 783-802), and also to describe a movement of religious reform calling for greater adherence to the life of Christ in the Spirit of the Gospel associated with Imbart de la Tour in the late nineteenth and

evangelization to stress the importance of preaching the gospel in his encyclical *Evangelii Praecones* on foreign missions.<sup>48</sup> However, especially because these tended to be identified with colonization, the Second Vatican Council, at which the bishops were increasingly from beyond Europe, there was a rethinking of missions. In the conciliar documents, ‘evangelization’ was used in three different senses: as missionary preaching, as the entire ministry of the Word, and as the church’s whole ministry.<sup>49</sup> But, significantly, in the decree of the Second Vatican Council on the missionary activity of the church, *Ad Gentes*, the words ‘mission’ and ‘evangelization’ were used synonymously to refer generally to ‘spreading the good news’ (paragraph 35),<sup>50</sup> and the body responsible for the mission *Ad Gentes*, the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Propaganda Fide), was renamed the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

In 1975, Pope Paul VI, drawing on the third synod of bishops, produced the apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN). At the synod were a much greater proportion of bishops from outside the West than at Vatican II and this probably encouraged the Pope to choose ‘evangelization’ rather than ‘mission’.<sup>51</sup> EN re-grounded mission in the work of Jesus Christ in proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom of God (EN, paragraphs 6-13). This had several important corollaries that in many ways paralleled developments in Ecumenical circles. First, mission as evangelization was no longer limited to the mission *Ad Gentes*. Europe and the West could now be included among the countries in need of an evangelization that embraced ‘all the strata of humanity’ and all cultures everywhere (EN 18-20). Second, evangelization became the work of the whole church – not only professional missionaries – in continuing Christ’s mission (EN 14-16). And third, mission was defined holistically to encompass good news to the poor and oppressed (EN 31-39) as well as proclamation of the gospel message and church planting. Evangelization was related not only to The Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church, *Ad Gentes*, but also to The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et*

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early twentieth centuries (Philip Knights and Andrea Murray, *Evangelisation in England and Wales: A Report to the Catholic Bishops* (London: Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, 2002), 29, n. 29.

<sup>48</sup> All references to Roman Catholic documents are to downloads in English from: [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

<sup>49</sup> Domenico Grasso, ‘Evangelizzazione. Senso di un termine’, in Mariasusai Dhavamony, *Evangelisation*, Documenta Missionalia 9 (Rome: Gregorian University, 1975).

<sup>50</sup> Karl Müller, ‘Missiology: An Introduction’, in Sebastian Karotemprel (ed), *Following Christ in Mission: A Foundational Course in Missiology* (Mumbai, India: Paulines, 1995), 21-36, 29.

<sup>51</sup> He did so in a way that made the two terms interchangeable. Roger P. Schroeder, ‘Catholic Teaching on Mission after Vatican II: 1975-2007’, in Stephen B. Bevans (ed), *A Century of Catholic Mission* (Oxford: Regnum, 2013), 112-20, 113.

*Spes*, and even to the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*.<sup>52</sup> Rather than ‘preaching the Gospel in ever wider geographic areas or to ever greater numbers of people’,<sup>53</sup> Paul VI laid emphasis on depth of evangelization and its transforming effect not only on individuals but also on cultures (EN 20) and societies (EN 23-24).

In his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (RM; 1990), John Paul II returned to ‘mission’ rather than ‘evangelization’. Rather than the ministry of Jesus, John Paul II grounded mission in the sending from heaven of the Son and the Spirit of Christ and on the demands of the kingdom of God which is ready to be fulfilled (RM parts I-III). This was to address a misunderstanding that the latter superseded the former and that in the stress on the multi-faceted nature of evangelization, the traditional mission *Ad Gentes* had been undermined.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, the Pope was wary that theology of inculturation had led to an over-emphasis on the goodness of cultures and religion; that theology of liberation had lost the necessary focus on the importance of the church in mission.<sup>55</sup> In *Redemptoris Missio*, ‘evangelize’ and its compounds are used frequently, and the document is replete with references to preaching the gospel and the transforming power of ‘gospel values’, but it is stressed that this is a ‘missionary evangelization’ (RM, paragraph 2) and an ‘evangelizing mission’ (RM 55) which is primarily about communicating the gospel. Although this was the first missionary encyclical to include inter-religious dialogue, the Pope gave priority to preaching and proclamation (RM 1),<sup>56</sup> and insisted on the continuing importance of the ‘missions’ where the church was not yet established (RM 32). Dialogue is included as a method and one of the ‘paths of mission’ but it is not an end in itself.<sup>57</sup>

While attending the nineteenth general assembly of the Latin American Bishop’s Conference in Haiti in 1983, John Paul II had used the term ‘new evangelization’, which was then current in Latin America where it signalled primarily a departure from the methods of the first evangelization from Europe to more fully embrace the particular challenges and distinctive

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<sup>52</sup> For an example of the breadth of evangelization, see Michael Hayes (ed), *Mission and Evangelization: The Vision of the Cardinals* (London: Burns & Oates, 2004).

<sup>53</sup> Francis I, *Evangelii Gaudium*, para 19.

<sup>54</sup> Frances Anekwe Oborji, *Concepts of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), 7-11.

<sup>55</sup> Roger P. Schroeder, ‘Catholic Teaching After Vatican II’, in Stephen B. Bevans (ed), *A Century of Catholic Mission* (Oxford: Regnum, 2013), 112-20, 115-16. For a broad understanding of evangelization, see Aylward Shorter, *Evangelization and Culture* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994), 26-54.

<sup>56</sup> Jonathan Y. Tan, ‘Mission as Witness and Proclamation’, in Stephen B. Bevans (ed), *A Century of Catholic Mission* (Oxford: Regnum, 2013), 175-82, 179.

<sup>57</sup> In a 1995 text produced by the Congregation for Evangelization for a ‘foundational missiology’, evangelization is also a path of mission: Karotempel, *Following Christ in Mission*.

socio-cultural context.<sup>58</sup> The Pope described it as ‘a commitment... new in its fervor, in its methods, and in its expression’.<sup>59</sup> In *Redemptoris Missio*, John Paul II developed the term to refer to a renewed evangelization or ‘re-evangelization’ (RM 33) of those peoples who have already heard Christ proclaimed (RM 30), and of ‘the non-practising’ (RM 37) in ‘Christian countries’ (RM 83).<sup>60</sup>

Pope Benedict XVI continued John Paul II’s use of ‘new evangelization’ in that he identified the ‘abandonment of the faith’, especially in societies and cultures which had seemed for many centuries to be ‘permeated by the Gospel’, as the primary challenge for evangelization today. On 21st September 2010, he established a new dicastery (department) of the Roman Curia: the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization to foster ‘a renewed missionary impulse’ arising from ‘a profound experience of God’,<sup>61</sup> and ‘to re-present the perennial truth of the Gospel of Christ’ in those regions where the process of secularization had led to ‘an eclipse of the meaning of God’.<sup>62</sup> The new dicastery was mandated to address the problems of secularization in ‘territories of Christian tradition’ but in which the original message had been so forgotten or distorted that they could no longer be described as ‘evangelized’.<sup>63</sup>

The Thirteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops 7th-28th October 2012 was dedicated to ‘trace new methods and means for transmitting the Good News’ today.<sup>64</sup> In preparation for the synod, the *Lineamenta* emphasized the duty to evangelize in obedience to the missionary mandate of Mark 16:15 and Matthew 28:20 (*Lineamenta*, paragraphs 11, 18). The primary model of the evangelist appeared to be the Apostle Paul who preached the Gospel with urgency and whether or not it was requested.<sup>65</sup> The new evangelization was described as the ‘fundamental mission’ of the church (*Lineamenta* 10) born out of personal encounter with Jesus Christ (*Lineamenta* 11), grounded in the Tradition and manifested in the church’s life (*Lineamenta* 12). It depended on faithful proclamation of the Word of God (*Lineamenta* 13), a renewed emphasis on catechesis and the catechumenate (*Lineamenta* 14), the agency of local

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<sup>58</sup> Cf. Leonardo Boff, *Good News to the Poor* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992), xii-xiv.

<sup>59</sup> Quoted in Boff, *Good News to the Poor*, xii. See also Paul Grogan and Kirsteen Kim (eds), *The New Evangelization: Faith, People, Context and Practice* (London: Bloomsbury T. & T. Clark, 2015).

<sup>60</sup> *Redemptoris Missio*: On the Permanent Validity of the Church’s Missionary Mandate (1990).

<sup>61</sup> Benedict, XVI, *Ubicumque et Semper*, Prologue.

<sup>62</sup> Vatican Information Service, ‘Pope Creates a Dicastery for New Evangelization’ (28th June 2010): [www.vis.va](http://www.vis.va)

<sup>63</sup> *Ubicumque et Semper*, para 2.

<sup>64</sup> Synod of Bishops, *Lineamenta* (2nd February 2011), Prologue.

<sup>65</sup> See the texts chosen to head each section of the *Lineamenta*.

churches (*Lineamenta* 15), and the ability of Christians to give an account of their faith (*Lineamenta* 16). However, at the synod, the bishops resisted any limitation of the breadth of evangelization. They also insisted that evangelization was contextual and that what was most needed in the West was not necessarily best for the rest of the world.<sup>66</sup>

The Propositions coming out of the synod<sup>67</sup> set new evangelization in the context of the mission of the church as it originates in the sending activity of the Trinity and by the grace of the Holy Spirit who enables enthusiastic and courageous ‘witness’ (Propositions, paragraph 4). They related evangelization more positively to culture by encouraging inculturation of the faith (Propositions 5) and a more rounded anthropology (Propositions 17). The synod identified the new evangelization as just one form of evangelization, and it insisted that ‘each particular Church must have the freedom to evangelize according to her own traits and traditions’ (Propositions 7). In addition, it strengthened the link of the new evangelization with other challenges such as globalization (Propositions 13), conflict and violence (Propositions 14), the violation of human rights (Propositions 15) and religious freedom (Propositions 16). Most noticeably, the propositions called strongly for serious commitment to life and justice as part of the new evangelization (Propositions 19, 24, 25, 31-32, 56).

The resignation of Pope Benedict left Pope Francis to reflect on the synod in his first year through the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG).<sup>68</sup> Francis treated new evangelization as including ordinary pastoral ministry, as well as re-evangelization and mission *Ad Gentes* (EG, paragraph 15). So he based his exhortation on *Lumen Gentium* and included in discussion of evangelization a number of pastoral issues in the life of the church (EG 17). Francis went back to Paul VI’s gospel foundation for evangelization. He described evangelization as the ‘missionary impulse’ which would focus the church outwardly rather than on its own survival (EG 27). He declared that it was integral to being church: ‘missionary outreach’ to all who do not know Christ, wherever they are, is ‘*paradigmatic for all the Church’s activity*’ and, quoting his fellow Latin American bishops, he called for a general move to a ‘*missionary pastoral ministry*’ (EG 15; italics original). Throughout, Pope Francis emphasized that ‘realities are greater than ideas’ (EG 233) and that evangelization should put the word into practice. He envisaged ‘a Church whose doors are open’ (EG 46), that ‘goes forth with joy’ (EG 24), and that is engaged with

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Oborji, *Concepts of Mission*, 12; Shorter, *Evangelization and Culture*, 82-83.

<sup>67</sup> Synod of Bishops, Final List of Propositions (27th October 2012).

<sup>68</sup> Apostolic Exhortation of Francis on ‘The Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World’, *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013). The exhortation followed the thirteenth assembly of the Synod of Bishops, which had been organised by Benedict XVI in 2012 on ‘The New Evangelization’. See Paul Grogan and Kirsteen Kim (eds), *The New Evangelization: Faith, People, Context and Practice* (London: Bloomsbury T. & T. Clark, 2015).

the world, even if that means it is ‘bruised, hurting and dirty’ (EG 49). While he affirmed preaching and instruction as essential parts of evangelization, in his discernment of the context, he began not with secularization but with economic injustice, oppression and exclusion (EG 52-75). The Pope construed the new evangelization as the renewed sharing of the good news and, as such, the very *raison d’être* of the church that continues the mission of Jesus Christ. He offered an incarnational model of the church’s mission that stresses engagement with those beyond the Christian community, the diversity and interconnectedness of the world church and its dialogical approach to other traditions.

A significant difference between Catholic understanding of evangelization, on the one hand, and conciliar definitions of mission and Evangelical use of evangelization, on the other, is that in the Catholic case, since Pope Paul VII, pastoral ministry, catechesis – or Christian instruction – and education have been included. In other words, the Catholic Church sees the church itself and all her members as in need of ongoing evangelization. The Pope called for the making of missionary disciples from among existing congregations as well as among those who do not yet know Christ. Or, to put it another way, biological as well as conversion growth is emphasized in evangelization.

### Mission as Evangelization

The relationship between evangelization (or evangelism) and mission has been construed in a number of different ways by different church and mission bodies. Sometimes evangelization has been seen to encompass mission (for example, in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*) while in other cases, mission has been regarded as the broader term. However, within part of the heritage of Evangelical, Ecumenical and Catholic world bodies, there is the use of ‘evangelization’ in a way that is synonymous with the current broad meaning of mission. Protestants, including Evangelicals, both look back to the holistic approach in 1910 that was referred to as world evangelization, and in 2013, in *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis revived the use of ‘evangelization’ in a broad sense that covers most of what is discussed under mission in Protestant circles and which includes pastoral work. The publication of *Evangelii Gaudium* presented an opportunity to bring churches and mission bodies together for renewed discussion of mission as evangelization.

As a synonym for ‘mission’, ‘evangelization’ is suggested rather than ‘evangelism’. This is, first, because in its origin and usage (except among some Evangelicals), ‘evangelization’ is a holistic term which does not give undue emphasis to proclamation.<sup>69</sup> Second, ‘evangelization’ connotes an activity or process while ‘evangelism’ smacks of an ideology. *Missio Dei* is

<sup>69</sup> Shorter, *Evangelization and Culture*, 7-8. See also 8-21.

predicated on the Johannine vision of the sending of the son of God (John 3:16; 20:21), but evangelization can claim to be equally biblical, drawing on the synoptic gospels instead. Both are ways of expressing how God's salvation is mediated through Christ and the Spirit but, whereas mission theology starts from above with the sending of Christ, evangelization starts from below by following the example of Jesus Christ and his preaching of the kingdom of God. Another advantage of 'evangelization' is that, in an era when 'mission' is used by all sorts of organizations, businesses and so on, it clearly identifies a Christian agenda since it has 'gospel' (*euangelion*) embedded in it.<sup>70</sup>

This suggestion of a shift from mission to evangelization is timely for another reason. The *missio Dei* paradigm has formed the theological foundation for Ecumenical mission studies since the 1950s and was given its fullest development in David Bosch's work, *Transforming Mission*. However, there is increasing theological and missiological discontent with the 'paradigm' of *missio Dei*. For a start, there was always disagreement about whether God's work in the world might bypass the church.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, much *missio Dei* theology is a form of the social Trinity, a model which has been heavily criticized as ideologically constructed.<sup>72</sup> The *missio Dei* paradigm has encouraged biblical reflection on mission and the conception of the church as missional.<sup>73</sup> But missiologically, it was developed in the 1950s as a way of responding to the limitations on 'horizontal sending' in the Cold War, and in the 1960s to justify mission as a secular development movement.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, *missio Dei* has been appealed to for so many causes as to render Bosch's 'consensus' largely meaningless. The World Council of Churches' statement *Together towards Life* gave *missio Dei* a new lease of life by focusing on the *missio Spiritus* but it does not entirely escape from its theological limitations and susceptibility to ideological interpretations.

'Evangelization', properly understood, encompasses the whole work of bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. In other words, it is a synonym for 'mission'. However, it particularly draws attention – in a way

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<sup>70</sup> I concede that the connection with 'good news' is lost on most English speakers but it is more obvious in some other languages.

<sup>71</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 400-02.

<sup>72</sup> E.g. Kathryn Tanner, 'Trinity', in Peter C. Scott and William T. Cavanaugh (eds), *Political Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 319-32. John Flett's recent corrective of the tendency of *missio Dei* theology to cleave God's being from his act goes a long way to responding to Tanner's criticism by reconnecting the *missio Dei* with the kingdom of God – in other words, with evangelization: Flett, *The Witness of God*, 290-92.

<sup>73</sup> Stanley H. Skreslet, *Comprehending Mission: The Questions, Methods, Themes, Problems, and Prospects of Missiology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012), 31-33.

<sup>74</sup> For an in-depth study of the origins of the *missio Dei* paradigm, see Flett, *The Witness of God*.

that 'mission' alone does not – to the distinctive heart of Christian mission as following in the way of Jesus Christ. His preaching of the good news was transformative both intellectually and holistically, both personally and also of families, communities, societies, and even the whole creation. Mission as evangelization is both a witness, which makes known this person and event, and at the same time a continuation of the work of Christ in the same Holy Spirit.

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# THE LITURGY AFTER THE LITURGY AND MYSTAGOGY: ORTHODOX RESPONSES TO THE COMMON CALL

Grant White

The Edinburgh 2010 Common Call challenges the church to link mission and *diakonia* explicitly, and in new ways.<sup>1</sup> The Common Call also challenges the church to be attentive to power, its structures, and its uses in the church. Within the context of a document that is deeply incarnational, pneumatological and liturgical, these challenges cannot be easily ignored by Orthodox. As with other recent ecumenical documents (the 2013 Faith and Order convergence text *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* comes to mind), the Common Call has incorporated central Orthodox theological emphases. It would seem that, given the extent to which ecumenical statements have recognized and incorporated Orthodox theological stances on foundational theological subjects, it is past time for Orthodox to re-enter ecumenical dialogues and help to build further on what has been achieved. Such a renewed participation in ecumenical dialogue, based on love and truth, would seek to recognize and acknowledge in dialogue partners the practices and beliefs that Orthodox are able not only to recognize, but to embrace and make part of the church's life today.

Such seeking, recognizing, and acknowledging would be rooted in what we Orthodox have stated for decades about tradition. In the context of ecumenical dialogue, and in our theological works in the twentieth century, Orthodox theologians have claimed that tradition is (to use Vladimir Lossky's famous formulation) 'the life of the Holy Spirit in the Church'.<sup>2</sup> As such, it is not bound simply to the forms of its living expression in the Byzantine tradition. However, we have been very good at saying what tradition is; we have not been as good at saying how (particularly given its pneumatological foundations) we can recognize tradition in other Christian communities. In the end, the question of tradition is a question of pneumatology: where do we see and acknowledge that the Holy Spirit is

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank the participants of my Summer 2015 Doctor of Ministry course 'Liturgical Life and Pastoral Ministry' (at St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary) for the conversations, presentations and reflections on liturgy and pastoral ministry that inspired me to see the importance of a renewed mystagogy for the life of the Orthodox Church today.

<sup>2</sup> Vladimir Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974), 152.

working in Christian communities outside the boundaries of the Orthodox Church? This is a central question that awaits a definitive Orthodox response.<sup>3</sup>

In its explicit linking of mission with *diakonia*, the Common Call highlights two dimensions of tradition. Orthodox writers on mission, as well as writers on Orthodox mission from other traditions, have noted that both evangelization and loving one's neighbour through loving service have been and are expressions of the life of the church. Service to others is a basic element of the church's witness to Christ. Along with witness to the transforming work of God in Christ through the Spirit, Orthodox service to others is a basic part of the work of God in redeeming and transforming the entire universe. As Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana notes,

The Orthodox 'witness' starting out in silence, and participating in the pain and suffering of others, advances with joy to the proclamation of the Gospel and to its summit in worship. Her goal remains the creation of Eucharistic communities in new places, where the people will celebrate the mysteries of the Kingdom of God in their own particular cultural environment, and radiate His presence and glory in a specific area. Orthodox witness constitutes a personal *participation in the process of the transformation of the world*, which has already begun 'in Christ' and will be fulfilled at the end of the eschatological age.

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<sup>3</sup> At the time of the writing of this essay (January 2016), it is still unclear whether or not the Great and Holy Council, planned to be held in 2016, would actually take place. In theory, such a council could address this issue in a definitive way. At the same time, the internal divisions and tensions among the local Orthodox churches today, coupled with differing views on the dogmatic authority of such a council, make this prospect unlikely. In the view of the present author, current Orthodox understandings of authority (especially episcopal authority and primacy) make it unlikely that the Orthodox Church will be able to convene a council similar to Vatican II, in which the council was able to take authoritative theological decisions around issues having to do with the church and the modern world. If this view is correct, it may be that local churches will continue to act in relative independence from each other on such matters as mission, coupled with universal adherence to the decisions of the ecumenical councils.

<sup>4</sup> Archbishop Anastasios, 'Dialogues and Mission' (1991), in Archbishop Anastasios, *Mission in Christ's Way* (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press and Geneva: WCC, 2010), 231. Anastasios goes on to say in the same essay that 'Orthodox mission cannot be limited to the offering of education, health care and other means of external development. She is bound to offer to each person, particularly to the poor and the oppressed, the faith that each person has a unique personal worth; that because each person is created in the "image and likeness" of God, he or she is destined for the highest possible achievement: to become "Christ-like", to partake of the divine glory, to attain, by grace, deification (*theosis*). This is the basis for every other expression of human dignity' (Anastasios, *Mission in Christ's Way*, 231-32). In this way, Anastasios roots the loving service of the other in an Orthodox anthropological, soteriological and eschatological perspective.

In addition, some Orthodox mission and aid agencies have explicitly coupled mission and *diakonia*. For example, the mission statement of *Filantropia*, the mission and development agency of the Orthodox Church of Finland, says the following:

The purpose of *Filantropia* is to deepen the work of *diakonia*, missions, and responsibility for our neighbour, in the Orthodox Church of Finland and its members.

*Filantropia*'s work approaches local societies and their members from a comprehensive perspective, in which equal attention is paid to both material and spiritual needs. The goal of our work is to develop the competencies of local communities, both at home and abroad.

*Filantropia* focuses on three sectors of activity, represented by the themes Word (education and schooling), Bread (water, food, and livelihood), and The Least of These (the vulnerable, weak and poor of society).

In all our projects and activities, we pay attention to the following themes [which] unite our entire work: Christian witness and service, human rights and creation.<sup>5</sup>

Other local Orthodox churches, such as those in the United States, support two separate organizations: one explicitly dedicated to mission (e.g. the Orthodox Christian Mission Center), the other explicitly dedicated to aid (e.g. International Orthodox Christian Charities).<sup>6</sup> Both organizations explicitly recognize the connection between Christ's saving action on behalf of the world and the imperative to serve the whole person. In addition, the mission statement of the International Orthodox Christian Charities refers explicitly to Matthew 25, a fundamental text for understanding *diakonia* from an Orthodox perspective: 'For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you welcomed me; I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me... as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me' (Matt. 25:35-36, 40, as quoted in the IOCC mission statement).

### **How to Make the Connection Explicit, How to Critique Power?**

Thus the Common Call emphasizes mission and *diakonia*, both of which Orthodox recognize as central features of the life of the church. However, the Common Call also challenges Orthodox to link mission and *diakonia* explicitly and, as part of that explicit connection, to challenge and critique structures of power and the unjust exercise of power:

Trusting in the Triune God and with a renewed sense of urgency, we are called to incarnate and proclaim the good news of salvation, of forgiveness of

<sup>5</sup> 'Orthodox Church Aid and Missions FILANTROPIA': <http://filantropia.fi/eng> (accessed 9th January 2016).

<sup>6</sup> For further information on these organizations, see: [www.iocc.org](http://www.iocc.org), [www.omcc.org](http://www.omcc.org)

sin, of life in abundance, and of liberation for all poor and oppressed. We are challenged to witness and evangelism in such a way that we are a living demonstration of the love, righteousness and justice that God intends for the whole world.

Disturbed by the asymmetries and imbalances of power that divide and trouble us in church and world, we are called to repentance, to critical reflection on systems of power, and to accountable use of power structures. We are called to find practical ways to live as members of One Body in full awareness that God resists the proud, Christ welcomes and empowers the poor and afflicted, and the power of the Holy Spirit is manifested in our vulnerability.<sup>7</sup>

The remainder of this essay will focus on the question: how might the Orthodox Church make explicit the living relationship between mission and *diakonia*, and how might the Orthodox Church practise ‘repentance... critical reflection on systems of power, and... accountable use of power structures’? Specifically, how might these actions happen at the level of the parish? How might each individual member of the church come to own and give a face to the relationship between mission and loving one’s neighbour? Where in parish life might a critical reflection on systems of power take place?<sup>8</sup>

At their heart, these questions have to do with the renewal of the church, and with the process of reception of ecumenical documents such as the Common Call as part of the process of renewal. Reception implies more than approval of theological texts by a local church. Reception necessitates that the church allows what has been said in such texts to challenge and inform the church’s life. Within the context of the ecumenical movement, the process of reception has come to mean ‘a spiritual process of appropriation and mutual critical testing of the traditions along the lines of “the faith of the church through the ages”’.<sup>9</sup> One can view the process of reception as having to do with tradition itself. The process of reception is one way in which the church, through the Holy Spirit, is constantly renewed in the image of Christ. This renewal has an eschatological dimension, in that God’s transformation of the universe is both a present

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<sup>7</sup> Edinburgh 2010 Conference, ‘Edinburgh 2010: Common Call’: [www.edinburgh2010.org/fileadmin/Edinburgh\\_2010\\_Common\\_Call\\_with\\_explanation.pdf](http://www.edinburgh2010.org/fileadmin/Edinburgh_2010_Common_Call_with_explanation.pdf), sections 1 and 4 (accessed 9th January 2016).

<sup>8</sup> This essay will not treat the question of accountable use of power structures, as it requires a separate discussion of its own. Such a discussion would need to include not only modern analysis of power and its exercise, but also canon law, civil and criminal law, and modern discussions of parish organization, all in a broader liturgical and ascetical context.

<sup>9</sup> Anton Houtepen, ‘Reception’, in Nicholas Lossky, et al (eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* (Geneva: WCC and Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 845. This article (and accompanying bibliography) is a good starting-point for anyone interested in the historical meanings of the concept of reception, and its interpretation and development in the twentieth century.

reality and one that will be fulfilled in the future. The Common Call sets forth a vision of renewal of the church in this way:

Remembering Jesus' way of witness and service, we believe we are called by God to follow this way joyfully, inspired, anointed, sent and empowered by the Holy Spirit, and nurtured by Christian disciplines in community. As we look to Christ's coming in glory and judgment, we experience his presence with us in the Holy Spirit, and we invite all to join with us as we participate in God's transforming and reconciling mission of love to the whole creation.<sup>10</sup>

The theme of the church as an eschatological community marked by both experience of the eschatological fullness of salvation in the present, and a waiting in hope for the fulfilment of God's Reign in the future, was a prominent feature of Orthodox theology in the twentieth century, particularly in the work of Alexander Schmemmann.<sup>11</sup> Schmemmann's emphasis on the Eucharist as the manifestation of the reign of God, experienced as a 'foretaste of the feast to come', was extremely influential on Catholic, Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox theologians who succeeded him, and continues to be influential today.<sup>12</sup>

### **'The Liturgy after the Liturgy': Eucharist, Church, Mission**

As the central act of Orthodox life, the Divine Liturgy is foundational for Orthodox life, experience and theology. As such, it has served as the starting-point for Orthodox reflection on mission and *diakonia* in the twentieth century. Perhaps the most influential of contemporary Orthodox reflections on mission, liturgy and *diakonia* is that of Ion Bria in his 1996 book, *The Liturgy after the Liturgy: Mission and Witness from an Orthodox Perspective*.<sup>13</sup> Bria's 1978 article on the same subject in the *International Review of Mission* defines what 'the liturgy after the Liturgy' means:

There is a double movement in the Liturgy: on the one hand, the assembling of the people of God to perform the memorial of the death and resurrection of

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<sup>10</sup> 'Common Call', section 9 (accessed 9th January 2016).

<sup>11</sup> Although this idea can be found throughout his writings, for a good introduction, see Alexander Schmemmann, *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom*, trans. Paul Kachur (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1988).

<sup>12</sup> The literature here is extensive. For example, see Aidan Kavanagh, *On Liturgical Theology* (1984); David Fagerberg, *Theologia Prima: What is Liturgical Theology?* (2007).

<sup>13</sup> Geneva: WCC, 1996. The idea of 'the liturgy after the Liturgy' was initially formulated by the Greek scholar Anastasios Yannoulatos who, after the fall of the Communist dictatorship in Albania became Archbishop of Tirana. He notes in his 1975 'A Clarification of the Phrase "The Liturgy after the Liturgy"' (the text of which appears in *Mission in Christ's Way*, 94-96) that the idea popularized by Bria had actually been formulated first by him in 1963, and then more fully in 1975 (*Mission in Christ's Way*, 95).

our Lord 'until He comes again'. It also manifests and realizes the process by which 'the *cosmos* is becoming *ecclesia*'. Therefore the preparation for Liturgy takes place not only at the personal spiritual level, but also at the level of human historical and natural realities... On the other hand, renewed by the Holy Communion and the Holy Spirit, the members of the Church are sent to be authentic testimony to Jesus Christ in the world. The mission of the Church rests upon the radiating and transforming power of the Liturgy. It is a stimulus in sending out the people of God to the world to confess the Gospel and to be involved in man's liberation.<sup>14</sup>

Thus the movement of gathering and sending forth, says Bria, embraces both the liturgical *anamnesis*<sup>15</sup> of the Lord's death and resurrection and the witness of Christians sent into the world to 'confess the Gospel and be involved in man's liberation'. In this view, the Divine Liturgy provides the renewal (through the Holy Spirit) of Christians, a renewal which makes it possible for them to participate in God's transformation of the entire world in their daily lives. Bria's article goes on to note that 'the worshipping assembly cannot be a protected place any longer, a refuge for passivity and alienation'.<sup>16</sup> How, Bria asks, does worship 'constitute a permanent missionary impulse and determine the evangelistic witness of every Christian?'. 'The liturgy after the Liturgy', he argues, requires four major emphases: 1. The 're-Christianization of Christians'; 2. Finding space in everyday life where Christians can witness to those who are not Christian; 3. The nourishment of Christian life in its 'public and political realm[s]'; and 4. The creation of a 'true *koinonia* of love and peace', and the creation of community in a society that lacks such community.<sup>17</sup>

Thus the church's work of mission must begin with a kind of re-evangelization of Christians themselves. Bria notes the extent to which it

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<sup>14</sup> Ion Bria, 'The Liturgy after the Liturgy', in *International Review of Mission*, Vol. LXVII, No. 265 (January 1978). This article also appears in the collection edited by Gennadios Limouris, *Orthodox Visions of Ecumenism: Statements, Messages and Reports on the Ecumenical Movement 1902-1992* (Geneva: WCC, 1994), 216-20. The quotation above is taken from Limouris, 217. An abridged version of this article also can be accessed at: [www.iocc.org/orthodoxdiakonia/index.php?id=7](http://www.iocc.org/orthodoxdiakonia/index.php?id=7)

<sup>15</sup> Translated into English as 'memorial' or 'remembrance' in the narratives of the Last Supper in Paul and Luke (1 Cor. 11:24-25, Luke 22:19), the Greek term *anamnesis* embraces the liturgical memorial and actualization of God's mighty acts for the salvation of the world in Christ. The term is rooted in Hebrew concepts of making memorial, sacrifice, acknowledgement and thanksgiving, particularly in connection with the Passover as well as the offering of flour in the Temple. In his article on *anamnesis*, Irenée-Henri Dalmis notes that, although the term comes eventually to denote the remembrance in the Eucharistic *anaphora* of God's salvific acts and their eschatological fulfilment, the Eucharistic memorial itself can be understood as embracing the entire Eucharistic prayer. See I.-H. Dalmis, 'Anamnesis', in Angelo Di Berardino (ed), *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, Vol. I, trans. Adrian Walford (New York: OUP, 1992), 33.

<sup>16</sup> Bria, in Limouris, 218.

<sup>17</sup> Bria, in Limouris, 218-19.

has become possible today for Christians to ‘put off Christ’ whom they have put on in baptism, and still participate in the Christian community ‘sociologically or culturally or ethnically’.<sup>18</sup> This is perhaps the greatest challenge to the existence of a ‘liturgy after the Liturgy’: it is painfully clear just how easy it has become to carry on a nominal membership in the Christian community, especially when one’s ethnic or cultural identity makes such membership a matter of course. When membership in the church comes to be viewed in terms of ethnic or cultural identity, the church’s catholicity becomes a catholicity in name only, and in the worst case, the church comes to embrace heresy (phyletism: limiting membership of the church to those of a particular ethnic, cultural, or national identity).

Bria further notes that ‘the liturgy after the Liturgy’ requires the existence of an authentic Christian community. His prophetic words are worth quoting in full:

Christian community can only proclaim the Gospel – and be heard – if it is a living icon of Christ. The equality of the brothers and freedom in the Spirit, experienced in the Liturgy, should be expressed and continued in economic sharing and liberation in the field of social oppression. Therefore, the installation in history of a visible Christian fellowship which overcomes human barriers against justice, freedom and unity is a part of that liturgy after the Liturgy. The Church has to struggle for the fulfillment of that justice and freedom which was promised by God to all men and has constantly to give account of how the Kingdom of heaven is or is not within it. It has to ask itself if by the conservatism of its worship it may appear to support the violation of human rights inside and outside the Christian community.<sup>19</sup>

Thus Bria recognizes that the kind of Christian community our evangelization invites people to join is of crucial importance. The church must ‘constantly give account of how the Kingdom of heaven is or is not within it’.

The 1977 New Valamo Consultation, held to address issues of ecclesiology and intercommunion that had arisen in the 5th General Assembly of the World Council of Churches held in Nairobi, Kenya, took up the theme of ‘the liturgy after the Liturgy’ in its final report:

The dynamics of the liturgical reality (Eucharistic community)... is rooted in the experience of the Trinitarian life in Christ which continuously saves and illuminates man and history. The members of the Church living, practising and witnessing this Eucharistic experience create a new lifestyle. This lifestyle was realized in the life of the Apostles, martyrs and all the saints who throughout history refused to exchange the ‘heavenly’ for the ‘earthly’. This mortal life is manifested today in the sins of our times, especially in a culture of individualism, rationalism, consumerism, racism, militarism, deprivation and exploitation in all forms. In each culture, the Eucharistic dynamics leads into a ‘liturgy after the liturgy’, i.e. a liturgical use of the

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<sup>18</sup> Bria, in Limouris, 218.

<sup>19</sup> Bria, in Limouris, 219.

material world, a transformation of human association in society into *Koinonia*, of consumerism into an ascetic attitude towards the creation and the restoration of human dignity.<sup>20</sup>

Bria's article, written a year after the Valamo Consultation, echoes the consultation's insistence that the local Christian community as a saving community must authentically 'manifest the Church of God':

In order to be such a saving community the local Church must overcome and transcend the divisions which sin and death create in the world. The local community is a true and authentic manifestation of the Church of God only if it is catholic in its composition and structure. It cannot be based on divisions and discriminations either of a natural kind, such as race, nation, language, age, sex, physical handicap, etc. or of a social type, such as class, profession, etc.<sup>21</sup>

At the same time, the Valamo Consultation emphasizes the goodness of the material world, the transformation of societal relations into *koinonia*, and embracing an ascetic attitude towards the world as a means of transforming the consumerism that was rampant even then. The inclusion of the ascetic tradition is significant here, for it illustrates the way in which elements of Christian life particularly stressed in Orthodox Christianity can be viewed in the light of contemporary problems.<sup>22</sup>

### **A Renewed Mystagogy: Teaching in the Church, our Journey to God**

A recurring question in the history of the ecumenical movement has to do with teaching. How does the church teach in such a way that all members of the church learn about and come to own the ideas and practices set forth in ecumenical documents? To put it another way, how do the results of 'upper-level' dialogues and consultations reach the so-called grassroots of the church, in such a way that the roots of the church are nourished? Each Christian community strives to answer these questions in the light of their own social, historical, theological, and liturgical contexts. What could be an Orthodox Christian way of teaching that would allow members of the church to learn about and embrace what the Common Call has to say, particularly with respect to its emphases on mission and *diakonia*, and on the necessity of critiquing power structures and their use in the church?

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<sup>20</sup> World Council of Churches, Orthodox Task Force, 'The Ecumenical Nature of Orthodox Witness': <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/ecumenical-movement-in-the-21st-Tdocuments-december-1999/new-valamo-meeting> (accessed 9th January 2016).

<sup>21</sup> World Council of Churches, Orthodox Task Force, 'The Ecumenical Nature of Orthodox Witness'.

<sup>22</sup> The subject of the definition, place and functions of *askesis* in a modern understanding of Orthodox missions awaits in-depth discussion.

Given the centrality of the Divine Liturgy for Orthodox life, a renewed liturgical mystagogy could provide one way of teaching about mission and *diakonia* today. Broadly defined, mystagogy is the church's reflection on the symbols, gestures, texts, iconography, architecture and music of the Divine Liturgy as signs in which Christ comes to us today, and through participation in which we are united by the Holy Spirit to God, in Christ.<sup>23</sup> Mystagogy is meant to lead the worshipper to God through the visible elements of the Divine Liturgy. Mystagogical literature appears as early as the fourth century, and arose from the insight that the Divine Liturgy was itself a text to be interpreted in the same manner as scripture. Thus both the typological approach of the Antiochian school<sup>24</sup> and the allegorical approach of the Antiochene<sup>25</sup> school were used to interpret the Divine Liturgy. As many commentators have noted, not all the mystagogical literature is of equal value. In his influential book *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, Fr Alexander Schmemmann criticized Orthodox mystagogical literature for fostering an approach to worship that is other-worldly, detached from the created world, and overly focused on the allegorical meaning of each element of the Divine Liturgy to the detriment of its inherent (and foundational) ecclesiological and eschatological dimensions. More recently, Robert Taft has sought to rehabilitate the genre of mystagogy, noting the more foundational (and multivalent) Byzantine concept of symbol underlying the work of the seminal mystagogical author St Symeon of Thessaloniki (d. 1429).<sup>26</sup>

Thus one possible Orthodox response to the Common Call is the creation of a renewed mystagogy which enhances and broadens the church's mystagogical tradition through interpretation of the Divine Liturgy from the perspectives of mission and *diakonia*. This approach has the advantage of drawing on a distinctive element of Orthodox theological expression which can have an immediate impact on the life of individual parishes in the various local Orthodox churches. In addition, this approach reflects the themes of the Common Call, and allows for the church to reflect critically on them in the context of the *anamnesis* of Christ in the

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<sup>23</sup> For two classic studies of the subject, see Enrico Mazza, *Mystagogy: A Theology of Liturgy in the Patristic Age*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Pueblo, 1989); and René Bornert, *Les commentaires byzantins de la Divine Liturgie du VIIe au XVIe siècle*, Archives de l'Orient chrétien, 9 (Paris: Institut français d'Études byzantines, 1968).

<sup>24</sup> See <http://www.svots.edu/content/antiochian-school-biblical-exegesis>

<sup>25</sup> See <http://mb-soft.com/believe/txc/antioche.htm>

<sup>26</sup> See Robert Taft, 'Orthodox Liturgical Theology and Georges Florovsky's Return to the Fathers: Alexander Schmemmann, St Symeon of Thessalonika, or Both?' in *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 53/1-4 (Spring-Winter 2008), 1-29. Taft notes that Schmemmann's own work, particularly the posthumous *The Eucharist: Sacrament of the Kingdom* (1988), is itself a modern example of liturgical mystagogy.

Divine Liturgy. Thus in the Divine Liturgy, through the Holy Spirit, we participate in Christ, whose liturgy (his Incarnation, ministry, suffering, death, Resurrection and Ascension) defeats the powers of the world (in a Pauline sense) and turns on their head all systems of power and of the exercise of power we encounter in the world. In the Divine Liturgy we make remembrance (Greek *anamnesis*) of Christ, the Word of God, who became a servant for the salvation of the world, whose cross has made the wisdom of this world into foolishness (1 Cor. 1:18-31). Space does not allow here for an expanded discussion of the possible components of such a renewed mystagogy, but it is a subject to which the present author hopes to return in a future study.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> For two recent discussions of the subject of a renewed mystagogy of the Byzantine Divine Liturgy, see Steven Hawkes-Teeple, 'Toward a Modern Mystagogy of Eastern Liturgies', in Roberta R. Ervine (ed), *Worship Traditions in Armenia and the Neighboring Christian East*, AVANT 3 (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press and St Nersess Armenian Seminary, 2006), 285-95. For another discussion, from the perspective of the Syriac Orthodox (i.e. the West Syrian) tradition, see Eugene Aydin, 'Rediscovering the Didactic and Missiological Aspects of Liturgy for Today', in Ervine, *Worship Traditions in Armenia and the Neighboring Christian East*, 297-306.

# HOLISTIC MINISTRY OF THE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

Julie C. Ma

## Introduction

Pentecostals have traditionally maintained their unique belief that the empowerment of the Holy Spirit is for the preaching of the gospel. However, in recent decades, they have broadened the concept and scope of mission to include social issues.<sup>1</sup> One immediate challenge, then, is how Pentecostals can continue to maintain their evangelistic commitment and passion, while existing as contributing members of society. This will require a rather substantial shift in their mission thinking and practice. This can be seen in two larger contexts. First, since the Lausanne Congress in 1974, Evangelicals have struggled to maintain the two ‘pillars’ of Christian mission in a healthy tension, between proclamation and social service.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, Pentecostal believers and churches have been trying to respond to challenges brought about by rapid social changes. They are trying hard to minister particularly to the socially marginalized and vulnerable.

One of the immediate goals of today’s Pentecostal mission engagement, especially in the social context of the global South, is achieving a peaceful living environment as God’s missional people to the world. Today, Pentecostal churches and missionaries are involved in a broad spectrum of social work such as HIV/AIDS intervention and care, serving the hungry and destitute, media, education, relief work and others. The rise of such ‘progressive Pentecostals’<sup>3</sup> may have contributed in part to the rise of Pentecostal Christianity in the global South where the church is compelled to engage in the daily struggles of people. This does not diminish, however, the Pentecostals priority in proclaiming the gospel. They somehow find ways to embrace the new, not at the cost of the old. In fact, such social works are a significant means of bringing people to Christ, thus serving both goals.

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This study will introduce and discuss a number of selected social works which Pentecostal churches and missionaries have undertaken in different

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<sup>1</sup> Wonsuk Ma, “‘When the Poor are Fired Up’: The Role of Pneumatology in Pentecostal Charismatic Mission”, in *Transformation*, 24 (January 2007), 29.

<sup>2</sup> See the *Manila Manifesto* of the Lausanne Movement on affirmations of the *Lausanne Covenant*: [www.lausanne.org/manila-1989/manila-manifesto.html](http://www.lausanne.org/manila-1989/manila-manifesto.html) and Rose Dowsett’s article in this volume.

<sup>3</sup> A term adopted by Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2007).

locations, especially in engaging with the marginalized. Three out of five are, or were, led by nationals, and two by missionaries. Two are led by women and three are men. The challenges which each ministry takes up as a mission task are different from one another, but they all aimed at, and resulted in, the transformation of lives and communities.

### The Orphanage Work in Egypt

Lillian Trasher (1887-1961) was an early Pentecostal believer from the United States. She once met Mattie Perry who ran the Faith Orphanage in Marion, North Carolina. Having shared how the orphanage was managed, Perry surprisingly invited her to work in his orphanage, which, according to him, was a faith operation.

As Lillian gained experience working in the orphanage, her trust in God was tested in the supply of daily needs. She entered a Bible school in Cincinnati, Ohio, to prepare herself for ministry.

Lillian had a strong desire for mission, and spent much time in prayer to discern God's guidance. At that time, she was engaged to a young Christian, Tom Jordan. Ten days before their wedding in June 1910, she attended a worship service to hear a missionary from India. In the meeting, the Holy Spirit clearly spoke to her to go into mission. As her fiancée did not share her missionary call, she had to make the excruciating choice to break off her engagement with him.<sup>4</sup> And yet, she did not find any country open to her. Shortly after having a concerted time of prayer, God opened a door to Egypt. Lillian arrived in Egypt on 10th November 1910. After settling in Asyut, she had a desire to start an orphanage, though there was no funding, nor anyone who promised to support her project.

Lillian approached several people for help and the first funds she received was thirty-five cents. It was just enough for one day's food supply for herself. She survived entirely on faith, and she journeyed on a donkey to different areas to visit churches to ask them to help the children. Government officers were astounded that no one tried to hurt her or threaten her life.<sup>5</sup> Miraculous provision was made by a local businessman for her to purchase property for an orphanage.<sup>6</sup> In 1915, an orphanage was started with a few children, and by 1916 the number of fifty children outgrew the facility. An adequate place to house them became an urgent

<sup>4</sup> Kelly Boxer Sagert, *Inspirational Christians: Lillian Trasher Biography*: [www.inspirationalchristians.org/biography/lillian-trasher](http://www.inspirationalchristians.org/biography/lillian-trasher) – 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Since she was a white woman, ill-intended men could easily have attacked her. *Assemblies of God World Missions-Eurasia: Orphanage Celebrates 100 Years*: [http://worldmissions.ag.org/regions/eurasia/\\_.cfm?targetBay=4bab7a5e-cb12-48a0-8788-486b7cfbbf7&Process=DisplayArticle&RSS\\_RSSContentID=18467&RSS\\_OriginatingChannelID=1164&RSS\\_OriginatingRSSFeedID=3689&RSS\\_Source](http://worldmissions.ag.org/regions/eurasia/_.cfm?targetBay=4bab7a5e-cb12-48a0-8788-486b7cfbbf7&Process=DisplayArticle&RSS_RSSContentID=18467&RSS_OriginatingChannelID=1164&RSS_OriginatingRSSFeedID=3689&RSS_Source)

<sup>6</sup> *Assemblies of God World Missions – Eurasia: Orphanage Celebrates 100 Years*.

priority, but she had no funds available. She hatched a plan to make bricks by using the labour of the children.<sup>7</sup>

By 1941, the orphanage had grown in number so that every day 2,700 meals were served and in the 1960s the number of children had increased to 1,500 and she served 4,500 meals each day, on a site that consisted of more than eleven buildings.<sup>8</sup> Lillian provided accommodation even for widows who had lost their husbands and had nowhere to live.

Lillian's essential desire was for a spiritual awakening. She prayed for a long period of time for this to take place among the orphans and widows. In 1927, there was an unusual spiritual occurrence that took place at an evening devotional meeting, when children and widows experienced a moving of the Holy Spirit. She was reading a passage from the Bible and explained its meaning to them when suddenly a number of them began to weep and, kneeling down, they openly repented of their sins to God and asked him for forgiveness. The gathering went on at length into the night.<sup>9</sup>

Lillian devoted most of her adult life, fifty years to be precise, to take care of children and women in Egypt. This missionary, affectionately identified as 'Mama Lillian', or 'Mother of the Nile', went home to be with the Lord on 17th December 1961.<sup>10</sup> The orphanage has provided a comfortable home, hope, Bible teaching and training to more than 25,000 children throughout its one hundred years of operation. Currently, it is one of the biggest and best orphanages in the world.

### **HIV/AIDS Intervention and Care and the 'Lazarus Project Care for Street Children' in Zambia**

Since 1992, Joshua Banda, the senior pastor of Northmead Assembly of God Church in Lusaka, has experienced events that led to a paradigm shift in his mission thinking and practice. As a typical Pentecostal minister, he was awakened to the social responsibility of the church only recently. In his study entitled 'The role of the church in crime prevention',<sup>11</sup> he presented a soul-searching question: 'Is the church actually involved in a crime prevention ministry?' It was evident that this was an unexplored area of mission. With a disturbed heart, he offered prayer to God, asking for his help and new ideas.

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<sup>7</sup> Janet and Geoff Bengé, *Lillian Trasher: The Greatest Wonder in Egypt* (Seattle, WA: YWAM, 2004), 93-94.

<sup>8</sup> Christie Florence, *Called to Egypt* (Wichita Falls, TX: Western Christian Foundation, 1997), 44.

<sup>9</sup> Bengé, *Lillian Trasher*, 138-39.

<sup>10</sup> *Assemblies of God World Missions – Eurasia: Orphanage Celebrates 100 Years.*

<sup>11</sup> Joshua Banda, 'Engaging with the Community: The Fight against AIDS', in Brian Woolnough (ed), *Good News from Africa: Community Transformation through the Church* (Oxford: Regnum, 2013), 41.

From 1992, he has been involved in a holistic ministry providing care for HIV/AIDS patients and their families. He was well aware that the church's response to this pandemic had to be holistic, encompassing spiritual, medical, educational, social and community care. In 1999, he began to care for street children, most of whom were AIDS orphans, and gradually other work followed. As a nation, Zambia's future was threatened by a growing rate of AIDS infections. According to a 2011 UNICEF report, AIDS patients in Zambia consisted of 337,316 adults and 43,625 children.<sup>12</sup> It became an urgent concern for the government and social sectors.

The Circle of Hope was established in September 2005 to provide Christian-based prevention and holistic care for HIV/AIDS patients, including free anti-retro-viral treatment (ART), and their families.<sup>13</sup> Openness to the test is the most difficult and yet most crucial part of HIV/AIDS prevention and care. They also expressed their sincere desire to contact people who were in similar situations. With their consent, the church began a specialised ministry among those who were infected with HIV/AIDS.<sup>14</sup> It was reported:

To date, COH has counselled and tested over 7,429 people, of whom 5,326 are HIV-positive and have been enrolled in care. Of the number that are positive, 2,310 are currently on full ART, of which 516 are children. A group in excess of 200 community adherence personnel, care givers and counsellors have sensitized, educated and monitored clients on treatment in their homes. Approximately 80 people visit the COH Centre per day, while 120 patients are enrolled monthly.<sup>15</sup>

The Health Care Association of Zambia, to which Banda's Northmead Assembly's programme belongs, accounts for over 50% of health care provision in the nation.<sup>16</sup> Christian intervention in AIDS by local congregations has made a substantial impact on society. As a result, Banda was invited to lead the National AIDS Council in 2007.<sup>17</sup>

The Lazarus Project is another social care programme of the church. It provides holistic care to orphans and vulnerable children.<sup>18</sup> As the years went by, the Lazarus Project developed into a community of seventy former street children, providing its own housing with a 40-acre farm. Using a vigorous family search programme, relatives of most of the

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<sup>12</sup> UNICEF, 'HIV & AIDS: Key Statistics': [www.unicef.org/zambia/5109\\_8459.html](http://www.unicef.org/zambia/5109_8459.html)

<sup>13</sup> Banda, 'Engaging with the Community', 48.

<sup>14</sup> Banda, 'Engaging with the Community', 49.

<sup>15</sup> Banda, 'Engaging with the Community', 49.

<sup>16</sup> Banda, 'Engaging with the Community', 42.

<sup>17</sup> Wonsuk Ma, 'A Pentecostal Reflection on Christian Unity in the New Christian Millennium'. Paper presented at Global Forum for the Future of World Christianity, Jeju, Korea, May 2015), 2. See also 'A Changing Africa', Joshua Banda 1/1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3cB63qmoew> – 2012.

<sup>18</sup> Banda, 'Engaging with the Community', 44.

rehabilitated children were traced. While the farm community helps the children to readjust to the social system, approximately fifty children were reunited with their relatives towards the end of 2005. To date, almost 1,000 orphans and vulnerable children have gone through its training, with amazing stories of transformation.<sup>19</sup>

Both programmes have been providing a wide range of care and help to the most vulnerable in society. Through all these programmes, the power of the gospel is central. Banda, his church and various ministries are all inspired and motivated by the gospel mandate. They also regularly share the good news of Jesus with HIV/AIDS patients, their families and the children under their care. In fact, proclamation of the gospel and responding to the immediate needs of the vulnerable have been going hand-in-hand from the very beginning.<sup>20</sup>

### Female Education in Burkina Faso

The rate of female education is among the lowest in Burkina Faso, as in other Sahel area countries. Reports tend to support the view that this situation is also true, especially of some Francophone West African countries.<sup>21</sup> In many countries and throughout many societies, there is an essential cultural prejudice in favour of boys. Girls have only a tiny chance to receive an education, and it consequently limits female involvement in areas of child care, nutrition, physical work, freedom of movement and marriage.<sup>22</sup>

The earliest Assemblies of God missionaries, Harold Jones and his wife came to Burkina Faso in January 1921. They were warmly welcomed by the Mossi king Naaba Koom II, who offered them a property to begin their mission at Gounghin, currently Sector 8 of the capital Ouagadougou. They established educational programmes for literacy, evangelistic work and economic development.<sup>23</sup> Their educational programme was mainly informal to help girls and women to read and write.<sup>24</sup> Later, churches were significantly involved in education.

Sixty years later that church influences 50% of the private Evangelical schools. The 2006 results paper shows that 33 Assemblies of God schools

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<sup>19</sup> Banda, 'Engaging with the Community,' 45. Numerous similar accounts are found in Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007).

<sup>20</sup> Joshua Banda, 'A Request'. Email sent to the author, 9th September 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Philippe Ouedraogo, *Female Education and Mission: A Burkina Faso Experience* (Oxford: Regnum, 2004), 2.

<sup>22</sup> C. Brock and N.K. Cammish, *Factor Affecting Female Participation in Education in Seven Developing Countries*, 2nd edition (London: DFID, 1997), 21.

<sup>23</sup> Ouedraogo, *Female Education and Mission*, 44.

<sup>24</sup> Ouedraogo, *Female Education and Mission*, 44.

represented 77.91% of the national primary schools. The national records in 2006 had 99 private Protestant schools of which 50% are related to the church, individuals or NGOs who opened schools with the Christian ethos. This indicates what an important role the church is playing in formal primary education. The remaining 50% of schools comes from other denominations and church leaders, families and associations.<sup>25</sup>

Philippe Ouedraogo, an Assemblies of God leader, began to be involved in girls' education in 1991 through his congregation. In the same year, the Association Evangélique d'Appui au Développement (AEAD), under his leadership, signed an agreement with the National Institute of Literacy. This initiative was a response to the low literacy rate of the nation, as AEAD was seeking to bring its contribution to the national need for female education.<sup>26</sup> In 1992, different churches, mission organisations and Christian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) came together under AEAD to strategize the Christian response to national education needs.<sup>27</sup> This provided an important platform for various Christian entities to bring their experiences and resources together for co-operative work. Their educational work was its focus:

Since 2006, an intense and accelerated nine-month educational programme [called 'Speed School'] has been set up in the northern region of the nation, where about 80% of its population is Islamic. By 2012, a total of 2,255 boys and girls between 9 and 12 years of age, who had missed their opportunity for elementary education, had completed this programme. After the nine-month fast track programme, 90% of them achieved the three-year equivalent of a formal elementary education, when they are placed in public schools.<sup>28</sup> In addition, local churches run formal schools under AEAD, and an overwhelming majority of the 5,035 students in 2008-2009 were girls (or 62.5%).<sup>29</sup>

Churches soon realised that education was a great means of bringing children to Christ. Between 2012 and 2015, there were about 342 conversions to Jesus Christ, consisting of 153 girls and 189 boys from the Speed School.<sup>30</sup> In other schools like the Protestant College in Ouagadougou, over 700 students came to Christ within the academic year 2014-15. AEAD currently operates eleven schools where more than 5,000

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<sup>25</sup> Ouedraogo, *Female Education and Mission*, 47.

<sup>26</sup> P. Ouedraogo, 'A request'. Email sent to the author, 1st September 2015.

<sup>27</sup> Ma, 'A Pentecostal Reflection on Christian Unity', 1.

<sup>28</sup> Ma, 'A Pentecostal Reflection on Christian Unity', 1.

<sup>29</sup> Ma, 'A Pentecostal Reflection on Christian Unity', 1.

<sup>30</sup> Philippe Ouedraogo, 'Transforming Community through Education', Brian Woolnough (ed.), *Good News from Africa: Community Transformation Through the Church* (Oxford: Regnum, 2013), 87. It explains that Speed School is 'aimed at those youngsters, aged 9-12, who have missed out on primary education and are thus not able to enter the national formal education schooling'.

children and adults receive their education, while hearing the good news of Jesus Christ.<sup>31</sup>

The co-operative work of this interdenominational network has proved to have real potential for changing the future of the country. Tertius Zongo, the former Prime Minister, endorsed this education programme as an 'innovative way to improve female education', swaying the government's strategies, making an input to a 'gender balance', and encouraging use of the 'national language in education'. The quality of its education was highly praised: '... the schools continually dominate in the national examination league tables.'<sup>32</sup> The influence of change provided by the churches working hand-in-hand has inspired a wider co-operation together with Catholics and Muslims. The effectiveness of Ouedraogo's passion for girls' education and his leadership in bringing various Christian bodies together have affected national education policies. AEAD's education programme has now been handed over to the government and has become a nationwide programme.<sup>33</sup>

### Integral Mission in India

Pandita Ramabai (1858-1922) was described as an Indian female Christian<sup>34</sup> 'reformer, Bible translator and social activist, particularly involved in the revival movement in her mission'. Ramabai turned to God from the Brahmin caste by vetoing the Hindu 'propriety' and marriage system. She had been widowed with her daughter less than two years after her marriage. She began to attend a church during her three-year stay in England where she studied education at Cheltenham Ladies' College. During this time, in 1883 she was baptised in the Church of England. Later she obtained her degree in education in America.<sup>35</sup>

She came back to India in 1889 after her studies, and pioneered a ministry for widows close to Bombay (now Mumbai), which after a year was moved to Pune. In 1895, she started a mission on a farm she had purchased at Kedgaon, close to Pune. By this time, she had changed her

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<sup>31</sup> Ouedraogo, 'A request', states that this information on the Protestant College of Ouagadougou was reported on 26th August 2015 in the Assemblies of God Executive meeting by the Principal, Emmanuel Kalkoundo.

<sup>32</sup> Tertius Zongo, 'Foreword' to Philippe Ouedraogo, *Female Education and Mission: A Burkina Faso Experience* (Oxford: Regnum, 2014), xiii.

<sup>33</sup> Ma, 'A Pentecostal Reflection on Christian Unity', 2.

<sup>34</sup> See Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism*, (London: SCM, 2007), 77: 'Ramabai is both significant in the origins of Pentecostalism and in the acceptance of its phenomena among some in the wider Christian community. The importance of her revival movement is born out by the prominence given to it in reports in the emerging Pentecostal press, both in India and especially in Britain and North America.'

<sup>35</sup> Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 77.

work from a 'religiously neutral' offering to an explicitly 'evangelical Christian organization'.<sup>36</sup> This change had a devastating effect: her support from Hindu parents vanished, followed by the resignation of her committee. Ramabai and her working team named this mission 'Mukti', which means 'salvation'. Its primary aim was to offer a shelter for deprived girls and young women. Many of them had suffered from child marriages, and had become widows. Others were rescued from starvation due to a shortage of food. There were 48 young women and girls in 1896, but throughout that year, 300 girls were liberated from starvation in Madhya Pradesh. By 1900, nearly 2,000 people were cared for.<sup>37</sup> This mission had become famous overseas by 1905, before revival took place.<sup>38</sup> Ramabai was convinced that Hindu women could experience complete liberty by coming to Christ. At the same time, her mission provided training in income-generating skills.<sup>39</sup> Ramabai's solid mission vision progressed, regardless:

But by 1907 the Mission had expanded to include a rescue mission, a hospital, an oil-press, a blacksmith forge, a printing press, a complete school that provided college entrance training, a school for the blind, and training departments in teaching, nursing, weaving, tailoring, bread and butter making, tinning, laundering, masonry, carpentry and farming.<sup>40</sup>

Ramabai had a strong belief in and experience of the work of the Holy Spirit. She once expressed, 'I found it a great blessing to realise the personal presence of the Holy Spirit in me, and to be guided and taught by Him.'<sup>41</sup> Later she developed a strong desire to be 'filled with the Spirit' to

<sup>36</sup> Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 77.

<sup>37</sup> Jessie H. Mair, *Bungalows in Heaven: The Story of Pandita Ramabai* (Kedgaon, India: Pandita Ramabai Mukti Mission, 2003), 87-88.

<sup>38</sup> Rajas K. Dongre and Josephine F. Patterson, *Pandita Ramabai: A Life of Faith and Prayer* (Chennai, India: Christian Literature Society, 1963), 13-18.

<sup>39</sup> See Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 77; and S.M. Adhav, *Pandita Ramabai* (Chennai, India: Christian Literature Society, 1979), 114-15: 'Ramabai became nationalistic because of the repression of "British rulers" and their arrogance towards Indian social structures...' 'She was a dedicated ecumenist before the word was coined in the twentieth century, deploring the divisions within Christianity and pleading for a united Indian church.' See also R.E. Hedlund, *Quest for Identity: India's churches of Indigenous origins – the 'Little Tradition' in Indian Christianity* (Chennai and Delhi, India: Mylapore Institute for Indigenous Studies and Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2000), 160: 'Gauri interprets Ramabai's conversion as a quest for intellectual and spiritual freedom... Ramabai set about "refashioning Christianity to her own requirements," says Gauri. If so, it is not surprising that in Ramabai one finds an incipient Indian Christian nationalism expressed in a critique of missionary paternalism and rejection of colonial control.'

<sup>40</sup> *Mukti Prayer-Bell* (Kedgaon, India: Pandita Ramabai Mukti Mission, 1907), 21-22.

<sup>41</sup> Dongre and Patterson, *Pandita Ramabai: A Life of Faith and Prayer*, 18, 24.

‘enter into a new experience of God’s power to save, bless and use’.<sup>42</sup> After learning of the Welsh Revival and the Australian revival led by R.A. Torrey, in 1904 she communicated with Manoramabai and Minnie Abrams to learn the necessary elements of a revival. Through this interaction, she became convinced that prayer and ‘pouring out your life’ were the key components for revival.<sup>43</sup> In January 1905 Ramabai started a ‘special early-morning daily prayer meeting, where 70 women would meet and pray’. She expressed her commitment ‘for the true conversion of all the Indian Christians including ourselves, and for a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit on all Christians of every land’. The number of people who attended this daily prayer meeting steadily went up to 500. The revival continued for a year and a half, and resulted in ‘1,100 baptisms at the school, confessions of sins and repentances, prolonged prayer meetings and the witnessing of 700 of these young women going out in teams into the surrounding areas’. She also began a ‘Bible school’ of 200 young women to form ‘Praying Bands’ to pray and ‘to be trained in witnessing to their faith’.<sup>44</sup> According to Ramabai’s knowledge, no revival such as this took place before 1905.

### Latin America Childcare

Latin America Childcare (LACC) was started in 1963 by John Bueno, an American who spent much of his time in Chile, pastoring the Centro Evangelistico, San Salvador. He had a strong desire to help children move away from their chronic cycle of deficiencies. The children made up 50% of Latin America’s population, half of them underprivileged, frequently malnourished and without fundamental health provision. One third of them had no access to education. LACC was intended to offer an ‘institutional alternative’ to these children. The first school, named Liceo Cristiano, was started in February 1963 with 152 children in Sunday school classrooms in several churches. This venture was effective from the beginning. Initially offering primary-level education, it soon added schools of a higher level with a considerable number of students enrolled.<sup>45</sup>

Liceo Cristiano and several other schools throughout Central America operated totally on their own funds, only occasionally receiving fairly small help from outside, normally for classroom goods and supplies. Years later, a three-storey school building was erected. In its inaugural ceremony,

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<sup>42</sup> Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 79.

<sup>43</sup> Gary McGee, ‘Minnie F. Abrams: Another Context, Another Founder’, in James R. Goff, Jr. and Grant Wacker (eds), *Portraits of a Generation* (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 2002), 87-104.

<sup>44</sup> Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 79.

<sup>45</sup> D. Petersen, *Not by Might nor by Power: A Pentecostal Theology of Social Concern in Latin America* (Oxford: Regnum, 1996), 152-55.

members of the large church were recognized for providing funds for the building project.<sup>46</sup>

Liceo Cristiano expanded by launching a satellite campus in 1973 in El Granjero. It was a slum area populated by refugees of civil war in the countryside. This extension started with 300 students, and in 1976 another campus was established in Candelaria. In 1977, an additional school was started in *Soyapango*, a suburb of San Salvador.<sup>47</sup> In 1983, Liceo Cristiano acquired a university charter to offer professional programmes in education. Eventually, over 50% of the institution's over 500 teachers received their professional degrees from Universidad Christiana de El Salvador.<sup>48</sup>

The dream of helping the children in the slum area led to the opening of Liceo Cristiano of El Salvador. In turn, this led to the founding of LACC or Programa integral de educacion de las Asambleas de Dios (PIEDAD) in November of 1977.<sup>49</sup> Between 1978 and 1985, the educational programmes of LACC stretched from Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala and Honduras, to Panama and Nicaragua, and are now in eighteen countries in Latin America.<sup>50</sup>

### Pentecostal Theological Reflection on Wholeness

As a general perception would suggest, Pentecostals have given much attention to the salvation of souls as its mission priority. However, this does not necessarily reflect a narrow view of mission. In their relatively short history, Pentecostals have intuitively demonstrated their holistic view of life, the gospel and mission. It is true that Pentecostal mission theology starts with the significant work of the Holy Spirit and encompasses not only soul-saving but also (physical) healing. An equally significant practice is the miraculous intervention of the Holy Spirit in human needs, which includes physical and material, as much as spiritual, relational and circumstantial needs. Although not fully developed in an articulated mission theology, this points to the life-giving work of the Holy Spirit, evidenced from the very beginning of history (or from Genesis). This includes life-sustaining and life-restoring .

Several Pentecostal missionary practices, such as Teen Challenge, reveal a theological logic in dealing with the destitute (or, in Teen Challenge, for example, drug addicts in urban centres). As the current state of human sinfulness began from rebellion against God, its undoing will have to begin

<sup>46</sup> D. Petersen, *Not by Might nor by Power*, 155-56.

<sup>47</sup> José Alfredo Guerrero, 'Origin, Desarrollo Y Filosofía de los Liceos Christianos', SIEELA (San Salvador, El Salvador: Documents of PIEDAD, 1984), 1-3.

<sup>48</sup> D. Petersen, *Not by Might nor by Power*, 157.

<sup>49</sup> D. Petersen, *Not by Might nor by Power*, 158.

<sup>50</sup> D. Petersen, *Not by Might nor by Power*, 160.

with the spiritual realm of human existence.<sup>51</sup> That is one reason why Pentecostal mission takes conversion seriously. Once the relationship with God is restored, the logic contends, the effect of God's redemption expands to behaviour, physical wholeness, work habits, family life and morality. This partly explains the upward social mobility that is observed among Latin American Pentecostals.<sup>52</sup>

The vision of individual and communal restoration through the Holy Spirit is at the heart of Pentecostal mission. It encompasses a full spectrum of life – from spiritual and physical restoration to emotional, mental and communal *shalom*. Isaiah 32 explicitly presents this vision as the work of God's Spirit:

... until a spirit from on high is poured out on us, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest. Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust for ever. My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places (Is. 32:15-18).

Jeremiah 33:6 similarly envisions restoration of the city of Jerusalem in the language of healing: 'I will bring health and healing to it [the city, Jerusalem]; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security...' Here lies a theological challenge for Pentecostal mission:

If Pentecostals develop the theological capability to apply their prized heritage of healing to broken families, relationships, divided churches and societies, racial conflicts and moral decay, the impact of Pentecostal mission will be unimaginable.<sup>53</sup>

Pentecostals have brought into the world of mission a radical set of gifts, and we need to celebrate this. One of them is definitely the holistic vision of God's mission. At the same time, especially in theological exploration and articulation, its practice has not been matched by a corresponding reflection. For example, in reconciliation or church unity as God's mission, Pentecostals have been either indifferent and uninterested in such important aspects of God's mission, or even responsible for many divisions (of the church). It is the Holy Spirit who plays a crucial role in reconciling humans with God through the death of Christ, and this should cause the people of the Spirit (as Pentecostals claim) to want to take reconciliation as an integral part of its missionary thinking and practice. The implications, such as creation care, can go on and on. The Pentecostal idea of mission is integral and holistic, but its practice appears otherwise, with a strong emphasis on evangelism, perhaps fuelled by its eschatological expectation

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<sup>51</sup> Wonsuk Ma, "'When the Poor Are Fired Up': The Role of Pneumatology in Pentecostal-Charismatic Mission', in *Transformation*, 24:1 (Jan 2007), 28-34.

<sup>52</sup> David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin America* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 90-92.

<sup>53</sup> Ma and Ma, 'Mission in the Spirit', 25.

in the early years. Pentecostal mission now faces an immediate challenge for theological reflection to articulate its holistic vision.

### **Conclusion**

This study gives five examples of holistic Pentecostal ministries in different countries, combining the proclamation of the gospel and social works. There is a common perception among Evangelicals that Pentecostal churches or missions tend to focus on only one side, declaring the gospel, ignoring the social aspect. But these case studies strongly suggest that, even from the initial period of its existence, Pentecostals have been consistently conscious of both proclamation and social work, even if their concern and awareness for social involvement have increased during recent decades.

Lillian Trasher, a single lady, wholeheartedly committed herself to mission in Asyut, Egypt. Her loving passion for the destitute caused her to embrace hungry and abandoned children, and to provide food and shelter. Joshua Banda's ministries for HIV/AIDS patients in society made a significant impact, not only within the community but also on the nation. He, a Spirit-filled pastor of a Pentecostal church, developed a mission strategy that extending a helping hand to those struggling with deadly disease and daily survival is at the very heart of mission. Philippe Ouedraogo's involvement in female education has affected the national education programmes of Burkina Faso, where girls have much less chance for education than boys. His education programme set a benchmark for the national education policies.<sup>54</sup> Pandita Ramabai in India strongly felt an urgent need to provide women suffering deprivation with a means of escaping the cycle of poverty. Her work for underprivileged women was noteworthy in empowering them to regain their self-respect. Ramabai's early morning prayer meetings for revival with seventy women were remarkable, and countless believers experienced the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Latin American Child Care, established by John Bueno for the education of underprivileged children, made a huge impact in Latin America.

Having discussed these examples, it would be appropriate to offer an analysis of features they have in common. First, the main players were Spirit-filled leaders. All of them considered prayer as a crucial part of their ministry planning and execution. They were deeply interested in the root causes of suffering, including the spiritual aspects. Their ministries were marked by strong spiritual activities. Secondly, all these examples have been taken from the global South. Poverty and oppression call Pentecostal believers to immediate action. Thirdly, their level of commitment to ministering to the suffering stands out. This can be attributed to the empowering role of the Holy Spirit for witness. Each one of them made a

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<sup>54</sup> Zongo, 'Foreword'.

strong commitment to fulfil their God-given tasks. Such committed dedication bears marvellous fruit, not only in the success of such ministries, but also in the holistic transformation observed in all these examples. Fourthly, social works prove to be an effective means of evangelism. In fact, as the *Lausanne Covenant* states, proclamation and social service are 'partners' in mission. Actions sometimes speak louder than words. Many non-believers have seen and experienced the loving care of the church. Fifthly, although not evident in all these examples, social works with a strong spiritual emphasis have the potential for triggering spiritual and social renewal. Ramabai's ministry became the epicentre of a significant revival which predates the Azusa Street Revival in 1906. In a similar way, Trasher's daily evening devotions led to the experience of the Holy Spirit among the children. Some, after their spiritual revival, reached out to other children with the gospel. As a result, many people came to Christ. Lastly, social works have the power to provide opportunities for ecumenical relationships and inter-religious dialogue for work among different churches and with other religions. Female education in Burkina Faso witnessed co-operation with Muslim authorities in providing education for girls. After all, the Holy Spirit is the Giver of life, and so Pentecostals, the people of the Holy Spirit, should be in the forefront of the flourishing of such life.

# UNITY IN MISSION: EVANGELISM AND DIAKONIA TOWARDS FULNESS OF LIFE<sup>1</sup>

Carlos Ham

## Introduction

Mission is the proclamation of the good news of the gospel. It comes from the God of life who sent the Son to share this abundant life with all the creation. God's mission involves a holistic understanding in such a way that each and every activity and ministry of the church is called to collaborate with this purpose.

Over the centuries, diverse churches have experienced and lived this holistic mission. Nevertheless, there has been a tendency in the churches to generate false dichotomies, separating and even prioritizing the different aspects of God's mission. This article will argue for the importance of acknowledging this all-inclusive character of God's mission, which embraces all aspects of the churches' role in society. It will emphasize particularly and explicitly the importance of sharing the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ in words (focusing on evangelism) and in deed (concentrating on *diakonia*), stressing their complementary role in this endeavour. This will be done looking specifically at the churches' participation in the ecumenical movement in general, and in the World Council of Churches (WCC) in particular,<sup>2</sup> since one of its historic purposes has been to promote common witness or mission in unity among its member churches.

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<sup>1</sup> This article has been previously published in John Gibaut and Knud Jørgensen (eds), *Called to Unity: For the Sake of Mission* (Oxford: Regnum, 2014), 229-46. It is included in this volume with the permission of the editors and Regnum International.

<sup>2</sup> The WCC was founded in 1948 and brings together 345 churches, denominations and church fellowships in more than 110 countries and territories throughout the world, representing over 500 million Christians. It includes most of the world's Orthodox churches, as well as Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Reformed, United and Independent churches: [www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us)

### What Do We Mean by Mission?

The WCC has issued many statements with the purpose of defining the meaning of God's mission (*missio Dei*).<sup>3</sup> I will quote here some portions of the three main ones published in the last thirty years, namely, the 1982 *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation*; the 2000 *Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today*;<sup>4</sup> and the 2012 *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*.<sup>5</sup>

In the final part of the 1982 *Ecumenical Affirmation* under the section *Looking Towards the Future*, we read:

Whether among the secularized masses of industrial societies, the emerging new ideologies round which societies are organized, the resurging religions which people embrace, the movements of workers and political refugees, the people's search for liberation and justice, the uncertain pilgrimage of the younger generation into a future both full of promise and overshadowed by nuclear confrontation – the church is called to be present and to articulate the meaning of God's love in Jesus Christ for every person and for every situation.<sup>6</sup>

Later, God's mission was defined by the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) in its study document *Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today* (2000), as one that:

... carries a holistic understanding: the proclamation and sharing of the good news of the gospel by word (*kerygma*), deed (*diakonia*), prayer and worship (*leitourgia*), and everyday witness of Christian life (*marturia*); teaching as a means of building up and strengthening people's relationship with God and with each other, and healing as wholeness and reconciliation into *koinonia* – communion with God, communion with people and communion with creation as a whole.<sup>7</sup>

More recently, the 2012 Affirmation *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* begins with a confession of faith:

We believe in the Triune God who is the creator, redeemer and sustainer of all life. God created the whole *oikoumene* in God's image and constantly

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<sup>3</sup> David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 16th edition (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 587. David Bosch points out that it was in the 1952 Willingen Conference of the International Mission Council where the idea (not the exact term) *missio Dei* surfaced clearly: 'Mission was understood as being derived from the very nature of God,' said Bosch.

<sup>4</sup> These two documents are published in the book *You are the Light of the World: Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches, 1980-2005*, Jacques Matthey (ed), (Geneva: WCC, 2005):

[www.mission2005.org/fileadmin/files/mission\\_statements\\_web.pdf](http://www.mission2005.org/fileadmin/files/mission_statements_web.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> This 2012 document can be found at: [www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/mission-and-evangelism/together-towards-life-mission-and-evangelism-in-changing-landscapes](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/mission-and-evangelism/together-towards-life-mission-and-evangelism-in-changing-landscapes)

<sup>6</sup> Matthey, *You Are the Light of the World*, 30.

<sup>7</sup> Matthey, *You Are the Light of the World*, 64.

works in the world to affirm and safeguard life. We believe in Jesus Christ, the Life of the world, the incarnation of God's love for the world (John 3:16). Affirming life in all its fullness is Jesus Christ's ultimate concern and mission (John 10:10). We believe in God, the Holy Spirit, the Life-giver, who sustains and empowers life and renews the whole creation (Gen. 2:7; John 3:8). A denial of life is a rejection of the God of life. God invites us into the life-giving mission of the Triune God, and empowers us to bear witness to the vision of abundant life for all in the new heaven and earth...<sup>8</sup>

Reading these three documents, particularly the sections quoted, the following observations can be made with regard to mission, from the perspective of the ecumenical movement:

1. The importance for the church to take into serious consideration the social, political, economic, ecological and religious context to carry out God's mission.
2. The role of the church is to articulate and to translate into these various contexts the good news of the gospel and the meaning of God's love in Jesus Christ for each and every person.
3. Therefore mission belongs to the Triune God, creator, liberator and sustainer of all life, incarnated in Jesus Christ, the giver of life in all its fullness and supported by the Holy Spirit, the sustainer of life.
4. God's mission entrusted to the church is holistic and is therefore carried out through its various ministries and efforts, such as the proclamation of the word, prayer, worship, witness and formation. Two relevant and complementary components of God's mission are this sharing of the gospel through evangelism and social service.
5. The purpose of God's mission is to build communion (*koinonia*) by strengthening relationships and seeking reconciliation with God, with each other and with the whole creation. Therefore, 'the churches are called to discern the work of the life-giving Spirit sent into the world and to join with the Holy Spirit in bringing about God's reign of justice (Acts 1:6-8)'.<sup>9</sup>

God's mission is not just about filling churches with people (or having to sell them if they are empty). The French Roman Catholic priest Alfred F. Loisy (1857-1940) made the observation that 'Jesus came preaching the kingdom, and what arrived was the church!'<sup>10</sup> Hence, the church is not placed in the world as an end in itself; rather, it is sent by God to serve and to proclaim God's Kingdom of 'righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' (Rom. 14:17).

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<sup>8</sup> Jooseop Keum (ed), *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes: A New WCC Affirmation on Mission and Evangelism*, 2012 (Geneva: WCC, 2013), 4.

<sup>9</sup> Keum, *Together towards Life*, 25.

<sup>10</sup> [www.mythicistpapers.com/2012/10/01/alfred-loisy](http://www.mythicistpapers.com/2012/10/01/alfred-loisy)

To put it in Faith and Order<sup>11</sup> language: ‘The church, as the body of Christ, acts by the power of the Holy Spirit to continue his life-giving mission in prophetic and compassionate ministry, and so participates in God’s work of healing a broken world. Communion, whose source is the very life of the Holy Trinity, is both the gift by which the church lives and, at the same time, the gift that God calls the church to offer to a wounded and divided humanity in the hope of reconciliation and healing.’<sup>12</sup>

### Mission as Evangelism

The 2000 document *Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today*, after defining the meaning of mission, goes on to say: ‘Evangelism, while not excluding the different dimensions of mission, focuses on the explicit and intentional voicing of the gospel, including the invitation to personal conversion to a new life in Christ and to discipleship.’<sup>13</sup> In other words, evangelism seeks to enable a personal encounter and experience with Jesus Christ, engendering a response from the interlocutor, in terms of *metanoia*, of repentance, that leads to a radical change of mind and life (2 Cor. 7:9) and to discipleship.

In the same way, it was mentioned by the participants at a WCC Orthodox-Evangelical consultation held in Egypt in 1995, the ‘Proclamation of Jesus Christ requires a personal response. The Living Word of God is never external, un-relational, disconnected, but always calling for personal conversion and relational communion. Such a conversion is more than appropriation of a message: it is a commitment to Jesus Christ, imitating his death and resurrection in a very visible and tangible way. That which begins with a personal commitment must, however, immediately lead into a relationship with other members of the body of Christ, the local witnessing community’.<sup>14</sup>

Reading these two quotes, acknowledgement can be made that the announcing of Jesus’ story includes three basic elements, namely: (a) an invitation to believe in the triune God; (b) an invitation to become a

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<sup>11</sup> ‘The Faith and Order movement is integral to the WCC. Its aim has always been, and still is, ‘to proclaim the oneness’ of the church of Jesus Christ and to call the churches to the goal of visible unity’. The chief means of achieving this goal is through study programmes dealing with theological questions that divide the churches’: [www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/faith-and-order](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/faith-and-order)

<sup>12</sup> *The Church Towards a Common Vision*, Faith and Order Paper No. 214 (Geneva: WCC, 2013), para 1: [www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/faith-and-order-commission/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/the-church-towards-a-common-vision](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/faith-and-order-commission/i-unity-the-church-and-its-mission/the-church-towards-a-common-vision)

<sup>13</sup> Matthey, *You Are the Light of the World*, 64.

<sup>14</sup> Hubert van Beek and Georges Lemopoulos, *Proclaiming Christ Today, Report of an Orthodox-Evangelical Consultation, Alexandria, Egypt* (Geneva: WCC, 1995), 13.

disciple of Christ; and (c) an invitation to join the community of an existing local church. These three elements reflect the text in Revelation 3:20: 'Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.' This *Message to Laodicea* concludes with these challenging words: 'Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches' (v. 22).

### *Challenges and opportunities for sharing the good news today*

In the proclamation of the good news, one of the first realities encountered is the rich diversity in theologies and practices of evangelism. The Pentecostal and the evangelical churches, and the churches in the global South, challenge not only the well-established churches in North America and western Europe, but the ones in the global South as well (e.g. African independent churches). We also observe how many ethnic churches in the global North tend to *re-evangelize* the established churches, bringing fresh meaning to the gospel, experiencing a renewed spirituality and forms of being church.

Another challenge is to rescue the holistic and liberating meaning of the gospel, which reminds me of a famous song in Latin America, *Misa Popular Salvadoreña*, written in 1986. It goes like this: 'Blessed those who in the Lord's name, announce the Holy Gospel, the good and great news of liberating power!' It is not enough to recognize its holistic character, e.g. exploitation may also be pervasive! The good news is subversive; it seeks social justice, as Jesus said at the beginning of his ministry: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor' (Luke 4:18).

### *Sharing the good news in the contexts of bad news*

The *good news* is good because there is *bad news* as well. The proclamation of the *good news*, which ultimately seeks the advancement of humankind and of creation, comes in contrast with situations of *bad news*, in a culture of neo-liberal globalization, which often produces impoverishment, fragmentation, exclusion, injustice, terrorism, migration, violence and degradation of the environment, and which ultimately threatens the web of life.

Consequently, Jürgen Moltmann said that mission requires a re-reading and a reorientation of Christian history on the basis of an ethic of life and of dialogue among the religions. Mission, he said, has proceeded in three stages. The first culminated with the creation of an *imperium*; the second involved the spread of churches. Now, the third involves participation in the evangelization of humanity – not its absorption into 'church', but

dialogue and action aimed at disclosing the basis of salvation. ‘Christ came to bring life, not Christianity,’ he has pointed out.<sup>15</sup>

An important element to take into consideration when sharing the good news is to observe and understand the context where the churches are serving. In his book, *A Passion for Unity*, Emilio Castro, former WCC General Secretary, notes in his essay *Evangelism: Ecumenical Frontiers Today*:

This is the only valid theological method for evangelism: conscious participation in the whole human life and its problems. When all is said and done, for the great mass of the people, evangelism is not a question of apologetics, but of life. Gustavo Gutiérrez once said that in Latin America, people are ‘poor and believing’. Much the same could be said of the vast deprived masses of the world as a whole... We are called to bear witness to the God of justice, hope, consolation and reconciliation, seeking to identify with the poor and the marginal.<sup>16</sup>

This call becomes increasingly urgent when listening to the words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who said the following on 20th May 2008 at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva: ‘When life is rough, you really understand the meaning of the gospel.’ Another prophet of the twentieth century, Dom Hélder Câmara (Brazil, 1909-99), once said: ‘When I feed the poor, I am called a saint, but when I ask why the poor are poor, I am called a communist.’ So the question is how to deconstruct a mission that is in complicity with the neo-liberal *status quo*, and reconstruct God’s mission. The church is called to promote an evangelistic mission devoted not so much to *feeding the poor*, but prophetically to raise the tough questions: asking why they are poor, marginalized, oppressed, and to do something about it.

Jesus’ ministry was in Galilee – the land of the excluded and marginalized; likewise, his church is urged to recover the values of God’s kingdom and rebuild hope, through prophetic witness in the social and political arena. The Latin American churches say, ‘A different world is needed and, by the grace of the Holy Spirit of God, it is possible.’<sup>17</sup>

### *Evangelism in post-Christian contexts*

In an extremely secular culture – which many even call *post-Christian*, like contemporary western European culture – what is the meaning of the gospel today? How can the good news be shared with the rich as well? How do traditional church structures respond to the challenge of empty churches, of people *believing* but not *belonging*? What are the core values

<sup>15</sup> Simon Barrow, *Christian Mission in Western Society* (London: 2001), 249.

<sup>16</sup> Emilio Castro, *A Passion for Unity: Essays on Ecumenical Hopes and Challenges* (Geneva: WCC, 1992), 37.

<sup>17</sup> 2001 Letter from Porto Alegre: *A Different World is Possible* (January 2011). See also: [www.commondreams.org/views01/0129-05.htm](http://www.commondreams.org/views01/0129-05.htm)

of the gospel for Europe today, such as community sharing, solidarity, love, hope, reconciliation and healing, and how can they be shared for transformation?

How can evangelism be re-thought both in terms of form and content in a situation where Christian culture no longer plays such a vital part in civil society? Is the church for a *soft* or *user-friendly gospel*, an *aspirin gospel*, an *opium gospel*, one that just makes people happy and forget their troubles and pains, or for a gospel that challenges and brings us a *creative tension* (and therefore, which is not popular), to face the current state of affairs prophetically?

In societies with a high regard for privacy, private matters and private properties, the church is called to live and to share a gospel in a renewed sense that is inclusive, social, communitarian and giving meaning for the lives of the people, particularly for those who feel lonely, even with all their material wealth.

### *Evangelism in multicultural and multi-religious contexts*

Again, the document *Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today* refers to the challenges arising for the churches trying to be faithful to the proclamation of the gospel in multi-religious contexts. And it goes on to say:

... such challenges inevitably raise theological questions concerning the nature of witness among people of other religious convictions, in relation to the nature of salvation itself. There is little consensus on this in the broader ecumenical movement. In the San Antonio, Texas (1989), and Salvador, Brazil (1996), Mission Conferences, the situation was summarized through the following affirmations: 'We cannot point to any other way of salvation than Jesus Christ; at the same time; we cannot set limits to the saving power of God.' And the document recognizes that 'there is a tension between these two statements which has not yet been resolved'.<sup>18</sup>

With reference to the encounter with people of other religions, Emilio Castro has said: 'This encounter is witness. In view of the missionary nature of God's message in Jesus Christ, Christians should approach others in the same spirit of love, sharing and communication that ruled the life of the man from Nazareth. Thus, the attitude is not only one of respect but of acceptance of the other.'<sup>19</sup>

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The evangelistic mission in multi-religious situations consists of encountering and bridge-building towards sharing in Christ's witness with humility and compassion and loving service. This understanding of mission leads to respect and acceptance of the other, working in harmony to overcome barriers but also co-operating for the well-being of creation. As the document *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World*:

<sup>18</sup> Matthey, *You Are the Light of the World*, 81.

<sup>19</sup> Emilio Castro, 'Evangelism', in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, Nicholas Lossky et al (eds), 2nd edition (Geneva: WCC, 2002), 445.

*Recommendations for Conduct* states: ‘Christians should continue to build relationships of respect and trust with people of different religions so as to facilitate deeper mutual understanding, reconciliation and co-operation for the common good.’<sup>20</sup>

As it was mentioned at the WCC Tenth Assembly in the Republic of Korea in 2013, during the Ecumenical Conversation No. 8 on *Evangelism Today: New Ways for Authentic Discipleship*, ‘How can we make evangelism holistic? It should not be a mere proclamation of the good news alone, but it should also bring about transformation in the individual, communal and social levels... We are called to become neighbors to those in need. How do we become neighbors and not strangers to one another?’<sup>21</sup>

Having said that, particularly from the perspective of the people in need, how is it possible to separate words from deeds in sharing the good news, even in multi-religious contexts? In the following section, the task of *diakonia* and its complementary role with *kerygma* will be addressed.

### Mission as *Diakonia*

The ecumenical movement in general, and the WCC in particular, have dealt profusely with both the notion and the practice of *diakonia* throughout the years. Willem Adolf Visser ’t Hooft in 1938 accepted the position of General Secretary on the condition of the readiness of the Council to become active in the field of service, ‘for there could be no healthy Ecumenical fellowship without practical solidarity’,<sup>22</sup> he said.

Therefore, for the WCC it has been a concern, not only to bring the churches together in order to reach the goal of visible unity, but also to deal holistically with the issues of witness and service so critical for their life and ministry in their respective contexts.

*Diakonia* has been defined in different ways, e.g. in the 1960s as the ‘responsible service of the gospel by deeds and by words performed by Christians in response to the needs of people’,<sup>23</sup> focusing more on charity. In the 1980s, with an emphasis on reciprocity, it was said: ‘Our *diakonia* now and for the future must be based on mutual trust and genuine sharing.

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<sup>20</sup> World Council of Churches (WCC), Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID), and World Evangelical Alliance (WEA): [www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/christian-identity-in-pluralistic-societies/christian-witness-in-a-multi-religious-world](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/christian-identity-in-pluralistic-societies/christian-witness-in-a-multi-religious-world)

<sup>21</sup> [www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/2013-busan/ecumenical-conversations-report](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/2013-busan/ecumenical-conversations-report), 58, paras 5 and 6.

<sup>22</sup> Kenneth Slack, *Hope in the Desert* (Geneva: WCC, 1986), 9.

<sup>23</sup> Teresa Joan White, ‘Diakonia’, in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, Nicholas Lossky et al (eds), 2nd edition (Geneva: WCC, 2002): [www.oikoumene.org](http://www.oikoumene.org), 305.

We recognize that people and churches on all continents have needs and that our *diakonia* must reach out to all those who suffer.<sup>24</sup>

Later, in the 21st century, more weight has been given to the so-called *objects* of diaconal engagement in order for them to increasingly become subjects of their own lives and of their own history, e.g. those living on the margins of society. On this note, a WCC consultation on *Theological Perspectives on Diakonia in the Twenty-First Century*, in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in 2012, stressed in its final statement the importance of an inclusive diaconal engagement, since ‘marginalized people, through their yearnings for life with dignity and justice, and through their participation in movements, are offering alternative visions of a world free of forces that deny justice, dignity and life for many’.<sup>25</sup>

This Colombo statement begins by expressing that ‘God’s mission is about the realization of God’s vision for the world, a world in which “God rejoices... where the aggressors are transformed so that all shall live in peace” (Is. 65:17-25)... This mission of God is dynamic and inclusive of all people and forces that uphold the sanctity and integrity of God’s creation’.<sup>26</sup>

The document advocates a foundational ecclesiology that interrelates service with God’s mission: ‘The church, as a community called into being through baptism and led by the Holy Spirit, participates in this mission through its very being, proclamation and service. Commonly understood as service, *diakonia* is a way of living out faith and hope as a community, witnessing to what God has done in Jesus Christ.’<sup>27</sup> This quote urges the church to be a serving community, pursuing a witnessing service, by assisting, caring for and supporting people in need, in collaboration with God’s mission.

This and other documents of the ecumenical movement recognize the fact that diaconal mission is rooted in Scripture; the concept of *diakonia*, as it is understood today, has been developed by the church mainly in the past 200 years, but its roots, images, understanding and motivation go back to Scripture and the early church. The diaconal ministry of the churches has grown and developed further, up to our day, inspired by the Christian faith and spirituality, helping to make more visible the signs of God’s kingdom in today’s world.

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<sup>24</sup> Klaus Poser, *Diakonia 2000 – Called to Be Neighbors: Official Report of the WCC World Consultation on Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service, Larnaca, Cyprus, November 1986* (Geneva: WCC, 1987), 125.

<sup>25</sup> WCC, *Theological Perspectives on Diakonia*, WCC consultation on Theological Perspectives on Diakonia in the 21st Century, Colombo, Sri Lanka, in 2012: [www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/unity-mission-evangelism-and-spirituality/just-and-inclusive-communities/theological-perspectives-on-diakonia-in-21st-century](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/unity-mission-evangelism-and-spirituality/just-and-inclusive-communities/theological-perspectives-on-diakonia-in-21st-century), 108, para 15.

<sup>26</sup> WCC, *Theological Perspectives on Diakonia*, 104, para 1.

<sup>27</sup> WCC, *Theological Perspectives on Diakonia*, 105, para 2.

### *Evangelism and diakonia as part of missio Dei*

The WCC's understanding of *diakonia* is one that reaches out to all people, particularly the impoverished, the 'least of these' (Matt. 25:44), and the oppressed, to comfort them and also to confront the root causes of injustice. This portion of the Gospel of Matthew, called *The Judgment of the Nations*, is considered pivotal, since taking care of 'the least of these' by feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming strangers, providing clothing for the naked, helping the sick or visiting those in prison, is equated with doing it to the 'Son of Man'. This logic is driven by the fact that serving those in need is linked with service to Christ himself and vice versa, as a precondition for sharing the *euangelion*. Hence, in this endeavour of sharing the good news of God's kingdom, the so-called *Great Commission*, of 'making disciples of all nations' (Matt. 28:19) is complemented by Matthew 25.

According to Pablo A. Deiros, 'in Jesus' ministry, *kerygma* and *diakonia* go together, hand-in-hand; they complemented each other since his words explained his works and his works dramatized his words. Words and deeds were expressions of his compassion for people, and must be ours. These words and actions arise from the lordship of Jesus, because he sends us into the world to preach and serve. If we proclaim the good news of God's love, we must express this love in caring for the needy. Indeed, so close is the relationship between the proclamation and service that they actually overlap'.<sup>28</sup>

An example of this *ethos* is Matthew 4:23: 'Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.'

It is helpful to look at the immediate context. We find that Jesus was already baptized, he was tempted by the devil in the wilderness, and now he begins his ministry in Galilee, calling his first disciples. So this verse is a summary of Jesus' holistic ministry to the people! As he proclaims the good news, he also serves the people by curing their sickness. Even when the Greek word *διακονία* (service) does not appear in the original text of this verse, we can take the word *therapeuōn* (therapy) as a way of service, a healing service. In this regard, it is interesting that the *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains* provides two meanings for this word *θεραπεύω* (*therapeuō*), namely as a verb: 1. To heal, cure; (passive) to be healed, be cured (Matt. 4:23; Luke 6:18; 9:2); and 2. To serve (Acts 17:25, etc.).<sup>29</sup>

To accomplish mission as evangelism – separated from mission as *diakonia*, development, emergency aid and advocacy for justice, peace and

<sup>28</sup> Pablo A Deiros, 'Prefacio a La Edición Electrónica', in *Diccionario Hispano-Americano de La Misión*, Nueva edic (Logos Research Systems, 2006).

<sup>29</sup> James Swanson, 'Therapeuō', in *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek New Testament*, electronic (Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

integrity of creation – is a transgression against the integrity of the *missio Dei* as practised by Jesus. Consequently, there is a need to acknowledge the unity and complementarity between *diakonia* and evangelism as a concrete manifestation of holistic mission as it is conceived and practised by churches in the global South.

### *The 'liturgy after the liturgy'*

An important concept that helps us understand further the meaning of both evangelism and *diakonia*, and their interrelationship, can be found in the notion of the *liturgy after the liturgy* since, for many people, spirituality in general and liturgy in particular are experienced in a space divorced from our daily lives, reflecting a dichotomy which tends to separate body from soul, and material life from spiritual life. The Orthodox theologian Ion Bria corrects this notion and points out that 'Eucharistic liturgy is not an escape into an inner realm of prayer, a pious turning away from social realities; rather, it calls and sends the faithful to celebrate "the sacrament of the brother" outside the temple in the public market place, where the cries of the poor and marginalized are heard'.<sup>30</sup>

Influenced by Orthodox spirituality and theology, the WCC has addressed this concept creatively and has encouraged its member churches to pursue their mission inspired by it. To mention one example, the 1983 Vancouver Assembly highlighted this tradition of relating liturgy particularly to *diakonia*. In the Official Report, under the section *Worship: the perspective and the power with which we witness*, it is expressed: 'For the sake of the witnessing vocation of the church, we need to find a true rhythm of Christian involvement in the world. The church is gathered for worship and scattered for everyday life. Whilst in some situations in the witnessing dimension of worship, there must be a *liturgy after the liturgy*, service to the world as praise to God, in other contexts it must be stressed that there is no Christian service to the world unless it is rooted in the service of worship.'<sup>31</sup>

This quote refers to a couple of key words, namely *gathering* and *scattering*. The whole church, not just a few prominent members, gathers for worship, and it is nourished spiritually in the liturgy in order to be scattered into the world to bear witness to Jesus Christ and to serve. As Pedro Carrasco underlines, 'The liturgy is one of the few descriptive formulas of the church that contains the concept of work. *Diakonia* is the *liturgy after the liturgy* as the Christian Orthodox tradition reminds us. It comes from *ergon*, *ergo* (work). Hence, you cannot do *diakonia* in the

<sup>30</sup> Ion Bria, *The Liturgy after the Liturgy: Mission and Witness from an Orthodox Perspective* (Geneva: WCC, 1996), 20.

<sup>31</sup> David Gill, *Gathered for Life: Official Report, Sixth Assembly of the WCC, Vancouver, Canada, 1983* (Geneva: WCC, 1983), 35.

absence of the liturgy. *Diakonia* is the way the church praises and serves God in creation.<sup>32</sup>

‘This concept of *liturgy after the liturgy* is an extension of the Holy Eucharist and an expression of the unity of the church as the body of Christ. Such an approach does not separate the vertical from the horizontal dimension, love of God from love of neighbour, the micro- from the macro-level of diaconal service.’<sup>33</sup> This vision urges the church to *look out* from the four walls of the sanctuaries and to find God out in the world, horizontally – not just on Sundays, but the rest of the week – to continue worshipping, proclaiming and serving God in society, particularly among ‘the least of these’. It is an inspiration to share in the world the bread that was broken at the altar.

As Chris Ferguson and Ofelia Ortega put it:

This view of Christian service does not separate love of God from love of neighbour. Here, the basis for *diakonia* is the self-emptying love (*kenosis*) of Christ. Thus, the Orthodox contribution of the theological understanding of the inalienable call to service and sharing can be summarized as follows: It is a direct consequence of Christ’s service... It flows from the Divine Liturgy... It is an expression of the unity of the church as the body of Christ... It is not an optional extra but an indispensable expression of that community which has its source in the liturgy... It is the ‘liturgy after the liturgy’... It is an offering in the form of alms and collections... and it liberates humanity from poverty, oppression and penury.<sup>34</sup>

This concept was reaffirmed at the Ecumenical Conversation on Evangelism at the Busan Assembly where the participants pointed out that: ‘Effective evangelism is the outcome of bridging the gap between worship and daily life... worship needs to equip us in our discipleship to translate our faith in our day-to-day lives.’<sup>35</sup>

Consequently, the church is invited to follow God’s mission in Christ’s way, empowered by the liturgy, through witnessing service in the world both in word and in deed, holistically. From the very beginning of the church’s history, *diakonia* has been a result of spirituality. The meaning and the inspiration for service were part of the liturgical celebration. An important requirement to become a member of the Body of Christ was to bear witness to Jesus Christ in concrete expressions of love. All this was

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<sup>32</sup> Interview with the author on 18th September 2012.

<sup>33</sup> Esther Hookway et al, *From Inter-Church Aid to Jubilee: A Brief History of Ecumenical Diakonia in the World Council of Churches*, Alex Belopopsky (ed), (Geneva: WCC Diakonia and Solidarity, 2002), 13: [www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/europe/diakoniahistorybook.pdf](http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/europe/diakoniahistorybook.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> Chris Ferguson and Ofelia Ortega, ‘Ecumenical Diakonia’ (WCC Regional Relations Team, 2002), 10.

<sup>35</sup> Report from Session 1, 53: [www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/2013-busan/ecumenical-conversations-report](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/2013-busan/ecumenical-conversations-report)

integrated in the liturgy of the Christian community and the liturgy of daily life, and this rich heritage urges the church to do the same today.

### *False dichotomies*

Reflecting on false dichotomies in the churches' work, the former Moderator of the WCC's Central Committee, Walter Altmann, in his address to this body in Geneva, 2009, after mentioning what he called 'false dichotomies', expressed it thus:

I would like to reflect a little more on the importance of the diaconal ministry in the life of the church, because another false dichotomy which exists, considers *diakonia* of lower value than mission, rather than seeing mission in a holistic way and *diakonia* as an essential dimension of mission itself. Mission without *diakonia* would easily turn into an arrogant and violent enterprise, not respectful of the culture, values and identity of the addressees of the Christian message. It would try to impose one's own faith upon others, instead of giving reasons for the hope that is within us (1 Pet. 3:15) and respecting the others' own faith decision.<sup>36</sup>

Altmann is here referring to mission in general, but historically false dichotomies have also been drawn, more specifically, between evangelism and *diakonia*. And the same arguments can be used regarding both. In other words, *diakonia* is an essential dimension of mission, just as evangelism is, both bringing dignity and hope to the human being. Evangelism without *diakonia* may become 'a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal' (1 Cor. 13:1), and in similar terms, *diakonia* without evangelism can become technocratic, mechanical, empty, sterile charity.

Evangelism is the proclamation of the church's faith in Jesus Christ, while *diakonia* is the praxis of that faith, it is faith in action; both embody communion between word and action of the church, as she is called and sent to both preach and to live the gospel. As it was stated at the WCC 1987 World Consultation on *Koinonia*, held in El Escorial, Spain: '... All activities of the Christian community in evangelism, *diakonia*, the struggle for human dignity, healing, peace and justice belong together in the one mission of God'.<sup>37</sup> Consequently, the *missio Dei* can be understood as witnessing service in creation.

The statement *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes* also addressed this issue by asserting that 'the church in every geo-political and socio-economic context is called to service (*diakonia*) – to live out to the world the faith and hope of the community of God's people, witnessing to what God has done in Jesus

<sup>36</sup> [www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/central-committee/2009/moderators-address](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/central-committee/2009/moderators-address) – para 13.

<sup>37</sup> Hubert van Beek, *Sharing Life in a World Community: Official Report of the WCC World Consultation on Koinonia, El Escorial, Spain, 1987* (Geneva: WCC, 1989), 45.

Christ. Through service, the church participates in God's mission, following the way of its Servant Lord. The church is called to be a diaconal community manifesting the power of service over the power of domination, enabling and nurturing possibilities for life, and witnessing to God's transforming grace through acts of service that hold forth the promise of God's reign'.<sup>38</sup> It is important here for the church as a diaconal community to observe the example of Jesus Christ, both by witnessing to him (evangelism) as well as following his way as a Servant (*diakonia*).

### *Evangelism, diakonia and conversion*

Another sensitive issue dealing with the relationship between evangelism and *diakonia* has to do with conversion, since it may imply taking advantage of the needs of the people to *gain souls for Christ*. On this note, and coming back to the statement *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct*, Principle No. 4 on *Acts of service and justice*, mentions the following: 'The exploitation of situations of poverty and need has no place in Christian outreach. Christians should denounce and refrain from offering all forms of allurements, including financial incentives and rewards, in their acts of service.'<sup>39</sup> This is such a delicate issue that some humanitarian organizations, even when they are *faith-based*, avoid using the word 'mission' in the sense described here, and even more so the term 'evangelism', when they care for the people in situations of crisis.

But taking advantage of the needs of the people to force them to convert to a particular religion is, indeed, a distorted understanding of what evangelism and *diakonia* are all about. As the Lutheran World Federation's *Diakonia in Context* booklet clearly underlines: '*Diakonia* is seen to be an integral part of mission in its bold action to address the root causes of human suffering and injustice',<sup>40</sup> which is inspired in 'Jesus' *diakonia* [whose] authority to invite people, even sinners, to be included in the messianic fellowship that he establishes, and to empower them to participate in his mission'.<sup>41</sup>

### **Unity in Mission**

In the 1982 document *Mission and Evangelism. An Ecumenical Affirmation*, the following sentence can be found: 'The present ecumenical

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<sup>38</sup> Keum, *Together towards Life*, 13.

<sup>39</sup> PCIRD, WEA, *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct*, 78-79.

<sup>40</sup> *Diakonia in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment* (Lutheran World Federation), 9.

<sup>41</sup> *Diakonia in Context*, 26.

movement came into being out of the conviction of the churches that the division of Christians is a scandal and an impediment to the witness of the church. There is a growing awareness among the churches today of the inextricable relationship between Christian unity and missionary calling, between ecumenism and evangelization.<sup>42</sup>

The document *Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today* also acknowledges the important historical fact that ‘the ecumenical movement has its origins in the missionary movement’. It goes on to mention: ‘The missionaries were among the first to look for ways and styles of witness in unity, recognizing that the scandal of Christian divisions and denominational rivalries hindered greatly the impact of their message.’<sup>43</sup> This is a clear reference to the first Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in Edinburgh, 1910, so called because of the urgency of identifying a vision, namely, ‘the evangelization of the world in this generation’. The ecumenical movement, including all Christian churches, celebrated in 2010 the centenary of this historic event, and this publication is an important follow-up of this event.<sup>44</sup>

God’s mission entrusted to the church has been, from the very beginning, mission in unity. Many biblical texts account for this, e.g. the classic Ephesians 4:1-16 and John 17:21. The latter is often quoted to stress the *visible unity* of the churches as being an end in itself, but Jesus prays to the Father for unity in mission, i.e. ‘that the world may believe’. This biblical paradigm reminds the churches time and again of the urgent call to proclaim ecumenically the good news of the gospel, to announce it in collaboration among the churches and not in competition against each other.

The divisions among the churches are a disgrace, being sinful and counter-productive to the mission endeavour. The unity of the church has a purpose – namely, to bear *common witness* to the Risen Lord today. The above text of John is an invitation to confess, a call to reorient the mission of the church and its evangelism journey, to affirm the richness of its diversities and, at the same time, to repent of its divisions.

The statement *Together towards Life* also has a section devoted to unity in mission called *God’s Mission and the Church’s Unity*. Here it points out that ‘there is a need to open up our reflections on church and unity to an even wider understanding of unity: the unity of humanity and even the cosmic unity of the whole of God’s creation’.<sup>45</sup> In this way, unity is not limited to the church herself but she has the mission to work towards the ‘cosmic unity’ where the whole creation can enjoy the fulness of life in Jesus Christ.

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<sup>42</sup> Matthey, *You Are the Light of the World*, 5.

<sup>43</sup> Matthey, *You Are the Light of the World*, 62.

<sup>44</sup> [www.edinburgh2010.org](http://www.edinburgh2010.org)

<sup>45</sup> Keum, *Together towards Life*, 23.

Some churches have established other dichotomies, like a division between *ecumenical churches* (perceived as more interested to unite round justice issues) and *evangelical churches* (seeming to have a stronger passion to preach the gospel). Somehow, there is a feeling that the churches tend to unite better to serve others (*diakonia*) than to evangelize. Since evangelism has a more denominational connotation for some churches, i.e. to produce more Presbyterians, Methodists, Anglicans, Roman-Catholics, perhaps this is one of the reasons why the former General Secretary of the WCC, Phillip A. Potter, in a speech to the Roman Catholic Synod of Bishops, Rome, 1974, expressed, ‘Evangelization is the test of our ecumenical vocation.’<sup>46</sup>

*Unity in Mission* is costly. To mention just some examples, the charismatic and Pentecostal movements represent a creative challenge for the so-called *historic churches*, which have not always continued to be reformed, and which are stagnating by sacralizing their ways and formulae, and losing the capacity to adjust to changing situations and giving an effective response to the needs of the population. In this sense, it is important, without renouncing biblical and theological precepts in the name of reaching new people, that the spiritual needs of our peoples, which are related to symbols, emotions and feelings rather than to elaborate rational processes, should be taken into account. At the same time, many churches that consider themselves *apolitical* are challenged by the *historic churches* to address the material needs of the people as well.

### Towards Fulness of Life

*Koinonia* is the source and ultimate goal of God’s mission, which marks the presence of the church in the world. Evangelism and *diakonia*, therefore, are not ends in themselves, but rather instruments used by God, together with others, to build an inclusive and just community, an *oikos*, a household in which the entire creation is included, enjoying the fulness of life intended for all.<sup>47</sup>

Our world today is one of neo-liberal globalization, of increasing poverty, and fragmentation by violence and ideologically-based terrorism. This is why the WCC launched the Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV,

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<sup>46</sup> Matthey, *You Are the Light of the World*. Quote from ‘Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation’, 5.

<sup>47</sup> David Gill, *Gathered for Life: Official Report, VI Assembly of the WCC, Vancouver, Canada, 1983* (Geneva, 1983), 197. This thought is elaborated based on the report of the WCC General Secretary at the time, Philip Potter, to its Sixth Assembly, held in Vancouver, Canada, in 1983. He said: ‘The ecumenical movement is, therefore, the means by which the churches which form the house, the *oikos* of God, are seeking so to live and witness before all peoples that the whole *oikoumene* may become the *oikos* of God through the crucified and risen Christ in the power of the life-giving Spirit.’

2001-10), and why its Commission on World Mission and Evangelism chose the mission paradigm of Healing and Reconciliation for its 2005 Athens Mission Conference – e.g. the conference’s Preparatory Paper No. 3 analyzed this world’s situation and acknowledged ‘the mission of the church is to receive, celebrate, proclaim and work for reconciliation, healing and fullness of life in Christ’.<sup>48</sup>

So, in the midst of a culture of death, destruction and violence, God is calling the church to a new ecumenical effort, the task of announcing and working for fullness of life in Jesus Christ for all creation. There is a bigger problem than the church down the road, which is the *culture of death*. Hence the church is urged to promote a *culture of peace* and non-violence with a strong prophetic voice. This is why the ecumenical movement held the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC) as a harvest festival of the DOV, and at the same time a planting season for fresh initiatives. The IEPC took place in Kingston, Jamaica, in 2011, under the theme: *Glory to God and Peace on Earth*.<sup>49</sup>

The task to which the God of life is calling the church today is to work in a united way towards this fullness of life for all creation, ‘allowing people to have a life with dignity’, as was highlighted in the Assembly’s Ecumenical Conversation No. 21 entitled *Compelled to Serve: Diakonia and Development in a Rapidly Changing World*.<sup>50</sup>

### Final Remarks

The God of life is urging the church, in increasingly multi-religious and multicultural settings, to celebrate and share experiences of healing, compassion, forgiveness, hope, solidarity and reconciliation, which are already taking place in our world but not always portrayed in the media. The phrase ‘No news is good news’<sup>51</sup> is often being heard. When lives today are dominated by media which consider the *good news* to be no news, one of the greatest challenges of the disciples of Christ is to make the *good news* relevant news to transform the lives of people today. Hence, God is calling the church to be a missional and evangelizing community, one which proclaims the good news of the gospel in word and in deed, and as Timothy said, ‘... willingly, even if it isn’t the popular thing to do’ (2 Tim. 4:2).

As Archbishop Tutu said in his speech at the Ecumenical Centre referred to earlier: ‘Evil, injustice, oppression, all those awful things, they are not

<sup>48</sup> Jacques Matthey, ‘Come Holy Spirit, Heal and Reconcile!’ *Report of the WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, Athens, Greece, May 2005* (Geneva: WCC, 2005), 23.

<sup>49</sup> [www.overcomingviolence.org/index.php?id=2913](http://www.overcomingviolence.org/index.php?id=2913)

<sup>50</sup> [www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/2013-busan/ecumenical-conversations-report](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/2013-busan/ecumenical-conversations-report), 158, para 4.

going to have the last word. Goodness, laughter, joy, caring, compassion, the things that you do and you help others to do, those are going to prevail.’

The *Unity in Mission* vision reaffirms spirituality and is founded on allegiance to the God of life that empowers to defeat the unjust powers and to transform the world towards the values of God’s kingdom. The church of Jesus Christ is urged to fulfil God’s mission, to be a united and inclusive diaconal community, empowered by the Holy Spirit with life-affirming values, to share the power of service over the power of domination. It addresses the needs of the people at the margins with their own participation, as subjects, since they experience the power of God manifested in their daily struggles and lives.

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# SECTION THREE

## DIAKONIA

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# TRINITARIAN PERSPECTIVES ON DIAKONIA

Kjell Nordstokke

## I

What are the theological grounds for *diakonia*? Is *diakonia* a way of following Jesus, and therefore in the first place an expression of Christian discipleship? Alternatively, is *diakonia* grounded on the theology of creation, based on the Christian view that all humans are created in the image of God with the vocation to be God's co-workers promoting justice, peace and the integrity of creation? While the first view will see Christology, or the second article of faith, as the basic point of reference for formulating the theological foundation for *diakonia*, the second will turn to the first article of faith. While the first will underline the distinct Christian nature of diaconal action, the second will emphasize its public dimension. These questions caused some controversies, for instance in Norway in the 1980s, until a broader consensus was reached, thanks to a new theological conceptualization of *diakonia*.<sup>1</sup> This implied a more comprehensive understanding of *diakonia*, rooting its nature and action in our faith in the Triune God: in God the Father, the Creator, in Jesus Christ, the Savior and Liberator, and in the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life.<sup>2</sup>

In what follows, we shall elaborate this view, presenting it as a new paradigm developed since the 1980s. We shall mainly refer to processes within the ecumenical movement that have contributed strongly to this development and present relevant recent research on the biblical understanding of *diakonia*. The World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation have played a leading role in this development, involving their member churches, mostly mainline Protestants and Orthodox, in reflection regarding the understanding of *diakonia*. They will therefore be the main points of reference. Among evangelicals, the concept of *diakonia* has not gained ground, perhaps due to the Anglo-Saxon context that often has dominated their theological tradition; here it is customary to talk about 'social ministry' or 'social action' rather than *diakonia*. It should be noted, however, that evangelicals also increasingly understand mission

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<sup>1</sup> Kai Ingolf Johannessen, 'Überlegungen zur Situation der Diakonie und zur Theologie der Diakonie in Norwegen', in Paul Philippi und Theodor Strohm (eds): *Theologie der Diakonie* (Heidelberg, Germany: Heidelberger Verlagsanstalt, 1989), 42-67.

<sup>2</sup> *Church of Norway Plan for diakonia*: <https://kirken.no/nb-NO/church-of-norway/resources/plan-for-diakonia>

as holistic or integral. This is clearly expressed in *The Cape Town Commitment*; the terms *diakonia* and ‘diaconal’ are not used in this document.<sup>3</sup> As regards the Roman Catholic tradition, the preferred term there is *caritas*, without specific links with the deacon as the lowest order of ministers.<sup>4</sup>

As we begin this reflection, it is necessary to acknowledge that theological reflection on *diakonia* will have to take into consideration that the term *diakonia* relates to two different realities. On the one hand, the term designates the social ministry of the church. In other words, it describes an empirical reality that may be studied from the perspective of church history and practical theology, but also with the help of social sciences. On the other hand, *diakonia* is a Greek word frequently used in the New Testament, and is thus a term that requires biblical knowledge in order to be interpreted correctly. This fact makes it clear that the study of *diakonia* must be interdisciplinary; it must be able to analyze critically a historically given social practice, and at the same time handle theological arguments based on biblical insight.

The term *diakonia* came into use in the 1830s when the modern diaconal movement began with the establishment of institutions in Germany.<sup>5</sup> From that time, deaconesses and deacons were educated as nurses and social workers, based on the understanding that their ministries had originally been established by the Apostles, but got lost along the history of the church, at least in the Protestant churches. According to the pioneers of the diaconal movement, led by Theodor Fliedner (1800-64) and Johann Hinrich Wichern (1808-81), it was now time to reintroduce these ministries. They shared the view that the focus should be on care for the sick and poor. The deacons and deaconesses were educated accordingly. In this early phase of the diaconal movement, more attention was given to people and their ministries, and less to *diakonia* as a concept. When it was introduced later, promoted by Johann Hinrich Wichern, it was particularly linked with his programme of Inner Mission, which may have caused the use of the term *diakonia* to be largely limited to Germany and to churches of Lutheran or Reformed tradition. For that reason, many churches, especially within the Anglo-American tradition and vernacular, are not familiar with the term *diakonia*, even though they may be familiar with the ministry of deacon and use it according to their confessional traditions.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.lausanne.org/docs/CapeTownCommitment.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Sven-Erik Brodd, ‘Caritas and Diakonia as Perspectives of the Diaconate’, in Gunnel Borgegård, Olav Fanuelson and Christine Hall (eds), *The Ministry of the Deacon: 2. Ecclesiological Explorations* (Uppsala, Sweden: Nordic Ecumenical Council 2000), 23-69.

<sup>5</sup> Kjell Nordstokke, ‘The Study of Diakonia as an Academic Discipline’, in Stephanie Dietrich et al (eds), *Diakonia as Christian Social Practice* (Oxford: Regnum, 2014), 46-61.

## II

Since the very beginning, the ecumenical movement has emphasized *diakonia* as the shared responsibility and service of the churches across geographic and religious boundaries, and at the same time seeing it as a commitment promoting unity among churches.<sup>6</sup> The *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* defines *diakonia* as ‘responsible service of the gospel by deeds and by words performed by Christians in response to the needs of people’.<sup>7</sup> This view is largely in line with how the diaconal movement perceived *diakonia*, above all as service motivated by the gospel, originally performed as professional Christian health and social care, later expanding to include humanitarian aid (emergency aid and refugee work) and development work.

Ecumenical organizations like the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation established departments for world service that co-ordinated large projects on humanitarian aid and development. This work, named both *diakonia* and inter-church aid, was financially supported mainly by churches in the global North and by church-based development agencies. From the 1960s many of these agencies developed their own agendas for international *diakonia*, although not all of them would use this term when describing their activities. Rather, they would talk about development, due to the fact that, since the 1960s, they also received governmental funding for their work. A similar development marked mission organizations; many of them established departments for development work.

By the 1970s, this development started to cause frustration, especially among church leaders in the global South. One main concern was the tendency to present development projects in strictly secular terms, according to the requirements and norms of governmental donors. This approach led to a strict separation between development programmes and traditional mission work, and in some cases it was emphasized that activities funded by development money should not have any links with evangelization activities.

How to defend this position theologically? Representatives of the church-related agencies would often hold the opinion that development work is an activity within the realm of the theology of creation, promoting human welfare and a just and sustainable society. From this point of view, international *diakonia*, if that term was to be used, did not include the Christian proclamation or matters related to the life of the church.

Such arguments did not convince, in particular those from the global South. They would ask: in what sense were the church-related agencies

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<sup>6</sup> Martin Robra, *Diakonia – A Central Task of the Ecumenical Movement* (Geneva: WCC, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> Teresa Joan White, ‘Diakonia’, in Nicholas Lossky et al (eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 2nd edition (Geneva: WCC, 2002), 305-10.

church-based? This led to the next question: Could they be church-based without acknowledging the church as an ecumenical reality, being rooted in a different context, but united in the vocation to serve in the world? In other words, the issue was both the subject and the nature of *diakonia*, both its ecclesiological dimension and its distinctiveness as faith-based service.

From the 1980s, the ecumenical movement – primarily the World Council of Churches – provided opportunities for discussing these questions. Influenced by Orthodox theology, it came to see *diakonia* as the ‘liturgy after the liturgy’ as the message from the Vancouver Assembly in 1983 stated:

The ‘liturgy after the liturgy’ is *diakonia*. *Diakonia*, as the church’s ministry of sharing, healing and reconciliation is of the very nature of the Church. It demands of individuals and churches a giving which comes not out of what they have, but what they are. *Diakonia* constantly has to challenge the frozen, static, self-centered structures of the church and transform them into living instruments of the sharing and healing ministry of the church. *Diakonia* cannot be confined within the institutional framework. It should transcend the established structures and boundaries of the institutional church and become the sharing and healing action of the Holy Spirit through the community of God’s people in and for the world.<sup>8</sup>

This statement clearly expresses the ecclesial and missional character of *diakonia*. It is important to have in mind that mission here is perceived as the action of the Triune God, and not primarily as an activity initiated by the church. Consequently, it sees *diakonia* within the concept of holistic mission, as an integral dimension of the church’s vocation to be sent into the world.

If the Vancouver Assembly addressed the understanding of *diakonia* basically from a theological point of view, a consultation organized in Larnaca, Cyprus, in 1986 under the theme ‘Diakonia 2000 – Called to be Neighbours’, took up these questions based on experiences from the diaconal praxis.<sup>9</sup> Again, the participants emphasized the ecclesial dimension of diaconal work; they claimed that *diakonia* is a ministry given to the whole church, and in particular, the local church. *Diakonia* therefore cannot be a task reserved for groups or institutions, mainly from the North, just because they have money and professional competence at their disposal.

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In addition, the Larnaca consultation argued in favour of a more holistic understanding of *diakonia*. On the one hand, this meant linking *diakonia* with the other dimensions of the church’s mission, such as proclamation and advocacy, although affirming the distinctiveness of each dimension. On

<sup>8</sup> David Gill (ed), *Gathered for life. Official report VI Assembly World Council of Churches, Vancouver, Canada, 24 July-10 August 1983* (Geneva: WCC, 1983), 62.

<sup>9</sup> Klaus Poser (ed), *Diakonia 2000: Called to be Neighbours. Official report WCC Consultation Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service: Larnaca, 1986* (Geneva: WCC, 1987).

the other hand, it also opened for a more comprehensive approach to social praxis, which included critical social analysis and awareness of root causes. As a consequence, diaconal work should not only be an expression of benevolent care, but also focus on justice and human dignity.

The 1980s thus represent a turning-point in the ecumenical understanding of *diakonia*. It is possible to register what I would consider a paradigm shift in conceptualizing *diakonia*, with emphasis on three basic dimensions:

1. Its ecclesial dimension. *Diakonia* is not an optional activity of the church; the church is by her very nature diaconal. The concept of *diakonia* thus holds together what the church **is** and what the church **does**, and must be reflected as such.
2. Its holistic dimension. *Diakonia* is not just a sector within what the church does; rather, it is an integral part of her mission in the world. Although distinct in its performance, diaconal action cannot be isolated from what the church announces as the foundation for her faith, hope and love.
3. Its prophetic dimension. *Diakonia* is not just charity work; it is rights-based with a mandate to defend human dignity, promote justice and care for creation. Inspired by biblical examples, *diakonia* is called to be prophetic when standing up against injustice and the abuse of power, and boldly defend the cause of the downtrodden and marginalized.

All three dimensions imply that the Triune God is at work in diaconal action: God the Father calls God's people to care for creation, to promote human dignity and justice, in solidarity with the poor and excluded. Jesus Christ gives his disciples a share in his sending to the world with the mandate to heal, include and empower (John 20:21). The Holy Spirit empowers for this mission, equipping God's people so that it has the needed energy and wisdom to serve.

At the same time, Trinitarian perspectives make it clear that *diakonia* relates to the nature and the mission of the church. For that reason, it makes sense to limit the use of the term *diakonia* to the caring ministry of the church and of Christians; it expresses the distinctive faith-base of such action. That said, it is important to acknowledge that not it is only Christians who are doing good works; all humans are created in God's image and given the capacity for loving care and for promoting justice, many of them more committed than most Christians. In concrete diaconal action, it therefore makes sense to co-operate with all people of goodwill, and promote networks of solidarity and joint action.

Finalizing this section which has focused on the shift in the understanding of *diakonia* within the ecumenical movement, I shall give a

few references to the documents from the latest WCC Assembly, held in Busan, South Korea, in 2013.<sup>10</sup>

The mission document, *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, affirms the holistic nature of mission, stating that:

The church in every geo-political and socio-economic context is called to service (*diakonia*) – to live out the faith and hope of the community of God’s people, witnessing to what God has done in Jesus Christ. Through service the church participates in God’s mission, following the way of its Servant Lord. The church is called to be a diaconal community manifesting the power of service over the power of domination, enabling and nurturing possibilities for life, and witnessing to God’s transforming grace through acts of service that hold forth the promise of God’s reign.<sup>11</sup>

These formulations are largely repeated in the *diakonia* document, *Theological Perspectives on Diakonia in the Twenty-First Century*.<sup>12</sup> It attempts to ‘re-imagine *diakonia* from the vantage point’ of vulnerable and marginalized communities, those who in the past often have been considered objects of diaconal service. According to this new view, they are subjects, called to be partners in God’s mission. Theological arguments and the biblical witness ground this shift of perspective: God opts for the poor and oppressed, Jesus constantly locates himself among the marginalized of his time; the Holy Spirit empowers the Christian community to resist the evil powers that seek to dominate in this world, and to act in a spirit that proposes alternative values and visions.<sup>13</sup>

### III

As we have observed, studies relating to ecclesiology and missiology were driving forces in the process of reformulating the understanding of *diakonia*, and of emphasizing its Trinitarian perspectives. Only later, the question regarding its biblical use gained attention, when scholars brought new critical light to the interpretation of the so-called *diak-* words (*διακονία*, *διακονειν*, *διακονος*) in the New Testament. Until then, the standard translation of *diakonia* was ‘service’, very much influenced by its use in diaconal institutions and the caring service of deaconesses and deacons. According to this tradition, those in need largely determined the nature of service; so, because the objects of diaconal action were the sick or helpless, diaconal workers were trained as nurses or social workers.

In addition, those involved in diaconal work would often view their service in line with concepts of spirituality that emphasized obedience to

<sup>10</sup> Kjell Nordstokke, ‘Ecumenical Diakonia: Responding to the Signs of the Times’, in *The Ecumenical Review*, 66:3 (2014), 265-73.

<sup>11</sup> WCC, *Resource Book, World Council of Churches 10th Assembly* (Geneva: WCC, 2013), 68.

<sup>12</sup> WCC, *Resource Book*, 104-06.

<sup>13</sup> WCC, *Resource Book*, 106-09.

the example of Jesus and therefore idealized humility and self-giving. New Testament scholars usually endorsed this interpretation, which as in the case of H.W. Beyer, who in 1934 wrote the article on *diakonia* in the influential *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, defining it as ‘active Christian love for the neighbor’.<sup>14</sup>

The research of the Australian scholar John N. Collins caused a real watershed in the interpretation of the *diak-* words. In a thorough study, published in 1990,<sup>15</sup> he set forth the view – that *diakonia* meant caring service – was based on a misunderstanding. Collins had examined all ancient sources written in Greek, and he had found no text in which *diakonia* meant caring service of the sick. Rather, the *diak-* words occurred in three types of context: message, agency and attendance upon a person in a household. According to this understanding, a *διακονος* would be a messenger, a person authorized by his master to fulfil an important mission.

In Collins’ view, this is also how the New Testament uses the *diak-* words. Paul speaks frequently about his *diakonia* (Rom. 11:13; 2 Cor. 4:1), a term that the Vulgate translates *ministerium*, or ‘ministry’ as in most English translations. The notion is apparently more about exercising important leadership than humbly caring for the poor. In a few cases *διακονος* refers to the specific diaconal ministry; the instructions in 1 Tim. 3:8-13 give no indication as to what the deacon was expected to do; rather, they focus on spiritual and moral qualities, similar to those in the parallel instructions regarding the bishops (3:1-7). It seems that bishops and deacons paired the leadership functions in the early congregations (Phil. 1:1). The mention of the deacon Phoebe in Romans 16:1 seems to affirm this: she clearly has a leadership role; it is also noteworthy that she is said to be a deacon (*διακονος*), not a deaconess, a term that appears later and was reserved for women. This fact indicates that she was holding an ordered ministry in the church.

Paul affirms the diversity of leadership roles in the church (1 Cor. 12:4-5), acknowledging them as gifts of the Spirit. When talking about his *diakonia*, he does not refer to the more narrow use of the term, namely one specific ministry among others, but rather to ministry in a more overarching way. For Paul, the decisive matter is who has given him his *diakonia*; it is not a ministry that he himself has invented, based on his own will or ambitions. Very much on the contrary, Christ has called him and authorized him to be his *διακονος* (1 Cor. 3:5; Eph. 3:7; Col. 1:25).

In my view, what marks the understanding of *diakonia* in the early church is this relationship with God who in Jesus Christ calls his disciples

<sup>14</sup> Hermann Wolfgang Beyer, ‘*διακονεω*’, in Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich (eds), *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament 2* (Stuttgart, Germany: Kohlhammer, 1935), 81-93; English translation: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament 2* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 81-93.

<sup>15</sup> John N. Collins, *Diakonia: Reinterpreting the Ancient Sources* (New York: OUP, 1990).

to follow him. The very term reminded them of the *diakonia* of Jesus, the Son of Man who ‘did not come to be served (διακονηθῆναι), but to serve (διακονῆσαι), and to give his life as a ransom for many’ (Mark 10:45). The title Son of Man refers to the messenger that God will send in the Final Age (Dan. 7:13). According to Mark, Jesus identifies himself with this figure, but qualifies his mission in the world as *diakonia*. Thereby a link is established with another messianic figure in the Old Testament, that of the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53). In responding to the ambitions of his disciples of sitting next to him ‘in his glory’ (Mark 10:37), Jesus makes it clear that, unlike the rulers of this world, he is not establishing his kingdom by exercising power from above. His mission, or *diakonia*, is to walk the way of the cross, giving his life for the lost.

This is also how it shall be with those who follow him. Jesus claims, ‘Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant (δουλος), and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all’ (Mark 10:43-44). Clearly, this is an imperative, the way of performing their mission in the world. Before that, however, it is an indicative, which Luke emphasizes in his version of this narrative. According to Mark, this happened as Jesus and his disciples were on their way to Jerusalem, causing both anxiety and expectations to what would happen when they got there. Would Jesus finally reveal his power and establish the messianic kingdom? Luke, however, places the story on the eve of his arrest, during their last supper together. Again, the disciples start to argue who is the greater among them; again, Jesus reminds them that ‘the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves (ὡς ὁ διακωνῶν)’, adding, ‘I am among you as one who serves (ὁ διακωνῶν)’ (Luke 22:26-27). With these words, Jesus reveals himself and his mission, as a mission from below, thereby authorizing them to sit at the messianic table (cf John 1:12).

The Gospel of John uses another story to state the same message. By washing his disciples’ feet during the Last Supper, Jesus let them know that, only by letting him be their servant, will they ‘have part in’ him (John 13:8). In other words, through the *diakonia* of Jesus, they are cleansed from whatever would disqualify them from belonging to the communion of the table. Their relationship with Jesus established by his *diakonia* also takes the form of an imperative:

‘Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly, I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him’ (John 13:14-16).

Although John does not use the term *diakonia* here, the basic understanding is the same: their relationship with Jesus is both a gift and a task; his sending is also their sending into the world (12:26).<sup>16</sup>

The gospels are unanimous in presenting the mission of Jesus as holistic. According to Matthew,

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them (4:23-24).

His healing ministry of restoring broken relationships and affirming the dignity of the marginalized gives witness to the diaconal dimension of his mission. These acts reveal his messianic authority (εξουσία) as power to lift up, forgive, include and empower (Mark 1:27; Luke 5:24).

The Triune God acts in Jesus and his diaconal sending to the world. This was affirmed when Jesus initiated his ministry; after being baptized, God's Spirit descended upon him; and a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased' (Matt. 3:17). Immediately afterwards, the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness; here the devil tempted him to opt for a different ministry than the one given him by his Father. Jesus, however, firmly resisted the ministry of glory, of demonstrating power from above; instead he remained obedient to his vocation. Back in his home synagogue in Nazareth, he announced:

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour' (Luke 4:18-19).

Summing up this section, the new insight into the original meaning of the *diak-* words has made it clear that these words do not point in the direction of specific tasks, such as caring service. A *διακονος* is a person that has been entrusted an important mission (*διακονια*), the one who commissions the *διακονος* determines the nature and content of the mission.

That is why Paul always talks about his *diakonia* as an affirmation of his relationship with the Triune God who has called and authorized him to serve (Acts 20:24; 2 Cor. 3:8; 5:18-20). In performing this mission, the model will always be the *diakonia* of Jesus, as Paul reminds his readers when motivating them to participate in his campaign of collecting money in favour of the poor in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 8-9). The campaign is simply called the *diakonia* (8:4; 9:1.12-13); the willingness to share with

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<sup>16</sup> Kjell Nordstokke, 'Diakonia according to the Gospel of John', in *Diakonia: Journal for the Study of Christian Social Practice*, 5:1 (2014), 65-76.

the poor is presented as a way of testing the sincerity of their love, oriented by the example of Jesus.

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich (8:9).

This is in line with Collins' findings, that the New Testament supports an understanding of *diakonia* as being entitled to the task of bringing the good news of the newness of life in Jesus Christ to the world. Collins describes this as a role of 'go-between', or as will be developed in the next section, a ministry of transformation, reconciliation and empowerment.<sup>17</sup>

#### IV

In 2009, the Lutheran World Federation published the document *Diakonia in Context*.<sup>18</sup> In many ways, it is a follow-up of another document, *Mission in Context*, from 2004.<sup>19</sup> Both documents affirm a holistic view on mission, stating that it encompasses proclamation, *diakonia* and advocacy. They also state that the church by her very nature is missional, called to participate in God's mission for the healing of the world. In addition, both documents highlight transformation, reconciliation and empowerment as key concepts when reflecting on what mission means in today's world.

While the mission document refers to *diakonia* in general terms, *Diakonia in Context* presents a more thorough understanding of its nature and practice. The document contains three parts: The first describes the context of *diakonia*, showing some of the trends that condition diaconal action, as for instance globalization. The second part introduces the theology of *diakonia*, ascertaining its Trinitarian perspectives, as well as its ecclesiological and missiological basis. The third and last part presents and analyses different aspects of diaconal praxis, such as objectives, methodology and actors.

*Diakonia in Context* avoids a strict definition of *diakonia*; instead, it maintains some fundamental assumptions:

One is that diakonia is a theological concept that points to the very identity and mission of the Church. Another is its practical implication in the sense that diakonia is a call to action, as a response to challenges of suffering, injustice and care for creation.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> John N. Collins and Kjell Nordstokke, 'Diakonia – theory and praxis', in Kjell Nordstokke, *Liberating Diakonia* (Trondheim, Norway: Tapir akademisk forlag, 2011), 41-53.

<sup>18</sup> *Diakonia in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment* (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 2009).

<sup>19</sup> *Mission in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment* (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 2004).

<sup>20</sup> *Diakonia in Context*, 8.

The second part of the document, *The identity of diakonia*, opens with the statement that Christians confess faith in the Triune God: 'It is in this faith that constitutes the identity of the Church and therefore the identity of *diakonia*'.<sup>21</sup> The following paragraphs elaborate the Trinitarian perspectives.

Faith in God the Creator implies that 'God's good creation cannot be reduced to an object of human consumption, but deserves respect and care'. Human dignity has its deepest roots in this view on creation: only men and women are created in the image of God. This should, however, not be used to justify any form of anthropocentrism; on the contrary, 'God gives a special responsibility to all humankind to care as stewards for God's creation'. Diaconal action is a way of confessing faith in God's continued presence in the world as Creator, and it motivates Christians to work together with all people of goodwill 'acknowledging that every human being is created in God's image and thereby given a mandate to be God's co-worker in God's ongoing love and care for all creation'.<sup>22</sup>

The document presents the diaconal dimension of Jesus' messianic mission along the same lines that we have presented above (Section III), focusing on two fundamental dimensions. The first refers to the holistic nature of his ministry, which holds together proclamation of God's kingdom and acts of healing, and siding with the suffering, downtrodden and marginalized. The other reveals 'his authority to invite persons, even sinners, to be included in the messianic fellowship that he establishes, and to empower them to participate in his mission'.<sup>23</sup>

Faith in the Holy Spirit equally contains a strong diaconal dimension; it 'asks God's life-giving breath to graciously awaken faith and to empower participation in the life and mission of the communion of believers'. With reference to Peter's speech on the day of Pentecost, and his announcement that what they now were experiencing was the fulfilment of what God had promised: the outpouring of God's Spirit would empower young people, even slaves, men and women to prophesy (Acts 2:17-18). Consequently, the document interprets the work of the Holy Spirit as an event that includes and empowers. It points to baptism as a holy space in the life of the church 'where inclusiveness is radically announced as even small children are embraced in the communion of believers'. It reminds us that baptism is at the same time a moment of empowerment, as all baptized are called and equipped by the Holy Spirit, to 'walk in newness of life' (Rom. 6:4). The document speaks here about the *diakonia of all believers*, as a reformulation of the traditional *priesthood of all believers*, and emphasizes, in line with Paul's teaching, that the body of Christ consists of different members, and that all are vital, regardless of their apparent status.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Diakonia in Context*, 24.

<sup>22</sup> *Diakonia in Context*, 25.

<sup>23</sup> *Diakonia in Context*, 26.

<sup>24</sup> *Diakonia in Context*, 26-27.

The third part of *Diakonia in Context*, entitled *The action of diakonia*, defines the basic directions of diaconal work as transformation, reconciliation and empowerment.<sup>25</sup> All three express the interdisciplinary nature of diaconal practice; they refer both to important concerns in social work, and at the same time have a strong theological significance.

Transformation means social change or development, but in a more holistic sense, it claims that we are all in need of having our mindset and way of behaving transformed. As a theological term, it refers to God's continued creation and God's promise of providing a future and a hope for all. In a time of complex conflicts, when even religion often seems to be involved as a motivating factor, reconciliation is an important task, both from a social and a political point of view. It is widely recognized, at least in some contexts, that religious leaders are trusted as mediators and peacemakers. This corresponds to the ministry (*diakonia*) of reconciliation that God has given the church, a task based on God's act of reconciliation through Christ (2 Cor. 5:18). Equally, empowerment is a well-known concept in social work, both as method and objective; in a theological perspective, it refers, as we have seen above, to the work of the Holy Spirit that empowers God's people to participate in God's mission in the world.

Transformation, reconciliation and empowerment are not separate processes; they presuppose and support each other mutually. As directions for diaconal action, this expresses their Trinitarian dimension, giving witness to the caring love of the Triune God who creates and liberates, and who gives eternal life.

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<sup>25</sup> *Diakonia in Context*, 43-47.

# **‘FOR THUS SAYS THE LORD’: PROPHETIC DIAKONIA AS ADVOCACY AND FIGHT FOR JUSTICE**

Stephanie Dietrich

## **Introduction: Fighting for Justice – or Proclaiming the Gospel?**

In the Old Testament the prophets spoke up against injustice. Their primary task was to call the people of Israel as a community to accountability and responsibility in their relationship with God. They helped the people understand what was expected of them in that relationship. In doing so, they often interpreted history, the flow of events, in the light of their relationship with God. Their task was not to predict the future, but to remind the people – both their own, and those threatening them – of God’s will for them. The prophets’ advocacy of justice was thus advice to practise grace and mercy towards those who had no power to secure it for themselves. This becomes very clear in the prophet Isaiah’s speech about justice to the city of Jerusalem (1:21-27):

See how the faithful city has become a prostitute! She once was full of justice; righteousness used to dwell in her – but now murderers! Your silver has become dross; your choice wine is diluted with water. Your rulers are rebels, partners with thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts. They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the widow’s case does not come before them. Therefore the Lord, the LORD Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, declares: ‘Ah! I will vent my wrath on my foes and avenge myself on my enemies. I will turn my hand against you; I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities. I will restore your leaders as in days of old, your rulers as at the beginning. Afterward you will be called the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City. Zion will be delivered with justice, her penitent ones with righteousness.

The prophets spoke out clearly about injustice. They blamed the corrupt leaders of their time, and advocated for the poor and marginalized. At the same time, they were concerned about the people’s faithlessness in relation to God. The love of God and the love of ‘your neighbour’ were connected in their prophecies. The neglect of God was, according to the prophets, intertwined closely with the neglect of humankind in need.

Should the Christian Church today do the same? Proclaim faith in the triune God, and engage in the fight for worldly justice? This article will focus on the question: Is it the task of the Christian church to fight for justice, or should the church rather concentrate on proclaiming the gospel

to the world? How can the Christian church today follow up this call to advocacy and fight for justice?<sup>1</sup>

There is no easy answer to these questions. Looking at the Common Call from Edinburgh 2010, the church's call to evangelize and the church's call to serve the world do not seem to be clearly separated:

Trusting in the Triune God and with a renewed sense of urgency, we are called to incarnate and proclaim the good news of salvation, of forgiveness of sin, of life in abundance, and of liberation for all poor and oppressed. We are challenged to witness and evangelism in such a way that we are a living demonstration of the love, righteousness and justice that God intends for the whole world.<sup>2</sup>

'Sharing in God's mission of love', according to the Edinburgh 2010 Call, includes both witness and service to the world. But how then can we differentiate between mission, evangelization and *diakonia*? And – are all of them of the same importance?

Different theological traditions and contexts give different answers. The answers often rely on different contexts and historical circumstances as well as profound theological choices. Nevertheless, when studying *diakonal* literature from the last decades, one can see that there is an increasing focus on the church's duty to engage in the world, often called *diakonia* as the fight for justice, or 'prophetic *diakonia*'.<sup>3</sup>

Inspired by Jesus and the prophets who confronted those in power and called for changes in unjust structures and practices, we pray that God may empower us to help transform all that leads to human greed, violence, injustice and exclusion.<sup>4</sup>

In this article, the focus will be on biblical and systematic theological aspects of *diakonia* as I try to come to terms with the understanding of 'prophetic *diakonia*'. There will be a specific emphasis on *diakonia* related to advocacy and the fight for justice, the so-called 'prophetic *diakonia*', and its biblical foundations, in both the Old and New Testaments.

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<sup>1</sup> This article builds largely on an earlier publication by the author, "Mercy and Truth Are Met Together; Righteousness and Peace Have Kissed Each Other" (Ps 85:10): Biblical and Systematic Theological Perspectives on Diakonia as Advocacy and Fight for Justice', in S. Dietrich et al (eds): *Diakonia as Christian Social Practice* (Oxford: Regnum, 2014), 25-45.

<sup>2</sup> [www.edinburgh2010.org/fileadmin/Edinburgh\\_2010\\_Common\\_Call\\_with\\_explanation.pdf](http://www.edinburgh2010.org/fileadmin/Edinburgh_2010_Common_Call_with_explanation.pdf) (accessed 25th January 2016).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Reinhard Böttcher (ed), *Prophetic Diakonia: 'For the Healing of the World'*. Report Johannesburg: South Africa (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, November 2002).

<sup>4</sup> 'A Letter from the Global Consultation 'Prophetic Diakonia: For the Healing of the World'', in Reinhard Böttcher (ed). *Prophetic Diakonia: 'For the Healing of the World'*. Report Johannesburg: South Africa (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, November 2002), 6.

*Diakonia* is not an easy term to define. As Psalm 85:10 says: 'Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.' *Diakonia* is about mercy – God's mercy for mankind and mankind's mercy for one another; it includes the call to stand up for justice and truth in society, to advocate the rights of the poor and underprivileged, and to work for peace in the world.

Many scholars differentiate between political *diakonia* and prophetic *diakonia*, highlighting both the differences and the close connection between the two concepts.<sup>5</sup> Nordstokke emphasizes that they should be differentiated, pointing out that political *diakonia* 'must be conscious of its socio-political role and be ready to speak out when it's necessary',<sup>6</sup> while prophetic *diakonia* has a somehow more theological and biblical emphasis, since prophecy is a theological term indicating that *diakonia* belongs to God's mission: 'It relates to the intrinsic theological nature of *diakonia*, affirming the prophetic task as a part of the mandate and authority that God has given the church and its *diakonia*.'<sup>7</sup>

### **Biblical Background and Old Testament Tradition**

It is important to highlight some *core aspects of biblical theology*, which are basic for the understanding of *diakonia* in the wide spectre of the inter-human interaction of care and the fight for justice.

We find in the *Old Testament* some profound principles concerning the relationship between God and mankind, and between human beings.

#### *The theology of creation and humankind's inherent dignity*

*The theology of creation* clearly indicates that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God and thus has an intrinsic dignity which forms the basis for humankind's call to treat one another as human beings, with the same dignity, value and right for protection and a meaningful life. Thus, an anthropology which is based on this basic principle forms the background for our emphasis on mutuality and respect as a diaconal paradigm. Everybody is created by God, with the same value and dignity. This dignity is neither based on humankind's abilities and resemblance, nor on its own merits and capacities. It is based and founded on the basic relationship between God the creator and all human beings – and it is given as a gift, not a merit. God's power to call into life marks the centre of human dignity. When God calls humankind into being and into community and relationship with God-self and one another, God calls us at the same time into responsibility for each other, and care for one another. Nobody is

<sup>5</sup> See Nordstokke, *Liberating Diakonia*, 51; Fretheim, 'Dimensions of diakonia', 78.

<sup>6</sup> See Nordstokke, *Liberating Diakonia*, 51.

<sup>7</sup> See Kjell Nordstokke, *Liberating Diakonia*, 51.

worthless in God's eyes; therefore, nobody should be worthless in humankind's eyes. Not respecting this basic principle of the equal value of all human beings, which does not mean sameness, will inevitably lead to other human beings being robbed of their dignity – in forms of discrimination or racism.

In many contexts, specific concern needs to be given to the living conditions of women, as they suffer discrimination in male-dominated societies and structures of power, and also in Christian churches. Thus, the basic Christian belief that men and women are created equally in the image and likeness of God should force diaconal agencies to fight for gender equality and gender justice.

A basic responsibility for the well-being of other human beings finds its foundation in the theology of creation. God's call for stewardship for the whole world includes the call to take care of each other and of creation. 'The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it' (Gen. 2:15).

#### *The need for companionship and the church for 'the other'*

From its outset, the Old Testament also emphasizes the *need for companionship*: 'It is not good for the man to be alone' (Gen. 2:18). Here, we could argue for a clear reciprocity concerning human relations based on God's call into life. As human beings created in the image and likeness of God, everybody is called to community and mutual care. A Christian understanding of humanity will therefore reject individualism where persons only feel responsible for themselves, following the principle 'What's in it for me?'. Being called into fellowship means being called into communion and care for each other. This mutual care is to be offered to everybody and lies in the basic condition of being human, irrespective of one's background, religion, gender, age or identity. This implies that Christian acts of *diakonia* should concern everybody, not just those who belong to the Christian community.

Another biblical story which underlines that human companionship is a godly gift and call is the story of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:1-16). Even when Cain had killed his brother, God continually called him and asked him where his brother was. Even a person who was outside God's covenant, who tried to disappear and quit the community, was still called by God to stand responsible for 'the other'.

Since the 1950s, many theologians have referred to a term coined by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 'The Church for Others'.<sup>8</sup> The church can only be

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Ottmar Fuchs, 'Church for Others', in Norbert Greinacher and Norbert Mette (eds), *Concilium: Diakonia: Church for Others* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 41-54. Bonhoeffer writes about the 'Church for others' in his famous letters from prison, in Christian Gremmels, Eberhard Bethge, Renate Bethge, Ilse Tödt (eds),

church in the real sense when it is there for other people. The 'other people' are all those who do not belong to the church as an institutional or doctrinal community of faith, especially those who are counted as 'unbelievers, sinners, outsiders' – all those who are suffering. Bonhoeffer himself, fighting against the Nazi regime and imprisoned, realized the dangers of a theological approach which contributed to the fact that most of the governing church structures at his time chose to accept and co-operate with the totalitarian regime, instead of fighting against it.<sup>9</sup> He argued against the Lutheran doctrine of 'the two kingdoms of God', the church and the state. In his opinion, the doctrine of 'the two kingdoms' leads to a false dichotomy between the church and the world. Bonhoeffer realized the dangers of a theological approach which caused most of the governing church structures at his time to accept and co-operate with the totalitarian regime. In his view, the church should become radically secular and through this become the church in its real sense. The church and the world are not two different entities; there is only one world, and the church is a part of it.

Nevertheless, the way Bonhoeffer's concept has been used by theologians later on, especially in relation to the social task of the church, might have been somewhat misleading. One might ask whether this concept, in spite of good intentions, has contributed to create new dichotomies between those who are 'inside' and those who are 'outside' the church. Ecclesiologically, based on a biblical concept of mutuality and reciprocity, of community and fellowship, there is no 'we, the church' and 'them, the outsiders'; there is only a 'we' who embrace everybody and call everybody into the communion of the church and fellowship with Jesus Christ. That does not mean that everybody becomes 'anonymous Christians', as in Karl Rahner's understanding, but it means that everybody as created in the image and likeness of God deserves to be respected and supported when in need of help.

In his ecclesiology, Bonhoeffer addressed his own evangelical church which he saw as shaped by a bourgeois middle class self-righteousness where 'the other' was mainly an object for charity in order to salve one's conscience. In this way, Bonhoeffer's approach – according to its intention – is highly relevant for an understanding of *diakonia* today. Bonhoeffer's ecclesiology and incarnational theology argue vehemently for the church's and every Christian's duty to live in the world, in actual societies, and engage in them as Christians. The Christian congregation is called to serve the world and society whether people are Christian or not. Those who are not baptized or do not belong to the church are not members of the church, but they are part of the community we all belong to, and thus we are all

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*Widerstand und Ergebung: Briefe und Aufzeichnungen aus der Haft* (München: Christian Kaiser 1998), 560.

<sup>9</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in Ilse Tödt, Heinz Eduard Tödt, Ernst Feil, Clifford Green (eds), *Ethik* (München: Christian Kaiser 1992), 52.

responsible for each other and bound to each other in our common humanity.

Contemporary concepts of *diakonia* – as, for example, presented at the 2013 WCC Assembly in Busan, South Korea – even emphasize that the church and its identity should be defined from the ‘underside of history’, from below, and not least from those living in the global South.<sup>10</sup> At a Conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 2nd-6th June 2012, on ‘Theological Perspectives on Diakonia in the 21st Century’, it was underlined that *diakonia* has its basic starting-point and perspective from the marginalized.

The world may tend to see the margins as places of disgrace and powerlessness; however, the biblical witness points towards God who is always present in the struggles of those unjustly pushed to the margins of society. It gives several accounts of God’s attention and caring love to people in situations of oppression and consequent deprivation. God hears the cry of the oppressed and responds by sustaining and accompanying them in their journey towards liberation (Ex. 3:7-8). This is the *diakonia* of God: a *diakonia* of liberation as well as of restoring dignity, and ensuring justice and peace.<sup>11</sup>

Based on this faith in God the Creator and humankind as created in God’s image and likeness, it also becomes clear that helping each other and receiving help are acts of mutuality, and there are no mere givers and recipients when everybody has the same basic value.

This basic understanding of mutuality and reciprocity is echoed concretely in Church of Norway’s Plan for *diakonia* when *diakonia* is defined as ‘the caring ministry of the Church. It is the Gospel in action and is expressed through loving your neighbour, creating inclusive communities, caring for creation and struggling for justice’.<sup>12</sup>

### *Social responsibility*

The Old Testament also emphasizes the *communal aspects of responsibility in society*. The Old Testament tradition of law includes an emphasis on the corporal responsibility of the faithful for those who are in need, and today’s diaconal emphasis on the responsibility for all the people we are living together with, and those who are slaves or strangers, finds its clear roots in the Old Testament texts showing how God asked the people of Israel to uphold this duty, through clear rules and official laws, and through story-

<sup>10</sup> *Theological Perspectives on Diakonia in 21st Century*: from the Conference jointly organized by the Justice and Diakonia, Just and Inclusive Communities, and Mission and Evangelism programmes of the World Council of Churches in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 2nd-6th June 2012 (resource document from the WCC programmes for the WCC Assembly 2013 Busan).

<sup>11</sup> *Theological Perspectives on Diakonia in 21st Century*, §11.

<sup>12</sup> <https://kirken.no/nb-NO/church-of-norway/resources/plan-for-diakonia> (accessed 25th January 2016).

telling and prophetic speech. The book of Leviticus is often referred to when one speaks about the Old Testament laws regarding the poor, the widows, the orphans and the alien. Leviticus 19:9-10 tells the Israelites to plough their fields only once so that the poor may come and harvest food for themselves. The Year of Jubilee, which is proclaimed in Leviticus 25:8-55 has become an important theme for today's understanding of global justice. These texts are very much in accordance with modern concepts of self-help when establishing policies which enable the poor to provide for themselves through their own work. Israelite landowners were asked to give access to their land to non-owners so that these marginalized and oppressed people could pick what was left and feed themselves through their own labour. The Jubilee tradition prevented people from remaining permanently landless, no matter the reason for their former loss of land.

### *The covenant between God and mankind*

In this context, the biblical tradition of *covenant* also plays an important role. There are different groups of covenants in the Old Testament, like the Noachic Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, the Priestly Covenant and the Davidic Covenant. All these covenant traditions, though having different emphases, underline that God has bound God-self to humanity; that God has a mission for mankind and uses mankind through sending them and obligating them to follow God's will. In the New Testament, covenant belief is related to Jesus' death and resurrection, establishing what can be called the *new covenant* connected with Jesus' life, proclamation and deeds, and his death. Luke 22:20 speaks about the new covenant related to the Last Supper and the institution of the Eucharist: 'This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.' The concept of covenant is important for our understanding of *diakonia*, because it links mankind's life with its mission and sending by God, and shows that God has a clear will and intention for his creation – namely, to follow God's call and to be faithful to him under all conditions. Further, it is important that the covenant in the biblical tradition is not about the relationship between God and individuals, but it is grounded in God's relationship with a *community* of people. In our understanding of *diakonia*, it is important that diaconal action, unlike mere charitable activities, which are often individualized, is a collective concept and thus demands organizational and collective structures above the level of individual motivation.

### *Prophetic diakonia*

The tradition of *diakonia* has often narrowly focused on humble service, based on historical circumstances in the 18th and 19th centuries, and a narrow reading of the New Testament tradition. Nevertheless, this concept

of humble service, often described as acts of charity, should not be totally discarded. As Molefe Tsele underlines:

God is charitable to his entire creation. Society as a whole needs to be made more charitable. We must resist to turn charity into a dirty word, an undertaking viewed with suspicion. However, the ultimate objective of diakonia is restorative: It aims to restore the dignity of the poor. In doing so, diakonia unites the giver and the receiver and leaves neither of them unchanged. Thus it is liberating and transforming.<sup>13</sup>

Within diaconal literature from recent decades, the term ‘prophetic *diakonia*’ turns up regularly in order to describe the pro-active dimension of *diakonia*. Prophetic *diakonia* addresses and takes a stand against injustice. The prophets in the Old Testament were clear in their messages, which often were unexpected and unpopular. The prophets claimed that their message was received from God, and they spoke bravely about injustice and the peoples’ misbehaviour and faithlessness, irrespective of the personal dangers this could imply for them. The prophets criticized the establishment sharply, as in Amos 5:12: ‘For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor at the gate from their right.’ In Amos 6:4-6, the prophet argues against the ‘amoral’ lifestyle of the governors:

‘You lie on beds adorned with ivory  
and lounge on your couches.  
You dine on choice lambs  
and fattened calves.  
You strum away on your harps like David  
and improvise on musical instruments.  
You drink wine by the bowlful  
and use the finest lotions,  
but you do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph.’

The prophets also criticized the cultic practice of the establishment, pointing out that all worship has to be in accordance with the basic insight that Yahweh, the God of justice, claims justice from his people. Thus, the prophets made clear that people’s faith, worship and lifestyle must be consistent with one another. There is no true service or worship to God without service to humankind, especially those who are in need. The prophets do not point only to the past, but also to the future. The hope for a future shaped by a just communal life and a new creation becomes the motivation for their prophecies, fighting against injustice (cf. Is. 49:7-13).

Prophets in the Old Testament were visionary, critical against the misuse of power in their societies and guiding role models for their people concerning ethical and moral choices in life.<sup>14</sup> In this way, one could say

<sup>13</sup> Mofele Tsele, ‘Prophetic Task of the Church’, 54.

<sup>14</sup> For an excellent summary of biblical and exegetical aspects of prophetic *diakonia*, see Herbert Haslinger, *Diakonie: Grundlagen für die soziale Arbeit in der Kirche* (Paderborn, Germany: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2009), 234-37.

the prophets can be seen as role models for a diaconal church. The prophets were individuals chosen by God to speak a prophetic word to those in power who were deviating from God's purposes. The prophetic aspect of *diakonia* refers to its task in dismantling injustice and fighting for the poor and marginalized. On the other hand, one has to be aware that there is the danger of false prophecy and the misuse of power, when people, especially within church contexts, claim to speak with the authority of God's voice and thus cannot be 'wrong'. A problem might also be communicating the terminology in secular contexts, where there is no clear reference or acceptance for a religious dimension linked with 'prophetic' terminology. Thus, the term 'prophetic' might be more useful inside the Christian church as an internal tool to explain one's diaconal engagement and mission in the fight for justice, than it may be towards society and the political authorities.

As indicated above, one should nevertheless ask whether the term 'prophetic *diakonia*' in the end turns out to be the most useful term when trying to underline the need for involvement and engagement in societal issues. First, the term 'prophetic' can be difficult to understand and communicate vis-à-vis secular institutions which do not relate to a Christian self-understanding. Secondly, it might be misleading because it claims to speak with a God-given authority which it is difficult to question.

Kjetil Fretheim<sup>15</sup> develops the concept of *diakonia* based on an analysis of the Kairos Palestine document<sup>16</sup> from 2009. Fretheim claims that the public, political and prophetic can and should be combined in Christian social work, even if there are nuances. Fretheim underlines that 'concern for the excluded and marginalized represents a key contact between public and prophetic theologies'.<sup>17</sup>

While public *diakonia* is concerned with inclusive and empowering participation, and political *diakonia* deals with policy implementation, prophetic *diakonia* shares the important characteristics of prophetic theology, being radically visionary, critical and morally committed to liberation and justice.<sup>18</sup>

Fretheim and many others underline the link between prophetic theology and prophetic *diakonia* and liberation theology, which interprets the teachings of Jesus Christ in relation to liberation from unjust economic, political or social conditions. The principal methodological innovation of liberation theology is seeing theology from the perspective of the poor and the oppressed. Among many other famous liberation theologians from the Latin-American context, one should mention Gustavo Gutiérrez who gave

<sup>15</sup> Kjetil Fretheim, 'Dimensions of diakonia: the public, political and prophetic', in *Diakonia*, Vol. IV, 2013, 67-80.

<sup>16</sup> *A Moment of Truth: A word of faith, hope, and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering* (Kairos Palestine, 2009).

<sup>17</sup> Fretheim, 'Dimensions of diakonia', 75.

<sup>18</sup> Fretheim, 'Dimensions of diakonia', 78.

the movement its name with his book *A Theology of Liberation* (1971).<sup>19</sup> Gutiérrez coined the phrase ‘preferential option for the poor’, which became a slogan of liberation theology. Drawing from the New Testament motif of the poor, Gutiérrez asserted that God is revealed as having a preference for those people who are ‘insignificant’, ‘marginalized’, ‘unimportant’, ‘needy’, ‘despised’ and ‘defenceless’. This becomes a core motif in diaconal theory which is strongly influenced by liberation theology.<sup>20</sup>

If we are aware of its prophetic nature, and able to integrate *diakonia* with a prophetic vision, diaconal work moves beyond charity towards social transformation, pointing to the reign of God. As churches become more aware of *diakonia*’s prophetic dimension, God’s mission in the world will be furthered.<sup>21</sup>

### The New Testament tradition

Coming to the *New Testament*, Jesus himself summarized his message with the words in Matthew 22:34-40:

‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.

Jesus was referring to and quoting from the Old Testament law in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. Neighbourly love, love of God and loving oneself are bound together and cannot be separated. This includes respect towards our neighbours as autonomous persons, not mere objects of charity. The profound respect for the other’s identity and integrity is the basis for our diaconal approach today, placing a specific emphasis on the call for mutuality and reciprocity in all human relations.

Taking into account Jesus’ own example in his encounter with other people, the picture is multi-faceted. What is striking in many of the New Testament stories about Jesus’ interaction with the people he met in different circumstances is his *holistic approach* towards them. He did not only tell them what to do and what was right, or preach to them, but he took care of them in a holistic way, healing their diseases, offering forgiveness and inclusion into his fellowship, turning traditional values in society upside-down and having table fellowship with sinners. Thus Jesus’ ministry integrated a model of respect and care for other human beings, despite their status in society, treating them as autonomous human persons deserving to

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<sup>19</sup> Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation* (15th anniversary edition with new introduction by author), trans. Caridad Inda, John Eagleson (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012).

<sup>20</sup> *Prophetic Diakonia*, 16.

<sup>21</sup> *Prophetic Diakonia*, 16.

be met with God's healing power through Jesus' encounter with them. Acts 10:38 tells how Jesus 'went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him'. Healing the sick and showing solidarity with the weak were integrated parts of Jesus' life and messianic service. Jesus did not only offer help to those who were in despair; he also felt sorry for them (Mark 1:41) and was touched by their destiny, and at the same time empowered them through his liberating and uplifting power. Thus, following Jesus' model of *diakonia*, professional care should always keep in mind that the carer's personal engagement with the other person is an important part of the act of caring, and not a sign of non-professionalism. Jesus never became so 'professional' that he was not touched personally by his encounters with other people.

### *Focus on people in need*

*Jesus focused especially on those in need.* Thus, the aspect of focusing on those who are in need in different ways, the outcasts of our communities and societies, is a core aspect of the theology of *diakonia*. Jesus' encounter with people in need did not mean mere acts of charity, but included empowerment and the challenge to change one's life. Even if today's diaconal emphasis concentrates primarily on mutuality and reciprocity, one should keep in mind that people who are suffering in different ways deserve specific concern for help and should be given priority. This also includes the fact that sometimes within diaconal action there is an imbalance of power caused by the reality of suffering in the world. This imbalance of power calls for a huge amount of awareness for all people involved in diaconal service.

### *Focus on gender equality and empowerment*

The stories about Jesus in the New Testament also show his focus on the *empowerment* of people, asking them what they want him to do for them (Mark 10:51). In the encounter with the blind man, Jesus did not take for granted that the man wanted to be healed, but asked him first what he wanted him to do for him. Respect for the autonomy of every human being, and faith in people's ability to think on their own and contribute to changes in life, should shape today's professional diaconal encounter between people. Jesus encouraged people to stand up, take their bed and go. Thus, diaconal authority should contribute to empowering people to manage their own lives. The New Testament stories about Jesus' encounter with people with different challenges show Jesus' respect for people's autonomy. According to Mark 10:43-45, Jesus made clear that serving each other in mutuality is the duty of his followers:

Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did

not come to be served (*deaconed*), but to serve (*deacon*), and to give his life as a ransom for many.

### *Individuality and communality- charity and justice*

Over many centuries, the church's *diakonia* has understood itself primarily as charity towards individuals in need. The story of the Good Samaritan, taking care of the injured person along the road, has become a core story for Christian *diakonia*. This kind of charity does not need any organization or structures. It is based on the individual's motivation and care for the one who is in need of help. One should not underestimate this aspect of personal motivation for diaconal care. Nevertheless, it is worth reflecting on how a Good Samaritan today would and should have acted. Certainly, there would have been the need for 'first aid', but more immediately, the need to call for an ambulance and professional help would have arisen. Today's health and welfare systems lead to an additional perspective on the story of the Good Samaritan, and the co-operation between the individually motivated *diakonia* arising from the very real encounter with pain, and the societal *diakonia* taken care of by structures and institutions in our societies. There need not be any contradiction between these approaches to *diakonia*, but there should be a vital co-operation between institutional, structural, political and individual *diakonia*. These existing structures would certainly vary in different contexts and countries, both within the global North and within the global South, and between the North and the South. Immediate and spontaneous *diakonia* as help for one another is still relevant and important. In addition, we need structural and communal approaches to *diakonia*. The Old Testament background shows that there is a strong biblical tradition supporting the need of societal structures and communal approaches, also to avoid individual dependencies. This leads us to an understanding of *diakonia* as prophetic *diakonia* which very much relates to and co-operates with existing structures in our societies.

*Diakonia* in this sense extends the biblical insight that *diakonia* is much more than feeling pity with other people and helping them when they are in need. The communal and rights-based approach which can be derived from the biblical tradition supports the development of a sustainable culture of mutual care where those who are in need of help are respected and supported to find ways to solve their problems. Mere charity creates dependency, while a rights-based approach contributes to creating secure and safe spaces for those who are in need, without claiming any specific 'goodwill' from those offering help.

Thus, for those who are in need of help and support, institutional structures and rights-based constituencies give a freedom to individuals and groups. In the long run, it is important for everybody to have predictable structures and not merely acts of free charity depending on individuals' varying motivation and engagement. This also implies that the church, in

its engagement with people in need, should not only focus on the individual's motivation to provide help, but also address structures of power and political stakeholders in order to create just legal systems and support people in the official structures of society. Thus, *diakonia* implies both voluntary help and care offered by individuals based on their own motivation, and socio-political *diakonia* focusing on just structures in society and pro-active work. These are not alternatives, but both aspects complement one other.

### Conclusion

Within the field of *diakonia*, acts of care on the level of interpersonal interaction must be supplemented with engagement for creating just societal structures through an engagement for rights-based democratic systems. The biblical tradition makes clear that, from the very beginning, these complementary aspects of *diakonia* are important for an adequate understanding of the church's social service today. Through supporting the creation of structures of social justice and solidarity, *diakonia* contributes both in co-operation with and sometimes in opposition and protest against the modern social state. This protest can also be summarized by what earlier was described as 'prophetic *diakonia*'.

This article has mainly focused on the biblical sources underlining the need to engage in *diakonia* as Christian social practice, neighbourly love and the fight for justice. It started by asking whether the church should focus on 'fighting for justice' or 'proclaiming the Gospel'. The biblical texts clearly show that the one cannot be separated from the other. *Diakonia*, as the gospel in action, partakes in the proclamation of the gospel. Jesus himself addressed the people concerning both their physical and their spiritual needs. Even though *diakonia* must not be instrumentalized, its goal lies never in evangelizing, but in serving. It witnesses, with or without words, to God's love of humankind. The holistic ministry of the church should distinguish between proclamation of the gospel and *diakonia*. Simultaneously, it becomes clear that, through holistic ministry, Christ's community responds to God's call and mission to the world by proclaiming its faith in the triune God and participating in the ongoing work of personal and social restoration and justice. Holistic ministry is the church's calling to share the good news of God's salvation through word and deed. The Great Commission and the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:37-40) are thus inseparable. The love commandment is an integral part of the mission commandment.

# JUSTICE AND APPROACHES TO SOCIAL CHANGE

Melba Maggay

Concern for the poor has always been at the heart of the missional sense of the church. There may be times when it is obscured by attenuated theologies abstracted out of contexts of relative affluence. Still, wherever bearers of the gospel have been confronted by need, acts of compassion have issued. The modern missionary movements, mostly pietistic and quiescent in their theologies, have nevertheless spawned hospitals, schools, feeding programmes and other such concrete responses to situations of need.

Today, particularly in the Majority World, there has been a remarkable recovery of the social dimensions of the gospel. Partly because of the poverty that stares us in the face; those of us who live in these places are pressed to account for the hope that is in us in a way that has the poor at the centre of its vision. In my own country during the last thirty years, there has been a mushrooming of faith-based NGOs and a decisive movement towards making a difference for the poor, even among more conservative churches.

However, there is also a decided drift towards either technical or merely spiritualistic solutions to poverty. Faith-based NGOs have yet to recognize that the paradigm that undergirds their social involvement is mostly borrowed from modernization theories and their language of 'development'. Some concerned churches, on the other hand, tend to labour under the notion that 'spiritual warfare' is enough to dislodge entrenched structures of ancient wrongs.

In the following, we discuss the need for some 'ideological suspicion' in the way we go about helping the poor. We shall revisit biblical ideas of justice as it relates to governance and processes of social change. In the course of it, we hope to gain clarity in some of the issues we face as people of the kingdom, wanting to make a difference in the many difficult places where we have been called to be disciples.

## **The Paradox of our Poverty**

Without being conscious of it, many development practitioners operate from the assumption that poverty is caused by 'underdevelopment' of some kind. The theory is that people and countries are poor because of certain 'deficits': lack of capital, natural resources, technology or an underdeveloped human resource.

The solution is a package of interventions that gives the poor access to capital (micro-finance), renews environmental resources (sustainable development), closes the technological gap (infrastructure and communications technologies), and invests in capability-building (education).

There are countries like mine, however, with none of these deficits. We have tremendous agro-marine resources; our people are educated and cross-culturally agile; there is no great lack of technical knowhow, and there is lots of money stashed away in Swiss banks or invested in China and elsewhere.

Yet we continue to see a great proportion of our people getting poorer. The paradox of our poverty and, I suppose, also that of many other countries, is that it exists side-by-side with immense wealth.

What seems to be wrong is the ancient structure of inequality which allows the elite to perpetuate privilege and corner many of the resources. Since the time of Spanish colonialism, which began in the sixteenth century, they have served as a catchment area for all the largesse made possible by co-operation with the powers. This historical edge has been sharpened further by the unbroken symbiosis between power-holders and business moguls.

With the advent of globalization and the digital divide, the poor have been swept to the sidelines much more massively and excluded from this process.

Given some variations in detail, this is a story shared by many decolonized countries, particularly those in Latin America. For a while, dependency theories offered a plausible explanation of the continuing poverty. There was the idea of a 'core' siphoning off resources from the 'periphery', within and among nations. This neo-colonial element has intensified, it is said, with globalization, where the global centres, or at least those countries with the power to project themselves beyond their borders, overrun and weaken nation-states. Societies implode from external and internal pressures brought about by porous borders and the rise of primal identities, now ethnically or religiously defined.<sup>1</sup>

With the failure of socialist experiments and the resurgence of neo-capitalism, *dependentista* theories have gone somewhat out-of-date, leaving the Majority World with a crisis of paradigm. Left with the pieces, faith-based organizations in these parts of the world tend to take on the question of poverty reduction piecemeal, mixing empowerment strategies with tools that allow the poor access to the market, like micro-finance. Knowing that there is no such thing as a free lunch, even before the collapse of the

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<sup>1</sup> For an introduction to dependency theories, see Fernando Henrique Cardoso, *Dependency and Development in Latin America*, trans. M. Upindi (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979).

welfare state, these organizations mostly help the poor to adapt to the ways of the market and make it there.

Meanwhile, governments board the fast train to become a ‘newly-industrialized country’, or NIC-hood as it used to be called in East Asia. Under the old theme of ‘enlarging the pie’, there is a great deal of optimism that if we play ‘catch up’ with the leading growth centres, the benefits will ‘trickle down’ to the rest of the population.

This line of thinking has been with us in the ‘developing’ world for some time, unaware that much of what works within this paradigm is embedded in the historical development of the West and may not be at all transferable elsewhere. It assumes that development is unilinear, that the experience of the West can be universalized.

As articulated by the likes of Walt Rostow, development is a uniform pattern of growth that evolves by stages; traditional societies pass from being feudal agrarian economies to modern industrial states. ‘Undeveloped’ countries will need to more or less follow the same path to modernization that the ‘advanced’ economies have trod in order to ‘take off’ at some point.<sup>2</sup>

This development narrative has been around for half a century, yet many countries are still reeling from spiralling poverty in spite of infusions of capital from the Bretton Woods institutions and the global spread of information technologies. It is a path characterized by an over-reliance on market forces and the over-exploitation of resources to feed the insatiable engines of growth. It has also reduced people into corporate automatons, societies into lonely crowds – turning isolated, atomized individuals into psychopaths. It is a wonder why the rest of the world seeks to follow the same path.

It is not within the purpose of this essay to go into a detailed critique of this narrative. It is necessary only to point out that the tools and strategies that have worked under its regime may be of doubtful efficacy in contexts where there is an absence of the conditions under which western economies flourished.

In the first place, many poor countries today suffer from the historical disadvantage of economic lag due to the shock of colonialism and its consequent psychological and social dislocations. The corrosive effects on governance by the breakdown of the old indigenous institutions have been irreversible.

In the second place, studies by people like Gunnar Myrdal, writing from his experiences in South Asia, have long ago discovered the difficulty of

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<sup>2</sup> Ranged on the opposite side of modernization theories are Arturo Escobar, *Globalization and the Decolonial Option*, co-edited with Walter Dignolo (London: Routledge, 2010); also Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995). See also Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bawtree (eds), *The Post-Development Reader* (London: ZED Books, 1997).

lifting the plight of the poor in situations where there are entrenched structures of inequality, like the caste system. This calls for something more than merely technical solutions to the problem of poverty.

What has Scripture to say about confronting poverty and transforming unequal worlds into just societies?

### **Justice as a Minimum Requirement**

It needs pointing out that the one purpose mentioned for the existence of the state as an institution is to 'punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right'. Rulers, says Paul, are not meant to be 'a terror to good conduct but to bad' (1 Pet. 2:13, Rom. 13:3).

The state has been given authority to wield the sword to secure justice. The coercive power of the state is mainly for seeing to it that crime is punished and the doing of the common good encouraged. It is not primarily to serve as a cradle-to-the-grave Big Brother, as has happened in failed welfare states.

It is also not there as an instrument for safeguarding society's morals, inducing religiosity in the citizenry by legislating such pieties as prayer in the schools. Scripture's purpose for the state is minimalist, as is also characteristic of societies where there are no great expectations from government and all that is being asked is that governance be just.

Justice is important for all, to be applied to both rich and poor. 'Justice, and only justice, you shall follow,' Israel was told (Deut. 16:20). Kings are to judge fairly, to use their power to maintain the rights of those who are usually unable to defend themselves – the poor and the needy (Prov. 31:8-9).

The prophets served constant reminders of the priority of justice in governance. 'Let justice roll down like waters,' thundered Amos. From the wilderness and remote villages they would, from time to time, address the powerful rulers of the country. For unlike other nations, Israel was meant to be ruled, not by monarchical institutions, but by the Law. They were to be governed primarily by a set of laws, which were given to them long before they were given a land and clamoured for a king.

Israel was unique in that she was ruled by a Law higher than the often arbitrary and absolutist reign of royal dynasties of the time. The Israelite kings were subject to this Law, as articulated by their prophets, priests and wise men. Most likely, this is the origin, in Judeo-Christian cultures, of what in time evolved into the modern idea of the 'rule of law'.

It is no accident that countries that have difficulty adhering to this principle, governed largely by the sort of justice cynically defined as 'the interest of the stronger', also tend to have unstable institutions. The failure to enforce the rule of law, particularly on those in high places, makes for what Myrdal calls a 'soft state'. Corruption in governance goes rampant, and rule-keeping buckles in the face of pressures from the powerful.

A ‘strong state’, biblically defined, is not a state ruled by the iron fist of a strongman or a military clique, nor an elaborate welfare state that has its hands on everything, including business and market mechanisms.

Instead, it is a state where justice is done, such that the public trusts its institutions, to the degree that there is fear and anxiety about wrongdoing and a sense of stability and security when one is obeying the rules. There is no need for government to arrogate to itself extraordinary powers, nor to overload it with too many expectations. The enforcement of justice is enough to secure public order and social wellness (Prov. 21:15).

### **Justice and Righteousness: Our Twin Mandate**

How then do we bring forth justice, particularly in those places where law and governance are subject to the informal pressures of kinship, political dynasties and other power-holders?

First of all, it is important to grasp that in the Old Testament, the words ‘justice’, *mispat*, and ‘righteousness’, *sedeqa*, are used interchangeably: to do justice to someone is to ‘declare one right’ (2 Sam. 15:4, Ps. 82:3, Ex. 23:6-8).

Our twin biblical mandate is ‘justice and righteousness’, so often put together as in Amos’ famous denunciation of Israel’s empty ritualism: ‘I hate, I despise your feasts... But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an overflowing stream’ (Amos 5:21-24).

Unlike today’s culture wars, there is no divide here between issues of public justice and issues of private morals. Scripture sees no separation between structural inequality and the need for personal fairness. There is no divorce between justice and morality, good governance and compassionate giving, the struggle for liberation and the small kindnesses of doing acts of mercy.

While ‘justice’ is properly an attribute of the state, ‘righteousness’ ought to be characteristic of the whole society. Government can at best provide an enabling environment for social compassion and public morals to flourish. It cannot legislate morality, nor the kind of civic virtue that will tenderly care for the elderly, the needy or the rights of the unborn.

This brings me to my second point: that the ‘justice’ that is properly the task of the state is in truth made possible by ‘righteousness’ in the larger society. Objective, structural conditions need a correlative subjective consciousness for the system to work. As Mao Zedong said a long time ago, an egg will hatch into a chicken by applying a certain degree of heat. But no amount of temperature will turn a stone into a chicken; the internal condition for it just does not exist.

Similarly, just governance requires a civil society whose values fit the system. Institutions need to be buttressed by corresponding values – an infra-culture, as it were. Unfortunately, many of the structures that have been transplanted under the rubric of ‘democracy’ in post-colonial times

have no culture-fit with the old indigenous patterns of governance and accountability.

Modern and impersonal systems of bureaucracy have difficulty thriving in traditional, personalistic cultures where kinship and other such connections play a major role in getting things done. Where the system is soft and slippery, this may be largely accounted for by the lack of supportive norms. Laws do not get implemented, or are ignored, because people have yet to be 'socialized' and familiarised with the new norms needed in order to make them conform.

This is not to say that pre-modern societies should necessarily adapt to modern systems of governance. It is simply to point out that such systems are dysfunctional, not because of something very wrong with these cultures, but because of the internal dissonance experienced by people in adjusting to alien ways of social organization.

It took the West five centuries to make the transition from despotic monarchies and tribal conflicts to democratic and peaceful ways of leadership succession and conflict resolution. We expect decolonized countries to behave in similar ways within fifty years of independence.

It is important to note at this point that societies readily adapt only to trivial artefacts of foreign influences, but are rarely changed in the deep structures of their cultures. On the surface, there may be shifts in such things as food patterns, clothing, architecture and building technologies. But not in matters like worldview or religious orientation, as seen in the resistance shown by village people when development personnel introduce new health care or agricultural practices. Diffusion of innovations runs aground before a culture's meta-narratives, those stories that make sense of a people's primal history and lend meaning to their collective experience.

For substantial change to happen, the Christian story must engage these meta-narratives. We are to come, not as mere agents of modernization, but as servants of the Most High, bringing a story that affirms people's stories from the shadowy past. Like the writer to the Hebrews, we lend to these foreshadowings clarity and meaning within the larger light of Christ.

Missiologists like Eugene Nida estimate that only about five percent of the elements of a culture need changing. But these are usually central structures rooted in the religious imagination, like the caste system in India, voodoo cults and female circumcision in Africa, or familism (a social pattern in which the family assumes a position of ascendance over individual interests) in East Asia.

Most cultures are elaborations of a faith tradition; at their base is a religion that once served as the centre of integration, no matter how eroded by secularization. This means that the resources of our faith – the Word and the Spirit – continue to be our primary means for change. It is not, in the first instance, a question of development tools and resources; we are barely scratching the surface if we think that these, coupled with 'evangelism' as usually practised, are what 'holism' is about.

Engaging the deep structures of our cultures is what turns nations round and brings them decisively towards Christ. Failure to do this merely domesticates Christianity, reducing it into a pet religion that has little to do with everyday life and the ‘weightier matters of the law’.

When Hispanic Christianity came to our shores, for instance, the interface with the indigenous religious consciousness was mostly an exchange of statues: we exchanged dark, wooden *anitos*, carvings of our ancestral spirits, for ceramic saints with Caucasian features. The native religious imagination remained the same, such that to this day, it has retained its preoccupation with the spirit-world. Indigenous religion is quite adept in its transactions with supernatural powers, but profoundly uninterested in philosophical speculations about the ‘ground of being’, as with Hinduism, and without much introspective curiosity about the problem of pain, as with Buddhism.

Its concerns are pragmatic – how to access potency and spiritual power and ward off evil. Sensitivity to horizontal relationships matter, not as an ethical interest, as in Taoism or Confucianism, but as a strategy for social maintenance.

On the whole, the culture has mostly adapted, but not converted. By its accommodative plasticity, it has gained the reputation of being the ‘only Christian nation in the Far East’. Yet, in the places where it matters, it has remained unchanged, untouched by the ethic of Christ.

In a cross-cultural study some time ago, the Philippines featured as one of the ‘most religious’,<sup>3</sup> yet in the surveys of firms doing business in Asia, it has been consistently listed as one of the most corrupt countries in the region.<sup>4</sup>

This phenomenon was not unknown in ancient Israel. The prophets spoke in contexts where intense religiosity co-existed with rife injustice and unrighteousness. In the end, Israel was judged and banished from the land because of idolatry and oppression, and the twin failures to love God and love one’s neighbour.

Similarly, nations continue to fail because of false gods and the consequent fall-out in public order. No society can survive without a minimum moral sense. Ultimately, a nation’s level of public justice and righteousness is determined by the depth at which it changes as a result of its people’s encounter with the one true God.

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<sup>3</sup> Akkoc, Raziye, *Mapped: These are the world’s most religious countries* (*The Telegraph*, 13th April 2015). [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/11530382/Mapped-These-are-the-worlds-most-religious-countries.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/11530382/Mapped-These-are-the-worlds-most-religious-countries.html). (accessed 10th February 2016). This is an article showing the Philippines as one of the most religious countries in the world, with the results based on a study by WIN Gallup International

<sup>4</sup> Transparency International, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2015*: [www.transparency.org/cpi2015](http://www.transparency.org/cpi2015) – shows the Philippines as 95th in rank among the most corrupt countries in the world, but one of the higher ranked countries in Asia.

### **Strategies for Social Change**

Does the foregoing then mean that evangelism is our best hope for transforming a nation, or that change in individuals automatically means change in society, as is so often supposed by well-meaning Christians?

The simple answer is no. There are larger, much more complex forces at work in human society than the volitional agency of men and women of goodwill. There is a great deal of talk in my country about 'political will', meaning the determined use of power towards particular ends. This sometimes works, but is more often subject to the limits imposed by popular opinion, a recalcitrant bureaucracy, oligarchs and other militant defenders of the status quo, available resources, a fractious civil society or competing political and other interests.

Also, church renewal or revival do not necessarily mean it will issue in justice and righteousness. For decades now, there has been considerable church growth in many Majority World countries, but this has yet to affect the level of corruption in governance. There was a time when the Philippines ranked next to Korea and Brazil in terms of church growth. But the new-found rise in status and numbers among our burgeoning mega-churches has yet to influence decisively the plight of our poor.

Certainly, there are stirrings in the churches towards lifting the poor. There are many small and promising initiatives, particularly the fairly large micro-finance industry. But these mostly manage to merely keep the heads of the poor above water. While micro-lending and other such acts of mercy are always good in themselves, these cannot be a substitute for hard social analysis and confronting the power structures that hold so many hostage to poverty.

Evangelicals are unfortunately stuck in merely providing discrete services to the poor, without addressing the larger context of why people are poor. There is a reluctance to engage in advocacy, to create a public voice and insert the cause of the poor into political space. The mandate to 'open your mouth for the dumb, for the rights of all who are left desolate', is clear, yet this remains unheeded for fear of getting 'too political' and stepping out of the boundary lines artificially set between church and state by secular society (Prov. 31:8 RSV).

We need to confront the fact that sin can be institutionalized, embedded in unjust structures and entrenched systems of oppression. Often, on the side of the oppressor is power, and the system crushes those who seek to change the order of things. There is a hardness, a mystery to evil that defies and taunts all attempts at social engineering: 'What is crooked cannot be made straight' (Eccl. 4:1; 10:8-9; 1:15).

Consciousness of the tragic nature of sin in human life does not mean, however, that we lie supine before the overwhelming forces of systemic evil. It is precisely because we live in a fallen order that we work for structural safeguards against concentration of wealth and perpetual poverty. Scripture itself has a host of social legislation providing safety-nets and the

chance of being able to start again for those who have fallen by the wayside.

Prominent among these is the Jubilee principle in Leviticus 25, which provides for a periodic rearrangement of power relations and the equalizing of access to resources. Every fifty years, the playing field is levelled: families return to their ancestral lands, debts are cancelled, slaves are freed and there is a Sabbath rest for all. The Jubilee restores original ownership of lands to those who, by some misfortune, have lost their inheritance and hence are bereft of their means of production and livelihood. Slaves and debtors walk away in freedom. All this breaks the poverty cycle and allows the people to start again.

In giving rest to both land and people, meaning and enjoyment are also restored, something that is missing in the frenetic life system of many in the workplace today. Scholars say that the Jubilee was never implemented in Israel. Still, it remains as a compelling paradigm of what a just society looks like.

How then do we move towards this kind of society? Critical theories and other studies tell us that there are at least three general approaches to effecting social change, which may be summed up in this way:

#### *The empirical-rational approach*

This is knowledge-based, the application of 'people' or 'thing' technologies to effect change. The premise here is that information, or educating people into awareness, causes them to be liberated, or at least to modify behaviour. It also facilitates problem-solving, as with systems analysis or operations research.

However, this does not take into account the fact that knowledge is rarely decisive in motivating changed behaviour. Everybody knows that smoking causes cancer, but this does not deter those who smoke and refuse to quit. Our fallen nature dooms us to the tragic condition described by Paul: 'I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate...I can will what is right, but I cannot do it' (Rom. 7:15-18).

#### *The normative-re-educative approach*

This is educating people into new norms, patterns and systems as internal support for planned change. As people clarify their values, it leads to a measure of control, since self-awareness means greater self-mastery. Included in this are such interventions as creativity enhancement and capacity-building for problem-solving.

'Value formation' has been the standard response whenever the political behaviour of the masses is seen as problematic, or micro-creditors lag behind in their repayments, or farmers need some collective sense to get a co-operative going. In truth, however, a science has yet to evolve out of this

process; no one really knows how conviction begins in one and cynicism in another, or what moves people to shift from individualism to a sense of community, to hope instead of despair. The work of the Spirit is intractable. In a post-modern world, it is acknowledged that it is spiritual traditions who know best the business of forming values. This is where the church can best contribute – creating new norms out of its faith perspectives. It is here that the resources of faith communities should be mustered in full force.

### *The power-coercive approach*

This is the use of power, whatever its nature, to ensure compliance and enforce planned change. It is usual to think that this is the sole preserve of politics; but power can be both **formal** and **informal**.

There is the **formal power** of government and other institutions, where contestations on policy changes and the recomposing of the political elite and other power-holders take place. There is also the **non-formal power** of social movements, whether traditional – church, labour unions, co-operatives, electoral blocs – or non-traditional – ‘civil society’, or NGOs centred on gender, ethnicity, environmental and other concerns.

In societies where the prevailing systems are merely borrowed from outside and circumvented by the local culture, non-formal powers tend to wield hidden but considerable influence. Our country’s experience of the ‘conjugal dictatorship’ of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos is one patent example, and so was the late Cardinal Sin’s magisterial presence in the events leading up to the overthrow of the regime. The nation formally subscribes to the ‘separation of church and state’, yet the church exercises an almost medieval power, reminiscent of the *friocracy* of the Spanish colonial period. This is partly a consequence of history and partly a function of native spirituality.

In countries that have yet to secularize, spiritual traditions are a vital element in public life. The rise of ‘political religions’ in recent times is witness to this fact. In many such places, an authentic church has tremendous opportunity to serve as a guiding light if it remains true to its calling. There is no need to make use of the coercive powers of the state to advance its own ends and persuade people of the cogency of its values. Simply by its faithfulness, a church authenticates itself and gains authority and power in the eyes of those longing for the reality of a transcendent goodness.

Having considered such approaches in the wider market-place, I would like to suggest some strategic areas for action specific to us as people of the kingdom:

### *Constructively engage the powers*

The parable of the wheat and the weeds tells us that the evil and the good are inextricably entangled together. The mystery of human solidarity is such that we share in the general contamination inherent in our condition. This means that we learn to move things and make a difference in places that are far from ideal. This is not an easy task for, as Walter Wink reminds us, there are sub-human powers at work in social institutions.<sup>5</sup>

The language of Paul in Ephesians 6 – thrones, dominions, principalities and powers – indicate that even in politics we are not dealing with mere sociology but spiritual forces that have lodged and embedded themselves in structures and life systems. This is why institutions, when left to their own inertia, tend to drift and eventually run away with a logic of their own. They develop internal contradictions and end up becoming the very opposite of what they set out to be. Churches, NGOs, revolutionary movements and other such idealistic do-gooders at some point come face-to-face with their own shadows. Once unmasked, they either seize this as an opportunity to reform and turn the organization round, or they lash back at those who have served as mirrors to the monster that stares them in the face.

But then there is beauty even in the beast, and it takes the eye of faith to believe that it can be tamed. By sheer endurance and the willingness to suffer, genuine movements for change emerge out of the depths of the most unlikely places: ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’

The missiologist Andrew Walls once noted that Christianity throughout history has shifted centres: churches like Antioch emerged from the ‘periphery’ and eventually eclipsed the originating ‘core’ of the faith, the older Jerusalem church. Then it moved to the barbaric hordes of the North – what is now Europe – then to the Americas and now in Africa and pockets of Asia.

As with geography, so with power relations: part of the movement of the kingdom is ‘the overthrowing of the mighty and the lifting up of the lowly’. A reversal – *peripeteia* – takes place on the ground, in our objective social and economic relationships, not just in our soul. It does not matter that it starts small, like a mustard seed for, inevitably, it soon grows into a very large tree, where all kinds of strange birds and bedfellows take shelter under its shade.

The early church was powerless to frontally fight slavery as an institution, but there was a new spirit in the way they related to each other as slave and master. The social vision of Galatians 3:28 – where rich and poor, male and female, slave and free, stand equally in Christ – eventually eroded the social fabric of the Roman Empire and contributed to its final collapse.

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<sup>5</sup> Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992).

Christianity transforms structures from within; it does not, in the first instance, tear things down so it can build again. It is not so much revolutionary as subversive. Like the yeast, it works mysteriously yet is visible in its results. Quietly, it penetrates society and alters it at its centre, at that place where things begin to turn and move towards a vision of 'the better country' we only see dimly from afar.

*Think contextual, act local*

Part of the mystery of our faith is that the God of the universe was a Jew – he had a nationality, a history, a home town where he walked the dusty streets and was so embedded in its village life that the people could not believe he could be other than the carpenter's son. Jesus was not a free-floating global citizen with no permanent address. He was rooted where he was. No other religion talks of God in this way; you have mythical avatars that make fleeting appearances or an Allah so high he is beyond touching or imagining. By contrast, Jesus is 'that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands', says John with awe and amazement. He who was from the beginning entered human history and became like us.

Quite the reverse, in an age of mass migrations, we are tempted instead to escape our histories and seek other identities. For economic and other reasons, people are forced to forsake home and rootedness. We are told that God cares for our geography; he has allotted territories for our habitation and defined their boundaries. The violation of these spaces by imperialism is now being paid for by both victim and aggressor. Migrants mostly become wraithlike shadows inhabiting the dark underside of global cities, strangers vulnerable to loss of rights and, more tragically, identity and significance. The theologian Walter Brueggemann once said that 'to be in history is to be in a place somewhere and answer for it'.<sup>6</sup> We have yet to understand the dislocation, the toll on the human sense of home, purpose and identity by this global diaspora.

The Incarnation as a pattern of engagement means that all our interventions in communities must be rooted and shaped by the local context. The trouble with organizations with a singular focus – whether health, children at risk, micro-finance, the environment, etc. – is that interventions tend to get fixed into a template, without regard for the peculiar contexts of communities. Similarly, international NGOs tend to skew the work of local organizations towards their preferred agenda, simply by funding only those concerns that interest them.

There is a subtle cultural imperialism in tying grants to compliance with systems, tools and procedures that they have unduly universalized, on the

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<sup>6</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1978).

assumption that they are generic and can be applied in other cultures with the same degree of usefulness. The tension between respecting local norms and measures of performance, on the one hand, and accountability in a way that makes sense to donors, on the other, needs to be negotiated with a great deal of cultural sensitivity.

Being contextual also means that we take seriously all endogenous human and material resources. Communities have stories, myths and legends that inspire and help them to survive all sorts of vicissitudes. Elders, opinion leaders, gate-keepers need to be engaged, but so also do the local gambling lord, faith healer and shaman. There is a great deal of indigenous technical knowledge among farmers, fishermen, craftsmen and the herbal doctor. These should not be bypassed but carefully listened to as important resources, and enlisted in the work of transforming cultures.

### *Nurture a strategic minority*

Changes begin with a small but determined minority of creative deviants. Social historians say that it only takes 5% of a community or nation to turn it round. We need to empower and nurture strategic minorities into a critical mass that turns into tidal change. Churches must begin to intentionally grow those among us who, like Daniel and Joseph, can interpret the times, articulate an alternative vision, and administer a planned response.

Of special concern to us in this day and age is the shaping of a cognitive environment that will serve as a foil to global media. We live in a time of what the sociologist Jacques Ellul calls 'shadows' – a secondary environment of myths and narratives constructed for us by the media. More than our own primary experiences, we tend to believe those anonymous, saturnine authorities that churn out those images and column inches of doom and gloom.<sup>7</sup> Many societies hobble and are continually disempowered by 'strongholds in the mind', those subtle and pernicious lies just below the threshold of our consciousness, telling us we shall forever be basket cases. What the Germans call *zeitgeist* (the 'spirit of the times') are usually influences emanating from the 'prince of the power of the air'. Along with their technological savvy, the new generation must be equipped to discern the seductions of this power, to smell the hidden rot and name the ways by which evil 'comes up softly like a flower', as the poet Baudelaire says.

This means that artists, writers, journalists, social scientists and others with similar gifts for analysis and articulation must be inspired with a vision that will challenge and give them a missional sense of their significance in a post-modern world. It is now through the imagination

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<sup>7</sup> Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*, trans. J. Wilkinson (New York: Random House, 1964).

rather than through reason that the Word breaks through to people. It is time to anoint these under-used gifts in the Body of Christ and release them to the wider world.

**To sum up**, justice is the primary reason for the existence of the state. Biblically, the doing of justice and righteousness go together. To survive, all societies need a minimum moral sense; acts of mercy are best done by the citizenry and not by an impersonal welfare state. Education, value-formation and the use of power are approaches to changing social behaviour. But even more important than these is the ability to constructively engage structures, help communities to resource their own needs within their own context, and nurture a strategic minority that will create a presence and a voice in the public space in behalf of the poor.

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# DIAKONIA AND DEVELOPMENT IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD

Isabel Apawo Phiri and Chammah J Kaunda

## Introduction: Down Memory Lane

From the outset, it is important to declare that the approach to the topic on *diakonia* and development in a rapidly changing world is through the lenses of the World Council of Churches (WCC) discourse. *Diakonia* is the language of the churches when participating in development projects. As will be shown, it is integral to the mission of God to the world. Therefore our starting-point in the discussion in the realm of church and development emanated from the WCC and its ecumenical partners as early as the 1950s when the WCC embarked on intensive study of the ‘common Christian response towards areas of rapid social change’ as a missional enterprise.<sup>1</sup> One key issue that emerged was the significance of focusing on the issues of economic and social development for most countries in Africa that were gaining geo-political independence. This issue was also emphasised at the Third Assembly of the WCC in New Delhi, India, in 1961.

In 1967, the *Ecumenical Review*, 9, No. 4 was dedicated to the question of development as an urgent necessity. The authors argued that engagement in issues of development as an aspect of church’s evangelistic calling was seen as the most critical concern of that time.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the Fourth Assembly at Uppsala, Sweden, in 1968 gave priority to world economic and social development as one of the central themes for discussion. Justice in its economic, social and political dimensions was a keynote, and the concern for freedom was now expressed more concretely in terms of ‘human dignity’. In the ecumenical debates about *diakonia* at Uppsala, the catchphrase was ‘justice, not charity’.<sup>3</sup> This began to give sharp evangelisation methodology which was seen as intertwined with development activities. Before then, *diakonia* was more concerned with emergencies. It became

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<sup>1</sup> Philip J. Wogama, *Christian Ethics: A Historical Introduction, Second Edition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 300.

<sup>2</sup> See the editorial, Chirapurath I. Itty, ‘Development – Introduction’, in *Ecumenical Review*, 19, No. 4 (1967), 349-52.

<sup>3</sup> Esther Hookway and Christopher Francis with Myra Blyth and Alexander Belopopsky, in Alexander Belopopsky (ed), *From Inter-Church Aid to Jubilee: A Brief History of Ecumenical Diakonia in the World Council of Churches* (Geneva: WCC Diakonia and Solidarity, 2002), 10: [www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/europe/diakonia/historybook.pdf](http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/europe/diakonia/historybook.pdf) (accessed 23rd November 2015).

increasingly acknowledged that emergencies were far from being temporary. The Assembly therefore acknowledged that a more sustained approach was needed; this would later result in broadening the definition of *diakonia* to include issues of development.<sup>4</sup> Within the ecumenical movement, various churches committed themselves to work for justice, human dignity and development as part and parcel of evangelisation. It became clear that the colonial paradigm of service imported by the missionary societies was inadequate to meet the needs of national development in the newly independent states in the global South.<sup>5</sup>

As a response to the Assembly, WCC established in 1970 the Commission for the Churches' Participation in Development (CCPD) as a strategy for social witness and action. At the WCC Nairobi Assembly in 1975, the member churches were called 'to recognize that empowerment of the poor, and sharing and solidarity in the struggle for justice and human dignity, are not only tasks of social action groups, but aspects of evangelization and core to the mission of God in which the church participates as an agent of God in the world. This call responded directly to the changing world situation.'<sup>6</sup> Liberation theology in Latin America and other parts of the global South was also at its peak during this period. Scholars have argued that the mood of liberation theology had a strong influence in the WCC's revolutionary overhaul of the notion of *diakonia* as 'people-centred development and making God's option for the poor the central theological concern'.<sup>7</sup> The Nairobi Assembly ushered in a period of intense reflection on the interconnected nature of issues of solidarity, development, mission and justice. *Diakonia* became increasingly to be seen as intertwined with the human search for development without which justice cannot be realized. This brought about a shift from a church-centred approach to a people-centred prophetic *diakonia* in critical solidarity with the people on the margins which would later be called 'the *diakonia* of the marginalised'. This approach enabled the WCC to promote contextualized approaches to the theologies of *diakonia* within different regions.

In the 1980s, there was an intense process in the ecumenical movement to further build a strong foundation for ecumenical commitment to *diakonia* underpinned by the indivisibility of evangelization and development. The Seminar on *Contemporary Understandings of Diakonia* was organized in

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<sup>4</sup> Michael H. Taylor, 'Interchurch Aid', in Nicholas Lossky et al (eds), *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, 2nd edition (Geneva: WCC Diakonia and Solidarity, 2002), 584-85.

<sup>5</sup> Martin Robra, 'Theological and Biblical Reflection on Diakonia: A Survey of Discussion within the World Council of Churches', *Ecumenical Review*, 46, No. 3 (1994), 276-86.

<sup>6</sup> Martin Robra, cited in Carlos E. Ham, 'Empowering Diakonia: A Model for Service and Transformation in the Ecumenical Movement and Local Congregations' (Free University of Amsterdam, April 2015), 47.

<sup>7</sup> Robra, cited in Ham, 'Empowering Diakonia', 47.

Geneva, 22nd-26th November 1982, as part of the preparatory process for the Vancouver Assembly in 1983, focusing on *Healing and Sharing Life in Community*. This seminar underlined the vital nature of *diakonia* to the life of the church and its prophetic and liberating mission.<sup>8</sup> Building on this, the WCC Assembly in Vancouver, Canada, in 1983 stressed '*diakonia* as belonging to the essence of being church. From this, it follows that diaconal action cannot be regarded as an optional response to external challenges, or limited to charitable services. The church is by nature diaconal'.<sup>9</sup> The consultation underlined that *diakonia* includes 'sharing, healing and reconciliation as focal points' but cannot be limited to actions organized by the church; God's life-giving Spirit acts and calls people to participate in God's mission of sharing and healing in a way that has a transformative effect also for the churches and their way of structuring their being and action in the world.<sup>10</sup>

Until then, the ecumenical movement functioned with the colonial perspective of *diakonia*. It was the WCC consultation in Larnaca, Cyprus, in 1986 which took the lead in decolonising the language of *diakonia* from its classical usage in Northern Europe as charity and humble service, to relating the notion to global challenges of poverty and injustice and a radical analysis of their underlying causes and advocacy in critical solidarity with people on the margins.<sup>11</sup> The consultation saw 'prophetic *diakonia*' as 'essential for the churches' role in shaping the future'.<sup>12</sup> The Larnaca consultation defined prophetic *diakonia* as an 'active expression of Christian witness in response to the needs and challenges of the community in which Christians and the churches live'.<sup>13</sup> It was further established that

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<sup>8</sup> Katherine Kinnamon, *Contemporary Understandings of Diakonia – Report Consultation, Geneva, Switzerland, November 1982* (Geneva: WCC, 1983). For a concise summary of the key concepts and definitions that emerged from this consultation, see Carlos E. Ham who recently completed a PhD on the history and development of the notion of *diakonia* within the World Council of Churches. See Ham, 'Empowering Diakonia: A Model for Service and Transformation in the Ecumenical Movement and Local Congregations' (Free University of Amsterdam, April 2015).

<sup>9</sup> Kjell Nordstokke, 'Diakonia and diaconate in the World Council of Churches', in *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 13, No. 4, (2013), 294.

<sup>10</sup> Nordstokke, 'Diakonia and diaconate in the World Council of Churches', 294.

<sup>11</sup> Kjell Nordstokke, 'International Diakonia', in Tormod Engelsen, Ernst Harbakk, Rolv Olsen and Thor Strandenæs (eds), *Mission to the World: Communicating the Gospel in the 21st century: Essays in honour of Knud Jørgensen* (Oxford: Regnum and Egede International, 2008), 110.

<sup>12</sup> Nordstokke, 'International Diakonia', 110.

<sup>13</sup> The details of the Larnaca declaration are summarised in WCC, 'Larnaca Declaration', in *World Consultation on Interchurch Aid, Refugee and World Service, Diakonia 2000, Larnaca, Cyprus, 19-26 November 1986*: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/justice->

'*diakonia* in all its many authentic forms cannot be separated from the struggle for justice and peace; from the empowering, transforming, liberating and suffering *diakonia*'.<sup>14</sup> The Lutheran World Federation made 'Prophetic Diakonia' an overarching theme for its global consultation in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002.<sup>15</sup> This theme was also discussed in the 2012 Jerusalem bilateral dialogue of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission (ALIC III) which was phrased thus: 'To Love and Serve the Lord: Diakonia in the Life of the Church.'<sup>16</sup> In recent developments, *diakonia* and *koinonia* are considered as two different sides of the same coin, as the fifth world conference on Faith and Order (1993) underlined:

The church as *koinonia* is called to share not only in the suffering of its own community but in the suffering of all; by advocacy and care for the poor, needy and marginalized; by joining in all efforts for justice and peace within human societies; by exercising and promoting responsible stewardship of creation and by keeping alive hope in the heart of humanity. *Diakonia* to the whole world and *koinonia* cannot be separated.<sup>17</sup>

The point is that ecumenical perspectives on *diakonia* are intertwined with development, justice and evangelism. At the same time, the language of mission and evangelism, when linked with *diakonia* and development, brings fear to secular organisations that the churches are using *diakonia* in order to evangelise. It is for such reasons that organisations such as Action by Churches Together (ACT) Alliance do not include any organisation in its membership that has mission in its name. Yet this is a decision that is currently undergoing review because to be a church organisation, mission and evangelism are part and parcel of its identity.

It was in this context that *the Consultation on Co-operation in the Field of Diakonia and Development* at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, Switzerland, 4th-5th February 2005, established 'a new alliance for churches and church-related organisations who work ecumenically in relief and development'. This new alliance was provisionally called 'ACT

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diakonia-and-responsibility-for-creation/ecumenical-solidarity/larnaca-declaration (accessed 20th November 2015). Copyrighted Material

<sup>14</sup> WCC, 'Larnaca Declaration'.

<sup>15</sup> Reinhard Böttcher (ed), *Prophetic Diakonia: For the Healing of the World, Report Johannesburg, South Africa, November 2002* (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 2002).

<sup>16</sup> Lutheran World Federation and the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, *To Love and Serve the Lord: Diakonia in the Life of the Church, The Jerusalem Report of the Anglican-Lutheran International Commission (ALIC III)* (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> Thomas F. Best and Günther Gassmann (eds), *On the Way to Fuller Koinonia: Official Report of the Fifth World Conference on Faith and Order* (Geneva: WCC, 1994), 233.

Global' with a mandate 'to address the needs identified by participants'.<sup>18</sup> The concept of *diakonia* continues to be understood as an integral dimension of the WCC framework for the struggle for justice, social development, creating inclusive communities, demilitarisation and nuclear disarmament, and caring for creation. Thus, the recent revival on the discussion of *diakonia* and development is not new. What is new is the overall change that has taken place in the area of world mission, *diakonia* and development and the social, political, economic context in which the work of *diakonia* is taking place.

The rapidly changing landscape requires that *diakonia* and development within the ecumenical movement respond to new demographics, namely, an increase in youth; 'communication technologies; geo-political-financial power shifts; private sector and military as new actors; changed global development architecture; shrinking political space for civil society; interreligious opportunities and challenges; neo-liberal economics and climate change'.<sup>19</sup>

### **Re-Emergence of an Old Debate: Convergence of Diakonia and Development**

The old discussion on *diakonia* and development resurfaced at the Tenth Assembly of the WCC in Busan, Korea, in 2013, under the theme: 'God of life, lead us to justice and peace'. In the book, *Resource for the Assembly*, a full chapter was dedicated to 'Theological Perspectives on Diakonia in the Twenty-First Century'.<sup>20</sup> This was used as a resource around which one of the key activities of the Assembly on ecumenical conversations was organised. The Assembly participants were able to engage in discussion on whether the church has to engage in the mission of God in relation to development activities in the world today. It was an occasion to take note of the rapidly changing world. This helped the participants 'to discern what it means to be the church together in the world today, seeking justice and

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<sup>18</sup> WCC, 'Cooperation in the Field of Diakonia and Development, 7th February 2005, Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, 4-5 February 2005. Final statement': <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/justice-diakonia-and-responsibility-for-creation/ecumenicalsolidarity/cooperation-in-the-field-of-diakonia-and-development> (accessed 23rd November 2015).

<sup>19</sup> ACT Alliance gives its conceptual frame of diakonia within the Lutheran World Federation. See, "'The Changing Development Paradigm": An ACT Alliance Discussion paper', in *Approved by ACT Executive Committee* (January 2013): [www.cws.org.nz/files/ChangingDevelopmentParadigmPaperACTAlliance.pdf](http://www.cws.org.nz/files/ChangingDevelopmentParadigmPaperACTAlliance.pdf) (accessed 19th November 2015).

<sup>20</sup> WCC, *Resource Book: World Council of Churches 10th Assembly, Busan, 2013* (Geneva: WCC, 2013).

peace; and the fullness of life for all creation'.<sup>21</sup> The Assembly declared *diakonia* to be one of the key attributes of the church. It was stated that *diakonia* is a means for the church to reach out in mission to the rapidly changing world. The theme 'Compelled to Serve: Diaconal Church in a Radically Changing World' was one of the ecumenical conversations jointly organized with the ACT Alliance. One of the papers received and endorsed was "'The Changing Development Paradigm": An ACT Alliance Discussion paper'. The purpose of this ecumenical conversation was to invite churches, ecumenical partners and the WCC to a deeper analysis of *diakonia* and development in a rapidly changing world, and to identify its challenges.<sup>22</sup> The publication of the special issue on 'New Perspectives in Diakonia', in *Ecumenical Review*, 66, No. 3 (2014) was inspired by this conversation. The current ecumenical thinking on *diakonia* is well captured by Kjell Nordstokke in his review of the *Ecumenical Review*, 21.<sup>23</sup> He confirmed '*diakonia* as rights-based, from the perspective that the struggle for justice and peace are core issues in any diaconal activity, and that it will be successful only when the poor and vulnerable themselves are empowered to claim their rights and have an active role in the shaping of society'.<sup>24</sup> This observation is further confirmed in the special issue of the *Ecumenical Review* mentioned above where *diakonia* was linked with mission from those who are on the margins of society.<sup>25</sup>

This means development from the perspective of ecumenical *diakonia* is referred to as development *from* the margins and not development *for* the margins. This approach reinstates the old ecumenical argument that 'development is a means to human welfare; it is not an end in itself. Man (*sic*) is more important than social processes'.<sup>26</sup> In this perspective, the focal point of *diakonia* and development is affirmation of the value of the human person.

<sup>21</sup> Carlos Ham, 'Transformative Diakonia in a Rapidly Changing World' – *Lecture hosted by Stichting Rotterdam, Utrecht, Netherlands* (accessed 11th December 2013):

[www.stichtingrotterdam.nl/actueel/item/download/2511](http://www.stichtingrotterdam.nl/actueel/item/download/2511) (accessed 19th November 2015).

<sup>22</sup> WCC, *Ecumenical Conversations Reports: Affirmations and Challenges from the 10th Assembly* (Geneva: WCC, 2014), 157.

<sup>23</sup> Kjell Nordstokke condenses various views that emerged in the process conceptualising the notion of *diakonia* in major documents that were prepared for the assembly. For more details, see his 'Ecumenical Diakonia: Responding to the Signs of the Times', in *Ecumenical Review*, 66, Issue 3 (2014), 265-73.

<sup>24</sup> Nordstokke, 'Ecumenical Diakonia', 265.

<sup>25</sup> For the affirmation that came from the discussion, see Kim Dongsung and Isabel Apowa Phiri, 'Editorial', in *Ecumenical Review*, 66, Issue 3 (2014), 249-51.

<sup>26</sup> Samuel L. Parmar, 'Concern for Man in the Quest for Development', in *Ecumenical Review*, 19, No. 4 (1967), 353-62 at 353; see also Richard M. Fagley, 'Christians and an Overall Strategy of Development', in *Ecumenical Review*, 19, No. 4 (1967), 428-35.

In this way, *diakonia* is placed in the holistic missional framework of the church. This affirms the perspective that was taken by Lutheran World Federation in its 2002 consultation, that ‘the church can never be reduced to its diaconal work, but *diakonia*, embodied in different ways in different situations according to the specific needs of the context, is always a part of the life of the church’.<sup>27</sup> *Diakonia* is squarely placed in the context of God’s mission in the world as principally the ‘expression of the churches’ participation in the ongoing mission of God’.<sup>28</sup> The joint conference by the ‘Justice and Diakonia, Just and Inclusive Communities, and Mission and Evangelism’ programmes in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 26th June 2012, argued that ‘*through its diakonia, the Church witnesses to God’s purpose in Jesus Christ and participates in God’s mission*’.<sup>29</sup> In other words, diaconal spirituality is a spirituality of the marginalised and is essentially a transformative spirituality which empowers the church in its missional work to resist and seek to transform all death-dealing forces. The challenge for the ecumenical movement is to discern the signs of the time in order to search for new ways of being and becoming a diaconal community that can respond adequately to current realities which are life denying to humanity and the whole of creation.

### **Naming the Realities: Diakonia in an Ever-Changing Global Landscape**

An ever-changing global landscape has prompted the WCC to begin rethinking its *diakonia* directions. The WCC Strategic Plan for 2014-2017 outlines how the Council understands the rapidly changing world and how it intends to respond to the current trends in society, churches and the ecumenical movement.<sup>30</sup>

First, within the ecumenical movement there are new forms of co-operation which have reconfigured the ecumenical movement, with an emphasis on the changing roles of ecumenical institutions and ecumenism in the 21st century.

Second, people round the world are searching for justice and peace in a radical way. There has been proliferation of various movements for peace

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<sup>27</sup> Lutheran World Federation, *Prophetic Diakonia*, 11.

<sup>28</sup> The missional nature of *diakonia* is articulated in WCC, ‘Theological Perspectives on Diakonia in the 21st Century’, the conference jointly organized by the Justice and Diakonia, Just and Inclusive Communities, and Mission and Evangelism programmes of the WCC in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 2nd-6th June 2012: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/unity-mission-evangelism-and-spirituality/just-and-inclusive-communities/theological-perspectives-on-diakonia-in-21st-century> (accessed 20th November 2015).

<sup>29</sup> WCC, ‘Theological Perspectives on Diakonia in the 21st Century’.

<sup>30</sup> WCC, ‘WCC Strategic Plan 2014-2017 as approved by the central committee, 2-8 July 2014, Geneva’, 1-28.

and justice in the world today. Some of them are The Global Justice Movement,<sup>31</sup> People's Forum on Peace for Life,<sup>32</sup> Peace Now in Israel,<sup>33</sup> International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons,<sup>34</sup> The Arab Spring 2011,<sup>35</sup> Women's Rights Movement,<sup>36</sup> Sexual Minority Rights Movement (Gay Rights Movement),<sup>37</sup> End Human Trafficking,<sup>38</sup> Animal Rights Movement<sup>39</sup> and many more.

Third, international organisations such as the World Bank, World Health Organisation, United Nations and others, are now willing to partner with faith communities, especially the WCC, in the promotion of the role of religion in sustainable development.<sup>40</sup>

Fourth, there is an increase in religion and violence and the manifestations of Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, xenophobia, Christians killing sexual minorities and in racism (e.g. the killing of black people in the churches, as in the USA). The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)<sup>41</sup> is threatening security round the world. Add to this the killings of Christians in the Middle East, Hindus killing Muslims in Myanmar, the *Boko Haram* insurgency in Nigeria, *Al-Shabaab* in East Africa, especially Somalia and Kenya, Al Qaeda in Mali, Christian militias in Central African Republic killing the Muslim population, Muslims against Christians in Sudan, and now Christians against Christians in South Sudan.

Fifth, there is also the gravely disturbing situation of the abnormal influx of refugees from Syria, Africa, Asia and Iraq coming to Europe, some of them losing their lives in the attempt to cross the Mediterranean

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<sup>31</sup> [www.globaljusticemovement.net/justices/peace.htm](http://www.globaljusticemovement.net/justices/peace.htm)

<sup>32</sup> [www.peaceforlife.org](http://www.peaceforlife.org)

<sup>33</sup> [www.icanw.org](http://www.icanw.org)

<sup>34</sup> [www.icanw.org](http://www.icanw.org)

<sup>35</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab\\_Spring](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_Spring)

<sup>36</sup> [www.sheswonderful.com/blog/2015/01/09/womens-rights-movement-new-agenda](http://www.sheswonderful.com/blog/2015/01/09/womens-rights-movement-new-agenda)

<sup>37</sup> <http://global.britannica.com/topic/gay-rights-movement>

<sup>38</sup> <http://endhumantrafficking.com>

<sup>39</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal\\_rights\\_movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Animal_rights_movement)

<sup>40</sup> Deryke Belshaw, Robert Calderisi and Christopher Sugden (eds), *Faith in Development: Partnership between the World Bank and the Churches of Africa* (Oxford: Regnum, 2001); Jeffrey Haynes, *Faith-based Organisations at the United Nations* (Badia: European University Institute, 2013); Olav Fykse Tveit, 'The Role of Religion in Sustainable Development and Peace'. Paper presented at Partners for Change: Religions and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Berlin, 17th-18th February 2016.

<sup>41</sup> Barack Obama and David Cameron use the name The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) broadly to refer to the same terrorist groups. The UK-based leading Muslim scholar Arsalan Iftikhar has pleaded with the western politicians to desist from legitimizing a terrorist group by calling it a 'state'; it should rather be classified as 'the Un-Islamic State'. See his 'Let's Call ISIS "The Un-Islamic State"': <http://theislamicmonthly.com/lets-call-isis-the-un-islamic-state> (accessed 20th November 2015).

Sea. The European situation, especially the November 2015 terrorist attack in Paris in which 130 people were killed and the discovery that one of the suicide bombers arrived disguised as a Syrian 'refugee', has resulted in a rejection and xenophobic attitude towards refugees. This adds to resentment due to the fact that the five wealthiest Gulf nations have refused to offer a haven for Syrian refugees.<sup>42</sup> This has brought about a shift in the use of language from calling them migrants to classifying them as refugees – which has implications for their political positioning in the receiving countries in Western Europe.

Sixth, the UN has launched the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 'for people, planet and prosperity'. The agenda has seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets which are built on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and seek to complete what the MDGs did not achieve.<sup>43</sup>

These and many other changes demand that the ecumenical movement repositions itself so that churches and ecumenical organizations find ecumenism meaningful as a framework for responding to common challenges through radical collaboration for justice and peace. The Strategic Plan suggests that 'a significant aspect of building bridges and fostering co-operation in more open and flexible networks in response to global challenges' is 'that institutionalized ecumenism again places the churches with their specific realities, challenges and responsibilities at the centre of the movement'.<sup>44</sup> Questions can be raised here: how can the ecumenical movement discern together how to do *diakonia* in this context? How can it discern the will of God? How can the WCC and ecumenical movement work together with a fresh commitment to transformative *diakonia* of the marginalised without trivialising their differences? How can the differences be seen as strengths rather than threats? How can faith communities be mobilised to work in co-operation and not in competition for resources?

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<sup>42</sup> Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain have resettled 'zero' refugees, causing Amnesty International to describe their inaction as 'shameful'. Read more from *Mail Online*, 'Revealed: How the five wealthiest Gulf Nations have so far refused to take a single Syrian refugee': [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3222405/How-six-wealthiest-Gulf-Nations-refused-single-Syrian-refugee.html#ixzz3s40BeHUC](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3222405/How-six-wealthiest-Gulf-Nations-refused-single-Syrian-refugee.html#ixzz3s40BeHUC) (accessed 20th November 2015).

<sup>43</sup> United Nations, 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development': <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld> (accessed 20th November 2015).

<sup>44</sup> 'WCC Strategic Plan 2014-2017', 5.

### **Diakonia and Development in the Framework of the Pilgrimage for Justice and Peace**

In order to promote the *diakonia* of the marginalised, the WCC has adopted the pilgrimage of justice and peace as the strategic direction for engaging with issues of development. At the WCC Tenth Assembly, churches joined together in a pilgrimage of justice and peace.

The WCC and the ecumenical movement are called to ensure that the community of faith is moving forward and wrestling with life's experiences together. In this context, development is placed in the frame of prophetic enabling action; too often development has functioned as a road block in the procession of pilgrims, especially those from the global South. The *diakonia* of the marginalised consists in living gospel values in solidarity with others, and does not see justice as an end itself but a means for human development. Therefore, *diakonia* as promotion of development 'stimulates, motivates and gives dynamism to'<sup>45</sup> the pilgrimage of justice and peace. In 'Public Witness and Diakonia', it is argued:

This common ministry is manifest in the call for a sustainable future, turning back the impact of climate change, in an economy that offers life for all, securing water rights, in the empowering of women and lifting up of youth. It may also be seen in advancing peace through social justice, capacity building for service, the healing ministry of the churches today, and HIV and AIDS work.<sup>46</sup>

In this statement, the pilgrimage of justice and peace becomes engaged commitment to concrete work that promotes human progress and development through the struggle against all life-denying forces to the fullness of life that Jesus Christ has given to all human beings. Central to this is the WCC's willingness to work together with all people of goodwill and support any initiative committed to the causes of justice, peace, dignity and life. The question might be raised here: what are some concrete examples of ecumenical *diakonia* in the pilgrimage of justice and peace in the context of development? The following are two examples of ecumenical engagement in *diakonia* and development from the margins.

#### **Examples of Working Together in Diakonia**

##### *The Malawi consultation of September 2014 and its outcome*

The WCC and the ACT Alliance, in co-operation with the Malawi Council of Churches and the ACT Malawi Forum, organised an international consultation in September 2014 in Mangochi, Malawi, to deal with the

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<sup>45</sup> Keum, *Together towards Life*, 12.

<sup>46</sup> 'Public Witness and Diakonia': <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/public-witness> (accessed 23rd November 2015).

challenges of collaboration between churches and church-based development organizations (specialized ministries)<sup>47</sup> in their ‘common vision of working together for justice and peace’.<sup>48</sup> The participants came from WCC member churches, national, regional and international ecumenical organizations, as well as representatives of specialized ministries.

The consultation was a platform for studying *diakonia* and the challenges of working together among the ecumenical actors. It was about ‘learning how to voice differences, to appreciate that such differences exist, and to commit to working together in spite of such differences is a challenge that we must all face as members of the one ecumenical movement’.<sup>49</sup> This consultation developed an ‘understanding of resources, assets and gifts that can be shared between the churches and specialized ministries in order to strengthen our common calling for service and Christian witness’.<sup>50</sup> The consultation also demonstrated the process of strengthening the relationship between the WCC and ACT Alliance as two international organisations moving forward together on the pilgrimage of justice and peace at both national and international levels, as they ‘strive to see people live in a just and peaceful world’.<sup>51</sup> To some extent, the WCC and ACT Alliance have already begun responding to the UN call for Sustainable Development Goals. The consultation improved the ecumenical understanding of ecumenical *diakonia* and development, and also developed some practical steps for effective co-operation.

### *The Sao Paul Statement Brazil 2012 and the New Financial and Economic Architecture*

The second example of the pilgrimage of justice and peace is the response to the financial crisis in 2008 by the Uniting General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). WCRC invited its members, in partnership with the WCC, Council for World Mission (CWM), and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), for an international ecumenical conference in São Paulo, Brazil, in 2012 to give a ‘response to and continuation of the decades of work round issues of economic, social and

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<sup>47</sup> The specialized ministries are funding partners of the WCC in its programmatic work and of the ACT Alliance in the area of development, emergency relief and advocacy.

<sup>48</sup> For a detailed discussion, see WCC, ‘Church organizations explore ways of strengthening relationships’ (10th September 2014):

[www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/church-organizations-explore-ways-of-strengthening-relationships](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/church-organizations-explore-ways-of-strengthening-relationships) (accessed 23rd November 2015).

<sup>49</sup> WCC, ‘Church organizations explore’.

<sup>50</sup> WCC, ‘Church organizations explore’.

<sup>51</sup> WCC, ‘Church organizations explore’.

ecological justice'.<sup>52</sup> The word 'continuation' in the sentence suggests that the ecumenical commitment to issues of economic and social justice is not new. Specifically, the São Paulo conference was called to propose a financial and economic architecture grounded on principles of economic, social and climate justice that serves the real economy, accounts for social and environmental tasks, and sets clear limits to greed. The conference involved economists, church leaders, activists, politicians and theologians. It presented criteria and a framework for overcoming greed, based on social inclusion, gender justice and ecological justice. The participants committed themselves to affirm existing alternatives to neo-liberal capitalism, arguing that 'the "economy of care" for the Earth cannot be separated from the issue of justice for all God's creation'.<sup>53</sup> They also linked spirituality and economy in a framework for ecumenical response to the global economy. In addition, the conference developed an ecumenical plan of action and landmarks for a new international financial and economic architecture. The formation of a panel of experts to 'give legs' to the São Paulo Statement is a further development in working together in the area of *diakonia* for advocacy.

### Conclusion

*Diakonia* is the bloodstream of the ministry of the church in its mission and evangelism. While other faith-based organisations are hesitant to link their work in development with mission and evangelism, the WCC and the ecumenical movement do not have the same limitations. For the church, *diakonia* is part of its identity, as is mission and evangelism. It is about humanitarian care, development, conflict resolution, peace-building, and the promotion of justice and advocacy. It is about valuing all human life as created in the image of God. The response of the church is different from NGOs because its motivation comes from faith in Jesus Christ. This requires a clear theology of ecumenical *diakonia* informed by different contexts within which the church functions. The current challenges of shrinking resources call the ecumenical movement to work in critical solidarity on diaconal issues in the world. It also requires coherence and speaking with one voice in order for the ecumenical movement to make maximum impact in the ever-changing global landscape. The call to member churches should be about sharing resources – not just human resources but all resources, including finances from everywhere to

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<sup>52</sup> For a detailed report, see WCC, 'São Paulo Statement: International Financial Transformation for the Economy of Life' (5th October 2012): <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/public-witness-addressing-power-affirming-peace/poverty-wealth-and-ecology/finance-speculation-debt/sao-paulo-statement-international-financial-transformation-for-the-economy-of-life> (accessed 23rd November 2015).

<sup>53</sup> WCC, 'São Paulo Statement'.

everywhere as a framework for empowering *diakonia*. *Diakonia* without justice is cruelty; justice without development is deception.

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# NEW TRENDS IN THE DISCOURSE ON RELIGION AND DEVELOPMENT

Dietrich Werner

## Introduction

This essay gives an introduction to some aspects and new trends in the discourse on religion and development as perceived by major actors in Christian development co-operation.<sup>1</sup>

The essay will:

- reflect on reasons for the traditional disconnect between religion and development, newly challenged in an emerging international discourse
- highlight some factors in global religious demographics which underline the urgency of a change of perspective on religion and development
- spell out some core convictions on the intersection between religion and development
- illustrate the need for new religious literacy for staff of development organizations by referring to Pentecostal churches and the churches in China
- show the need for practical tools for analysis by highlighting the significance of values, ethics and religious motives in concrete project work and country assessments
- introduce the significance of the German government initiative for a ‘Charter for the Future: One World – Our Responsibility’ and its attention to cultural and religious factors
- underline the significance of the Reformation Jubilee 2017 and the tradition of Reformation churches for the debate on religion and development
- close with a reflection on one of the most pressing areas of further research, i.e. the question of how to counter religious extremism which has become a major hindrance for sustaining peace and integral development.

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<sup>1</sup> The author serves as senior theological advisor to Bread for the World, Berlin, and also as one of the chairs of the ACT Alliance Community of Practice on Religion and Development, established in 2015. See also ACT Alliance News item:

<http://us9.campaign-archive1.com/?u=1f4fe85b27aeaa1448409d457&id=cb8764aef8&e=750597f646> and:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GiQconE5ok&feature=youtu.be>

Katherine Marshall from the Berkley Center for Religion and Development Program in a ground-breaking paper in 2005, entitled 'Faith and Development: Rethinking development debates', analyzed the disconnect which marked the approach of the World Bank and many development agencies until the early 1990s:

The World Bank, over its 60-year history, had remarkably little professional contact at either global or local levels with the world of faith and the people who work in it. Faith perspectives – including the active roles of religious institutions that own land, run schools, assist poor people, and care for orphans and disabled people – were often invisible to development teams. That oversight often resulted from preconceptions about differing roles, although it sometimes reflected suspicions that faith institutions stood against development goals. Project analysis and documentation, institutional vocabulary, research agendas, dialogue with countries, public speeches, and internal staff training rarely included glimpses of the world of faith. Even today, the World Bank website hardly mentions faith. Some encounters with churches, temples and mosques did occur, but these interactions were driven by specific individuals and proved patchy and ephemeral.<sup>2</sup>

Critical observations such as these had real consequences in terms of a policy change since then. Based on an initiative of James D. Wolfensohn, at that time Director of the World Bank, a World Faiths Development Dialogue Program (WFDD) was initiated which accompanied the formulation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),<sup>3</sup> and was later continued in co-operation with the Berkley Centre for Religion and Development Program.<sup>4</sup> A new era had started in terms of intentional dialogue between political institutions and Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs).<sup>5</sup>

Many western development actors as late as the early 1990s tended to perceive development efforts as best being pursued without religion as this would dilute their political conceptual clarity. But significant change has

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<sup>2</sup> In Katherine Marshall, *Faith and Development: Rethinking Development Debates* (The World Bank, June 2005); <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/PARTNERS/EXTDEVDIALOGUE/0,,contentMDK:20478626~menuPK:64192472~pagePK:64192523~piPK:64192458~theSitePK:537298,00.html>

<sup>3</sup> The WFDD Program was based in the UK from 2000-2006 and in Washington from 2006 onwards – see *History of World Faiths Development Dialogue* (WFDD): <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/wfdd/about>

<sup>4</sup> <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/people/katherine-marshall>; see also: [www.global.ucsb.edu/orfaleacenter/luce/luce08/documents/Marshall\\_OsloNGObk-June1.pdf](http://www.global.ucsb.edu/orfaleacenter/luce/luce08/documents/Marshall_OsloNGObk-June1.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> See more details of this paradigm change in the survey article from Azza Karam: *The United Nations, Faith Based Organizations and Development Post 2015 – An Overview*, (New York: UNFPA); and *UNDP Guidelines on Engaging with Faith Based Organizations and Religious Leaders* (October 2014), in: [www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/documents/partners/2014\\_UNDP\\_Guidelines-on-Engaging-with-FBOs-and-Religious-Leaders\\_EN.pdf](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/documents/partners/2014_UNDP_Guidelines-on-Engaging-with-FBOs-and-Religious-Leaders_EN.pdf)

been achieved through several high-level initiatives, which have brought together FBOs, governments and UN actors on a common platform to end global poverty, putting the religion and development discourse visibly on global UN agendas.<sup>6</sup>

Today it is a common conviction that sustainable global dialogue must include guiding values.<sup>7</sup> Secular societies (including governments and agencies) in the North Atlantic have tended to underestimate the role of religious traditions in implementing development processes in society. Overcoming the disconnect between religion and development in the New Millennium has therefore become a major issue in political debate, both at an international as well as a national level, in the North as well as in the global South – a paradigm change which can be understood as part of a wider shift away from a narrowly defined economic paradigm of development.<sup>8</sup>

### **Global Religious Demographics as Factors for Rethinking the Intersection between Religion and Development**

In its 245-page *Report on the Future of World Religions*<sup>9</sup> from May 2015, the Pew Foundation reveals some interesting demographic trends which will mark the future of the world's religions and their relationship in the decades to come. By and large, religious demographic trends as indicated in recent studies (also from the Gordon Conwell-based Center for the Study of World Christianity in Boston<sup>10</sup>) have featured less prominently in strategic planning for Christian development organizations than statistic trends

<sup>6</sup> See Corrie van der Ven, 'What UN documents and some other sources say on engaging with FBOs'. Internal paper January 2015.

<sup>7</sup> See Klaus Michael Leisinger, 'Global Values for Global Development, Working Paper for the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)', (September 2014), in: <http://unsdsn.org/resources/publications/global-values-for-global-development/>

<sup>8</sup> See also Gerrie ter Haar, 'The Role of Religion in Development: Towards a New Relationship between The European Union and Africa', in *The European Journal of Development Research*, Vol. XVIII, No. 3 (September 2006), 351-67. A major shift away from narrowly economic concepts of development has been recently found strong advocates in a major new study from EKD churches in Germany: '... that they may have life, and have it abundantly' – A Contribution to the Debate about New Guiding Principles for Sustainable Development: Study by the Advisory Commission of the EKD on Sustainable Development (Hanover, Germany, 2015).

<sup>9</sup> [www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050](http://www.pewforum.org/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050)

<sup>10</sup> See Study Report, 'Christianity in its Global Context, 1970-2020. Society, Religion, Mission', in: [www.gordonconwell.com/netcommunity/CSGCResources/ChristianityinitsGlobalContext.pdf](http://www.gordonconwell.com/netcommunity/CSGCResources/ChristianityinitsGlobalContext.pdf); or the earlier report from Pew Foundation, *Global Christianity: A report of the size and distribution of the World's Christian Population* (December 2011), in:

[www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-exec](http://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-exec)

indicated in the changing figures for Official Development Assistance (ODA) on national levels or in the World Development Report. However, we argue here that trends in global religious demographics have a paramount significance for the future of Christian development co-operation and should be taken into consideration in strategic planning for future decades. Four factors deserve special attention:

1. *A first factor is the resurgence of religions and religious values in most parts of the world.* For decades, Western thinkers assumed that religion would decline globally as scientific ideas spread, replacing ‘superstitious beliefs’ with modern and rational ways of life. Instead, according to the Report *Christianity in its Global Context*, the number of those living with religious affiliation has grown continuously on a world scale: ‘In 1970, nearly 82% of the world’s population was religious. By 2010 this had grown to about 88%, with a projected increase to almost 90% by 2020. Religious adherence is growing largely due to the continuing resurgence of religion in China. In addition, in 1970 Christianity and Islam represented 48.8% of the global population; by 2020 they will likely represent 57.2%.<sup>11</sup> Religious motivation and affiliation continues to mark the value systems and daily decisions of an increasingly significant part of humanity. The number of people with no religious affiliation, secularists, or atheists on the other side, is declining on a world level.<sup>12</sup>
2. *A second factor is the rapidly changing composition of world Christianity* with regard to Independent, Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches which was already indicated in earlier Pew Foundation Reports. World Christianity is increasingly fragmented, indicated by the hugely growing number of different Christian denominations.<sup>13</sup> Also, Pentecostal churches accounted for 16.1% of all Christians in the world by 2010, compared with less than 1.5% in 1910.<sup>14</sup> A Pew Research Center Report from 2011 found

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<sup>11</sup> See Study Report, ‘Christianity in its Global Context 1970-2020: Society, Religion, Mission’, 6, in: [www.gordonconwell.com/netcommunity/CSGCResources/ChristianityinitsGlobalContext.pdf](http://www.gordonconwell.com/netcommunity/CSGCResources/ChristianityinitsGlobalContext.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> The 2015 Pew Research Report projects that the unaffiliated will decline from 16% of the world’s population in 2010 to 13% in 2050 on a world level, while this group is expected to be slightly increasing only in the USA, New Zealand and France.

<sup>13</sup> The World Christian Database lists 9491 Christian Denominations on 380 pages, see: [www.worldchristiandatabase.org/wcdw](http://www.worldchristiandatabase.org/wcdw)

<sup>14</sup> Todd Johnson, Kenneth Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh University Press 2009), 70.

Charismatic and Pentecostal Churches together represented about 26.7% of the World Christian Population.<sup>15</sup>

3. A third factor is the **changing global balance between Christianity and Islam**. Christianity will no longer be the world's dominant faith by 2050. Almost all the major religious groups will increase in numbers, but Islam will be the fastest-growing religion of the world. Over the course of the next four decades, the number of Muslims will nearly equal the number of Christians round the world for the first time in history – at 31% and 30% respectively of the global population in 2050. The Muslim share of the world's population would equal the Christian share, at roughly 32% each, in about 2070. After that, the number of Muslims would exceed the number of Christians. A 2015 Pew Foundation Report projects a 73% increase in the size of Muslim populations between 2010 and 2050, the highest of any of the religious traditions.
4. A fourth factor is the **changing demographic and religious landscape and declining numerical strength of Christian churches in Europe**:<sup>16</sup> Already the 2013 study on Christianity in its Global Context Between 1970 and 2020 had stated, that 'each of the six major Christian traditions is expected to grow more rapidly than the general population in the global South. Simultaneously, Christianity is declining as a percentage of the population in the global North at a dramatic rate. Birth rates in many European countries in particular are below replacement level, and populations are ageing'. The Pew Report 2015 expects that the Muslim share of the population of Europe will increase from 5.9% in 2010 to 10.2% in 2050, taking migration into account along with other demographic factors that are driving population change, such as fertility rates and age. Europe will remain the only region in the world where the total population is projected to decline. Europe's Christian population is expected to shrink by about 100 million people in the coming decades, dropping from 553 million to 454 million.

Western development agencies operating from within a European context marked by lower degrees of religious vibrancy or de-Christianization trends are well advised not to take their own context as a measurement for other contexts in the global South; increasingly experts realise that Western European countries are quite insular with regard to religion, not easily comparable with other parts of the world, and at the same time also themselves rapidly changing due to migration and social transformation. Increasing religious literacy, competency and proper

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<sup>15</sup> Pew Research Centre, *Global Christianity: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World Christian Population*, 17.

<sup>16</sup> See also interactive map with data projections of all countries: [www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=11429960](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11429960)

analytical assessment tools for the staff of Christian FBOs involved in development co-operation in Western Europe is therefore essential. If Protestant churches, particularly, being mindful of their own European tradition of social Protestantism, fail to be in more sustained global dialogue with all religious partners on religion and development issues, then European countries as a whole might fail to provide a common alternative to the growing influence of extremist religious orientations on a world scale.

### **Core Convictions on the Intersection between Religion and Development**

Ground-breaking research was done by various groups including the Dutch Knowledge Centre on Religion and Development,<sup>17</sup> the network of European Christian development organizations APRODEV (now ACR Alliance Europe),<sup>18</sup> and the Lutheran World Federation.<sup>19</sup> An international study consultation in Berlin, organized by Bread for the World and LWF in December 2014, then brought together scholars, practitioners, development specialists and theologians to formulate some common core convictions on the intersection between religion and development:

#### *Religions as the basis for value systems and ethical choices:*

It was commonly affirmed that religious traditions are a basis for ethical values, a strong resource for social and political commitments, and a guiding factor for interpretative frameworks for the world. This influences decisions and choices for sustainable development for the majority of people. A ‘re-assessment and new appreciation of the role of religious ideas, religious communities and religious practices for and in development (is needed). While, in the past, the role of religion(s) was sidelined and not really taken seriously for several decades due to the dominance of the “secularization thesis” and the modernization approach as the leading

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<sup>17</sup> See [www.religion-and-development.nl](http://www.religion-and-development.nl) and their booklet, *Religion and Development Practitioner’s Guide* (Leiden, Netherlands: 2014).

<sup>18</sup> ‘The importance of the interactions between development and religion, and politics and religion, is increasingly recognized. Sometimes religion can be part of the problem, sometimes it can be part of the solution, but almost always religion plays a role in social developments – especially in areas other than secularized parts of Europe. As faith-based organizations, APRODEV and its members are, in principle, well placed to discern the role of religion and to engage in politics and activities which aim at enhancing the positive role religion can play in improving the livelihood of people.’ In *Development and Religion*, APRODEV (Brussels 2012), 24.

<sup>19</sup> Kenneth Mtata, *Religion: Help or Hindrance to Development?* (Leipzig, Germany: EVA, 2013).

development paradigm within western development discourses after World War II, the intersection of religion and development has become increasingly important today. There is a growing realization that since the majority of the world's populations, and those for whom development initiatives are undertaken, construe their world of ideas, values and daily practices informed by religion, such an orientation needs to be comprehensively engaged if development is to be sustainable through local ownership'.<sup>20</sup> The rights-based approach to human development which has become the leading paradigm for development organizations has devoted much attention to the dimensions of *policy* and *practices* of development, but much less to the level of *ideas*, *beliefs* and *values* which in daily life influence the decisions and behaviour of a majority of people round the world to an even greater extent.

*No uncritical or idealizing concept of religions:*

Religion is often both part of the problem as well as part of the solution. While faith communities have substantial assets and potential for social transformation, religion can also be misused to cover up exploitation and even crime. Nigeria is known for its vibrant Christian churches, but also is the country with the biggest number of private jets, several of which are owned by quite wealthy church leaders. The Berlin report stated:

While religion is certainly not the only and ready-made 'answer' to eradicating poverty or overcoming global injustices, clear approaches should be forged for authentic engagement by development actors with religion. Here religion is viewed as a legitimate partner of development with a great potential to enhance development outcomes not to be merely defined in terms of a traditional modernization agenda and primary economic growth orientation. Both the concept and perception of religion as well as the concept of development need redefinition, constant checking and critical reinterpretation, as there are 'good' and 'constructive' concepts and understandings of religion as well as of development – and at the same time also distorted, misguided and destructive concepts of both religion and development.<sup>21</sup>

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*Critical engagement with religious traditions  
in both the South and the North:*

'Dominant assumptions of the "secularization", "privatization" and "regionalization" of religion, especially in the West, are slowly giving way.

<sup>20</sup> *Report of the Report on the International Consultation on Religion and Development* (15th-18th December 2014), Berlin, No. 2.

<sup>21</sup> *Report of the Report on the International Consultation on Religion and Development* (15th-18th December 2014), Berlin, No. 5.

Religion is no longer wholly assumed to be something relating only to the private sphere of life or a personal relationship to some supernatural deity. Religion both in history and in the present has immense implications for the value systems within societies as well as for actions to alleviate poverty and to promote justice and human rights. With globalization and rapid movements of people from one region to the other, religion can no longer be seen as something only of relevance for the so-called “developing countries” in the global South. It is now accepted by many development actors across the globe that in the light of the 2015 sustainable development discourse, religion will have a critical function for the future of life on this planet, both for countries in the global North as well as for those in the global South. The North will need to learn about the value of religion in the process of integration of many migrants and refugees... The South will also learn the value of critical engagement with faith in order to minimize its potential for excesses and distortion of human dignity.<sup>22</sup>

*The intersection of evangelism and diakonia as a connecting point for engagement in the religion and development debate:*

It is not by chance that, in a majority of countries in sub-Saharan Africa, more than half of the national educational and health care systems were originally started and supported by Christian churches. Christian churches and their *diakonia* systems are still major health care providers and reach out to even the remotest local areas. Christian mission history provides numerous examples of the intersection of evangelism and *diakonia*. Christian faith becomes active and concrete in personal and institutionalized forms of charity, social care, relief work and educational efforts. The Berlin consultation recommended even more intentional research on this historical and contemporary engagement of religious communities in social services.<sup>23</sup> For Christian traditions, especially those marked by Reformation principles, with their strong emphasis on public responsibility, education and the transformation of society, the interconnectedness of evangelism and *diakonia* provides a unique and relevant connecting point for the new religion and development debate.

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<sup>22</sup> *Report of the Report on the International Consultation on Religion and Development* (15th-18th December 2014), Berlin, No. 6.

<sup>23</sup> See *Report of the Report on the International Consultation on Religion and Development*, (15th-18th December 2014), Berlin, No. 3: ‘The potential of local religious institutions for development still is under-researched while the value-added function of religion in development can and should be properly supported by evidence.’

### *Need for more religious literacy*

‘Actors in the development field need more religious literacy in order to properly understand how religion contributes to human progress and human rights, and new actors in the religious field have to be more intentionally integrated into development policies and decision-making. The conference therefore emphasized both deliberate attempts to increase the “religious literacy” of staff in developmental organizations as well as in politics in issues of religion and development, and also recommended further dialogue on how to translate factors and indicators of religious life in context assessments (national expertise papers) as well as in project criteria so as to contribute to mainstreaming the insights of the religion and development debates in current project processing.’<sup>24</sup>

### **Social Transformation by African Pentecostal Churches as an Example: The relevance of Religious Literacy for Staff of Development Organizations**

The majority of mainstream Christian churches in sub-Saharan Africa have become active (and visible) in development projects, with ‘development wings’ within their regular structures, and systems to deal with ecumenical partners and to tap into the increased flow of donor money to civil society organizations. Pentecostal churches by contrast have been much slower to set up specialized departments or FBOs for development projects, or to get actively involved with development-focused projects with western partners. However, they do engage in social development and social transformation in a way different from the dominant western development paradigm. Dena Freeman has shown that ‘by far the greatest impact that Pentecostals have on development in Africa comes not from [these] FBOs, but from the changes instilled in “believers” by the religious activities of the churches themselves. In these churches “religion” is not separated from “development”. Church leaders take a holistic focus on the “whole person” and try to bring about change socially and economically as well as spiritually.’<sup>25</sup> Freeman identifies ‘three key interlinked processes of change that are brought about by Pentecostalism: first, a major embodied personal transformation and empowerment of the individual; secondly, a shift in values that provide moral legitimacy for a set of behavior changes that would otherwise clash with local sensibilities; thirdly, if other factors are favourable, a radical reconstruction of the social and economic

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<sup>24</sup> *Report of the International Consultation on Religion and Development* (15th-18th December 2014), Berlin, No. 3.

<sup>25</sup> Dena Freeman, ‘Pentecostalism and development in Sub-Saharan Africa’, in Emma Tomalin (ed), *The Routledge Handbook on Religions and Global Development* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 114-26, here 116-17.

relationships in families and communities'.<sup>26</sup> Personal transformation, a change of value systems, reconstruction of economic and social relationships – these might well become key categories for understanding the subtle and profound impact of religious transformation on social transformation and development in countries of the global South.

### **Rediscovery of Diakonia in Chinese Christianity as an Example – Claiming a Political Space for FBOs in Restricted Societies**

A second example is the recent development of Christianity in China. Membership in Chinese churches has grown exponentially since the 1980s, especially in urban areas, drawing into their midst intellectuals, workers and business entrepreneurs. One of the key factors is a sense of mutual belonging, care and love which is developed within Christianity, filling a value vacuum in a context of rapid social change and transformation. There is an immense longing for something beyond material values and for a deeper spiritual meaning of life which many discover in the virtues and attitudes of Christian love to the weak, the elderly and the vulnerable. Larger urban churches have given birth to congregations with a membership ranging from 1,000 to 5,000 people, increasing financial resources available for building up Christian initiatives and projects in social services. Since 2003 more and more churches have run health clinics, support HIV-AIDS work, run facilities for seniors and engage in environmental issues.<sup>27</sup> The development of social services and *diakonia* in Chinese Christianity often goes hand-in-hand with the development of contextualized Chinese theology. As churches engage with poor and vulnerable groups such as orphaned children, migrant workers, the disabled and the elderly, they are beginning to understand and to interpret their theology in the larger context of Chinese society. The challenge for Chinese churches today is how to develop contextual theologies that can reflect the mission of the church in a rapidly changing society and not interpret Christian faith as relating only to the individual and private realm. *Diakonia* thus can serve as a bridge between Christian culture and Chinese culture. The religion and development debate is therefore of immense importance for the future of Chinese Christianity. It is by expanding its social service system and at the same time keeping the Christian identity values within the social service system that Christianity can claim and justify its political space in Chinese society. If Christianity can prove that it contributes to moral reconstruction, to value-based approaches to

<sup>26</sup> Freeman, 'Pentecostalism and development in Sub-Saharan Africa', 117. Details of her research are published in Dena Freeman, *Pentecostalism and Development: Churches, NGOs and Social Change in Africa* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, September 2012).

<sup>27</sup> Bingguo Xie, 'Love Never Fails: A Look at Sinicization of Christianity from the Perspective of Social Charity', in *Ecumenical Review*, 67, Issue 1 (2015), 70-76.

development and humanization of Chinese society with its inclination to civilization of love, it will be more recognized in its public role and relevance.<sup>28</sup> The expectation for western development agencies in this changing context might in the long run be much less classic financial support to development projects, as funds for carrying out social charity and relief work are more and more available and channelled by wealthy Christian entrepreneurs within Chinese society. But the priority and shifting agenda will be to provide expert advice, to contribute to theological and diaconal leadership formation and conceptual dialogue in terms of a holistic concept of *diakonia* and development for Chinese society.

### **Religion, Values and Cultural Factors in Country and Context Analysis**

One of the questions which follow from the current debates on religion and development is how to get these insights translated and implemented at the operational level of writing project proposals, providing regional and national context analysis and evaluation of existing development projects. A change in practices of western development agencies will not take place just by adding fascinating and scholarly volumes and anthologies on evangelism and *diakonia*, religion and development, or FBOs and social change, to the bookshelves. Procedures and criteria of project management must be changed, and intercultural dialogue on development co-operation enlarged, between partners in North and South.

There are some of the primary tools which have been developed within the ACT Alliance Community of Practice on Religion and Development Forum in this regard; during a meeting of the ACT Alliance working group on 1st June 2015 in Geneva, an 'RCV Assessment Tool' was introduced by Bread for the World.<sup>29</sup> The introduction of mandatory key questions was proposed to assess more effectively the potential of FBOs in context for development co-operation. The role of religion must be taken into account when developing the context analysis, which is a part of the process of drawing up a Country Programme. For this purpose, the following specific questions relating to the role of religion are suggested by DanChurchAid to be followed in preparing a context analysis:

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<sup>28</sup> See, for the whole debate, Theresa Carino (ed), *Christianity and Social Development in China* (Hong Kong: Amity Foundation, 2014).

<sup>29</sup> The RCV – Assessment Tool, 'Mapping Religion and Development Factors in International Partners' Cooperation Instrument for Religion, Culture and Values Assessment (RCV-Tool) in context analysis and country programming'; an internal draft from BfdW 2015 was also inspired by the internal draft paper from Swiss colleagues from Brot für alle: Leitfaden für die praxisrelevante Reflexion der Rolle religiöser und kultureller Faktoren in Projekten der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, BFA Handbuch (Bern: January 2015).

1. What is the religious composition of society in NN historically and today?
2. What positive and/or negative relations exist between different religious groups in NN?
3. What values do the most important religious groupings promote in today's NN?
4. How do different religions/religious groups address societal issues?
5. What religious forces from the exterior might impact on NN?
6. To what extent do FBOs have legitimacy and ability to be 'honest brokers' and/or the voice of the poor/marginalized in NN?
7. To what extent can FBOs play a mediating role, and to what extent do they tend to defend and nurture the self-interest of their community?
8. How does government or traditional authorities view religion and religious authorities in NN?
9. What does the constitution or legislation in NN say about religion and the role/space of religious institutions?
10. How good are religious groups in formulating and transmitting 'political' advocacy messages effectively?
11. What is the positive potential of faith communities and FBOs in NN that DanChurchAid (DCA) could build on?
12. Is there anything DCA should be alert to or avoid when working with FBOs in NN?

It is important that DCA and others<sup>30</sup> have regarded this religiously sensitive context analysis as necessary and therefore mandatory. To identify actors who have the potential to drive change, and to understand how change can be triggered and promoted by supporting religious communities which have a transformational impact on systems of self-esteem, value orientation and patterns of social and economic activities and relationships becomes vital for any future value- and religion-sensitive development co-operation.

### **The German Government Initiative 'Charter for the Future: One World – Our Responsibility'**

The debate on religion and development has also provided new fields of interaction with government partners. In Germany, the Ministry for Development Co-operation in 2014 launched the 'Charter for the Future'

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<sup>30</sup> Very helpful as a guide for religion-sensitive context analysis are also the key questions for context analysis spelt out in the Practitioners' Guide from the Dutch Knowledge Centre on Religion and Development: Religion and Development Practitioners' Guide, 27ff. See also: [www.religie-en-ontwikkeling.nl/documents/gfx/Praktijkboek/practitioners-%20guide%20def.pdf](http://www.religie-en-ontwikkeling.nl/documents/gfx/Praktijkboek/practitioners-%20guide%20def.pdf)

project,<sup>31</sup> which is a broad-based commitment and dialogue with civil society partners concerning co-operation in the field of sustainable development. Goal No. 6 in this Charter states: ‘Person-centred development agenda must be sensitive to culture, religion and people’s different worldviews. Culture and religion lie at the heart of every society. In today’s interconnected world, most people live surrounded by cultural and religious diversity. Culture and religion can and should help to foster mutual respect and tolerance... We must, more than ever before, harness the potential of culture and religion to facilitate sustainable development and a respect for human rights, both now and in the future. If we are to witness a paradigm shift towards sustainability, we need a new mindset at individual, political and social levels. Development co-operation must therefore join forces with all stakeholders in society who can help to bring about this change.’<sup>32</sup> Concrete steps are in place to further this.<sup>33</sup>

### **The Reformation Jubilee 2017 and the Relevance of the Religion and Development Debate**

The 500th anniversary of the Reformation offers special opportunities to churches of the Reformation tradition to publicly highlight how Christian churches and faith-based development actors have shaped and become engaged in civil society – especially through the promotion of health, education and social awareness, all of which have transformed society and promoted human dignity all round the world.

Churches of the Reformation tradition have also strengthened civil society and their role in development and politics, the responsibility of political power and the protection of the common good, through a focus on public theology. Justice and reconciliation have been key concerns also. In today’s world of growing levels of violence and intolerance, and religious hatred, Reformation-tradition churches are committed to peace and peacemaking.<sup>34</sup>

All these characteristics take on a new urgency in the current global crisis, and accentuate the need for full inclusion of religion in all debates about development, and in its practice.

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<sup>31</sup> See ‘Charter for the Future – One World – Our Responsibility’, English text version at: <https://www.zukunftscharta.de/das-dokument.html>

<sup>32</sup> ‘Charter for the Future – One World – Our Responsibility’, English Version, 46.

<sup>33</sup> See ‘Thesenpapier Religion und Entwicklung. Impulse für eine neue Debatte’, BMZ (Berlin: June 2015); International Conference: Partners for Change: Religions and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Berlin, 17th-19th February 2016.

<sup>34</sup> See, for more information on these intersections between reformation, education, transformation, Dietrich Werner, *Reformation – Bildung – Transformation: Ökumenische Perspektiven zum Thema Reformation und Eine Welt*. Lecture Bad Herrenalb (May 2015), in: [www.r-e-t.net/en/index.html](http://www.r-e-t.net/en/index.html)

### **Peace, Religious Extremism and the Role of a New Spirituality of Peace and Reconciliation**

By far the most burning issues in the area of religion and development are those related to the spread of religious extremism, particularly in those countries which are located beyond the traditional spectrum of partners from western development agencies. Fragile states, the collapse of all aspects of good governance, protracted regional conflicts and the extension of power conflicts of external states operating outside their own territories add to situations with an explosive mix of unpredictable, severe conflicts, the militarization of ethnic or religious factions, and the politicization of forms of religion which have not been subject to any form of transformation and major encounter with modernity and human rights agendas. It is important to be reminded of the key findings of a major global study on Peace and Religion from 2014:<sup>35</sup>

- Religion is not the main cause of conflicts today. Whilst religion has evidently been a cause of many conflicts throughout history, it is by no means the only reason for conflict.
- There is no clear statistical relationship between either the presence or the absence of religious belief and conflict.
- Multivariate regression analysis reveals that there is a consistent relationship between factors such as corruption, political terror, gender and economic inequality, and political instability which determine poor peace scores as measured by the Global Peace Index (GPI). The research clearly indicates that these factors are globally more significant determinants in driving violence and conflict in society than the presence of religious belief.
- Religion can be the motivator or catalyst for bringing about peace through ending conflict as well as helping to build strong social cohesion. Furthermore, religion can act as a form of social cohesion and, like membership of other groups, greater involvement in society can strengthen the bonds between citizens, strengthening the bonds of peace.

One of the key challenges for evangelism as well as *diakonia* today is to provide proper religious and political education which is able to counter the temptation of religious extremism on all sides, both Muslim and Christian. Christian and civic education needs to include accurate and non-distorted religious information on the other players. Christian development agencies need to contribute all in their capacity to avert the politicization of religion and the religionisation of politics. In practice, this means investing in long-term capacity-building for functioning inter-religious councils which are

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<sup>35</sup> Five key questions answered on the link between peace and religion: A global statistical analysis on the statistical link between peace and religion. *Institute for Economics and Peace* (October 2014): <http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Peace-and-Religion-Report.pdf>

the only means to effectively engage with these issues with all parties involved. There are important examples showing that in the area of religion and development, the building up of interfaith coalitions on certain human rights-sensitive issues can have a successful impact on international mobilization across religious boundaries.<sup>36</sup> There are many other examples of FBOs developing a clearer common understanding on how to become involved in humanitarian response following disasters or major conflicts, an aspect which particularly relates to the issue of religiously sensitive psycho-social support in emergency situations.<sup>37</sup> Only if strategic interfaith collaboration and regional as well as local interfaith dialogue for citizenship are maintained and strengthened, can efforts become successful to prepare for peaceful co-existence and to de-legitimize, isolate and overcome religious extremism or aggressive political instrumentalization of religion. The role of religion in conflict and peace-building will remain one of the overarching priority themes in the discourse on religion and development in the future.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> See the Anglican initiative for a global faith movement for gender justice: [https://www.christianaid.org.uk/Images/Reports-Gender-Strategy-July2014-J2623\\_tcm15-78960.pdf](https://www.christianaid.org.uk/Images/Reports-Gender-Strategy-July2014-J2623_tcm15-78960.pdf);  
[www.anglicannews.org/news/2015/07/anglicans-co-launch-international-faith-movement-for-gender-justice.aspx](http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2015/07/anglicans-co-launch-international-faith-movement-for-gender-justice.aspx);  
[www.anglicancommunion.org/media/167665/final-communiqu%C3%A9-faith-and-gender-workshop-march-2015-2-.pdf](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/media/167665/final-communiqu%C3%A9-faith-and-gender-workshop-march-2015-2-.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> See the debate on 'The role of FBOs in humanitarian response' which plays a major role in the preparatory process towards the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 in Istanbul: [http://actalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/WHS\\_Submission\\_ACTAlliance\\_Role-of-FBOs-in-Hum-Response\\_July2015.pdf](http://actalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/WHS_Submission_ACTAlliance_Role-of-FBOs-in-Hum-Response_July2015.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> See the important report of the British Academy for Humanities and Social Research from 2015 under the same title: 'The Role of Religion in Conflict and Peacebuilding', in:

<http://blog.britac.ac.uk/the-role-of-religion-in-conflict-and-peacebuilding>

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# PART FOUR

# EVANGELISM

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# TOGETHER TOWARDS LIFE: EVANGELISM AND SERVICE IN MISSION

Gregory P. Leffel

This chapter turns to evangelism as proclamation of the Christian good news, and to *diakonia* as deeds of service in love and justice, and considers them together as the public face of mission's engagement with society outside the churches. Evangelism provides the cultural, or rhetorical, master framework to communicate the content of the reign of God, and the call to action to enter and participate in it. Acts of love and justice demonstrate the moral virtue that proves the message. What is said must be demonstrated, what is demonstrated must be explained for missional witness to be concrete. Evangelism and service combine in the life of the church to produce a singular witness. And a very public witness at that: 'Your holiness makes you as conspicuous as the sunset in the midst of heaven,' John Wesley reminds us; 'unobserved religion cannot be the religion of Jesus Christ.'<sup>1</sup>

However evangelism frames our message, and our service proves it, they draw their public meaning and persuasiveness from the circumstances of a particular context – like my own in the United States. Here, as we reconsider mission to and with our fellow citizens and those immigrating among us, Christian witness is anything but new.<sup>2</sup> Evangelism is so embedded in popular discourse that, even if it is often an unwelcomed intrusion on one's privacy, most US Americans still understand what they are being told. Charitable activity is expected of the 'faith community'. But commonly our diaconal service is thought of simply as one more 'community resource' among others. If the 'salt' is losing its 'savour' as it appears to be doing today, in part it is from too much familiarity with the public conduct of the churches themselves, and the diminished public salience of their well-worn practices of proclamation and service. This was not always the case in our most religious of western democracies. And in the light of these changes, and now with pressing urgency, we must

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<sup>1</sup> John Wesley, 'Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount', in N. Burwash (ed), *Wesley's Doctrinal Standards* (Salem, OH: Schmull Publishing, 1988 [1881]), 245.

<sup>2</sup> Scarcely a generation ago, the thought of the United States as a subject of mission at all was novel and controversial. But the idea has become mainstream especially since the publication of the classic missiological proposal by Darrell L. Guder (ed), *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998).

continue to raise in our context the important question asked in the recent World Council of Churches' ecumenical affirmation *Together Toward Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*: 'How do we re-envision God's mission in a changing and diverse world today?'<sup>3</sup>

In this quick sketch I want to suggest that contemporary Christian witness in the changing landscape of the United States has lost its voice and influence to the extent it misunderstands the tradition of American liberalism. This is to suggest that liberalism – the pursuit of liberty – is America's most enduring tradition. Directing attention to it opens a fresh angle of vision on mission in the American context to supplement others that address the relationship of society and Christian faith from pluralist and post-modern perspectives. The purpose is to advance an account that better helps us to move our consideration of evangelism and *diakonia* from the abstract into the historically-shaped circumstances of mission in the United States – or rather, into the challenges of a 're-mission' in an 'already-been-Christian' context.

Several claims are offered. First, contrary to 'post-liberal' accounts by social critics on the left who regard liberalism as an artefact of a failed modernity, and on the right for whom 'liberal' has been a term of derision for decades, the United States has always been and remains – when its history, politics, economics, ethics, individualism, religion and diversity are taken together – among the most enduringly liberal societies that Christian mission has encountered. *Liberty*, and the *liberal* 'social imaginary' (to use Charles Taylor's term) that derives from it, is America's principal socio-cultural operating system and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future.<sup>4</sup> Second, more than we often acknowledge, American mainline Protestantism has through its history been among the most important influences in creating a liberal society. Third, American liberalism's socially-unifying consensus and the Christian influences within it, began to fragment in the 1960s, and this has created a crisis for the churches as much as it has for the wider society. And last, our evangelistic proclamation and forms of service (*diakonia*) will find potency and meaning only as well-contextualized responses to the social and political conflict created by competing forms of liberalism in contemporary society.

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<sup>3</sup> *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, Jooseop Kim (ed), (Geneva: WCC, 2013), 4.

<sup>4</sup> Taylor describes the 'social imaginary' as 'an implicit "map" of the social space': the socially constructed scheme through which people may 'imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things might go on between them and their fellows, the expectations which are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images which underlie these expectations. 'That common understanding which makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy.' Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap/Harvard University Press, 2007), 171-73.

The following sketches the historical context, mostly from a mainline Protestant perspective, from which earlier forms of evangelistic and diaconal practices emerged and found their meaning in a liberal society; their subsequent loss of socio-cultural salience; and what is entailed in re-contextualizing them in support of a renewed mission – as we together seek a common witness, affirming with the WCC’s *Together towards Life* that ‘life in all its fullness is Jesus Christ’s ultimate concern and mission’.<sup>5</sup>

### **The American Reformation and the Formation of a Liberal Society**

‘Liberty’, it is safe to say, as Alan Wolfe does, is America’s ‘official philosophy’, embraced on ‘the right, in the form of economic freedom’ and on ‘the left, in the form of personal freedom’.<sup>6</sup> By referring to the *liberalism* that derives from it, I want to be clear that I am not referring to capitalist markets or to centre-left political parties, or to economics or politics per se, but rather to the overall life-way that emerges from liberal values. One essential value is *individual liberty*: the priority placed on personal autonomy, individual dignity and freedom of conscience which supports the strong individualism of American culture. Another is *liberality*, a mood of openness and generosity – one might even say ‘grace’ – which supports concern for other individuals, equality, tolerance for diversity of people and opinions, and the good of the commonwealth.<sup>7</sup> These ‘individualist’ and ‘communitarian’ strands of American liberalism often have been in conflict. But co-mingling through time, they have formed a tradition of consensus that orients the identities and expectations of most Americans.

The roots of American liberalism are also more Christian, or at least more Protestant, than we might often think. This Christian influence is the legacy of the first sustained attempt, beginning in the eighteenth century, to contextualize the faith in a new society. The pursuit of liberty in early, pre-revolutionary colonial America flowed from three streams: political liberty, property rights, and religious freedom. The first two of these reflected Enlightenment civil liberties, the third an elaboration of the European Reformation. As these ‘liberty ways’ converged in the colonies to form a uniquely American culture, a theological movement arose to synthesize Enlightenment and Reformation values. The movement was articulated and mobilized among elites, foremost through the writing and preaching of New England Congregationalist ministers. These novel thinkers successfully caught the mood of the moment, and by framing the

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<sup>5</sup> *Together towards Life*, 4.

<sup>6</sup> Alan Wolfe, *The Future of Liberalism* (New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 2010), 21.

<sup>7</sup> For the history and range of uses of the word ‘liberal’, see Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, new edition (Oxford: OUP, 2015), 130-32.

Reformation with the Enlightenment as a single whole, they produced what Amy Kittlestrom has called the ‘American Reformation’.<sup>8</sup>

The American Reformation radicalized the European Reformation’s central value – liberty of conscience – and extended its meaning to emphasize individual free will, moral agency and private judgement. Beyond this, it provided a religious framework to incorporate enlightened values such as rationalism, free thinking, self-determination, social equality, self-expression and political liberty. Above all, it stressed *moral virtue*. Its advocates argued, in fact, that any belief must be proved virtuous by the good it produces in society, or it should be discarded. Conversely, any belief, Christian or otherwise, must be considered good, and be adopted if it produces virtue. They advanced, in effect, an ethical pragmatism that put action ahead of theory – ‘deed’ above ‘creed’, ‘orthopraxy’ before ‘orthodoxy’. All these values taken together constituted a ‘liberal’ way of life, a form of Christian humanism rooted in individual liberty, virtue toward others and progressive innovation. And all of it, particularly its social pragmatism and open-mindedness, continues to resonate deeply with the majority of Americans. Not surprisingly, the religious reformers who advanced the American Reformation, Kittlestrom notes, ‘became the first people in the world to call themselves liberals’.<sup>9</sup>

Liberal religion was controversial from the start. ‘Orthodox’ Christians denounced it. In fact, American Protestantism’s competitive ‘progressive-versus-conservative’ ‘two-party system’ began then and continues today. But even the orthodox were deeply influenced by the liberals’ rationalism, pragmatism and democratic values. The American Reformation was an intellectual revolution and it cast a long shadow over the entire history of the United States, religious and secular. ‘The engagement of Protestant Christianity with the Enlightenment,’ writes David Hollinger, ‘was – and continues to be – a world-historical event, or at least one of the defining experiences of the North Atlantic West... from the eighteenth century to the present.’<sup>10</sup>

In spite of this reformation, religion in revolutionary America was at a low ebb. The 1776 political revolution was an Enlightenment project. But two subsequent movements cemented political and religious liberalism together in a process of co-development. One, the surging Second Great Awakening which transformed American Protestantism into a predominating social force, arose after 1800 and continued for another thirty years. The other was a great wave of populist democratization – which Gordon Wood describes as a ‘second American revolution’ – that

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<sup>8</sup> Amy Kittlestrom, *The Religion of Democracy: Seven Liberals and the American Moral Tradition* (New York: Penguin, 2015), 22-38 and *passim*.

<sup>9</sup> Kittlestrom, *The Religion of Democracy*, 5.

<sup>10</sup> David A. Hollinger, *After Cloven Tongues of Fire: Protestant Liberalism in Modern American History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 3.

created the democratic *culture* of the new republic.<sup>11</sup> This social transformation spanned revolutionary and revivalist generations of Americans and further fused the American Reformation with the Enlightenment.

What united the political and religious arms of this 'second' revolution was, as Nathan Hatch tells it, a shared 'revolt against history': the throwing off of established hierarchies (secular and religious), the freeing of individual conscience from higher authorities, and a claim of personal equality before others and before God. Christians, in their many revivals, were as enthusiastic as any to adopt enlightened values such as commonsense rationality and democracy. They shared with the Enlightenment the expectation of the 'new': of the inbreaking of a new age – in Christian terms, the Millennium itself. 'The popular millennialism of the early republic,' says Hatch, 'became "secretly united" with viewpoints of the Enlightenment... The millennium, in short, became explicitly democratized.'<sup>12</sup>

In the period when the Awakening flared, with only nascent governmental and social institutions in place in the new republic, it is not surprising that 'people expected almost everything from religion (and churches) and almost nothing from politics (and the state)'. Nor is it surprising that democratizing zeal found organized expression in the churches. 'As mass popular movements, churches came to be places in which fundamental political assumptions were forged: ideas about the meaning of America, the priority of the individual conscience, the values of localism, direct democracy, and individualism.' As religious movements 'anticipated the dawn of a millennial age of equality and justice', they 'had the ironic effect of accelerating the break-up of traditional society and the advent of a social order given over to competition, self-expression, and free enterprise'.<sup>13</sup>

The new methods of evangelism developed in the revival movements fit the growing democratic society and its culture. The revivalists respected enlightened values such as liberty of conscience, free will, and critical thinking. Out of respect for reason, they fashioned their evangelistic appeals around rationalist arguments; out of respect for conscience, appealed to individuals *as individuals* to make informed and personal

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<sup>11</sup> Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 1991).

<sup>12</sup> Nathan O. Hatch, 'Millennialism and Popular Religion in the Early Republic', in Leonard I. Sweet (ed), *The Evangelical Tradition in America* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 116. Cf. Robert Bruce Mullin, 'North America', in Adrian Hastings (ed), *A World History of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 428-32.

<sup>13</sup> Nathan O. Hatch, 'The Democratization of Christianity and the Character of American Politics', in Mark A. Noll (ed), *Religion in American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the 1980s* (Oxford: OUP, 1990), 92-93, 109.

assents to faith in Jesus Christ; and, to demonstrate the truth of Christian beliefs, they called upon their converts to prove their faith through moral virtue and good citizenship.

The movements also sought new forms of Christian service and social reforms befitting the millennium. Zealous lay men and women followed in the wake of their preachers to reinforce revival with a multitude of voluntary associations, each with its own mission of social reform. They did not consider America a Christian nation, writes Daniel Walker Howe. That was ‘something to be achieved rather than something to be maintained’. What they did envision was a ‘gigantic effort of organization... a “benevolent empire”’: an interlocking network of voluntary organizations’ to create a new society. Out of this co-operative work, a form of progressive ‘Protestant ecumenism’ emerged.<sup>14</sup>

This witness of service resulted in an activist, institutionalized benevolence that supported *social innovations* – universities and hospitals, care for the indigent and disabled, public education; *progressive social movements* – the abolition of slavery, early feminism, temperance; and countless acts of *individual and congregational charity*. These innovations were mobilized by growing church denominations – the Protestant ‘mainline’ – that anchored an emerging civil society by providing vital institutions mediating between families, congregations, communities and the nation. Through these forms of action, the evangelistic gains of the Awakening were solidified into a vast complex of churches and civic and educational institutions which attracted national political and social influence, public support, and enormous financial resources.

Within a hundred years of the Revolution, Christian mission in the United States had not merely succeeded in establishing the Protestant churches as the most active and influential social institutions of their time. It had also succeeded by integrating the humanizing liberal values of the American Reformation deeply into the ethos of a growing nation. Evangelism, with its insistence on moral virtue as the proof of one’s faith, was nearly synonymous with a call to virtuous citizenship in a liberal democracy; the works of service (*diakonia*) which proved the truth of the gospel’s claims, with the active desire to build a benevolent, liberated society. This was the contextualized form given the gospel of ‘life in all its fullness’, c. 1900.

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### Losing the Protestant Mainline and its Consequences

Mainline Protestantism reached its peak influence in the 1940s and 1950s. ‘Before 1960,’ Hollinger reminds us, ‘if you held a major leadership

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<sup>14</sup> Daniel Walker Howe, ‘Religion and Politics in the Antebellum North’, in Mark A. Noll (ed), *Religion in American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the 1980s* (Oxford: OUP, 1990), 131.

position and had real opportunities to influence the direction of society, you most likely grew up in a white Protestant milieu.<sup>15</sup> Since the 1970s, however, the mainline has effectively collapsed such that it is easy to overlook now how deeply the cultural authority of the mainline churches once penetrated American society, and what we can learn from their decline and its consequences.

First, the mainline was successful enough in integrating the values of the American Reformation into a liberal democratic culture that, even as its churches decline, its Protestant influence lives on. Liberal Christianity, as its orthodox critics seldom tired of pointing out, was never particularly stable in sustaining a durable, historically recognizable Christian identity. Among even the leading children of the American Reformation, many left the church entirely, founding important new American schools of thought along the way – for example, Transcendentalism, the original proposal for spirituality without religion, and Pragmatism, with its enduring claim that the truth of a proposition is proved by the virtue of its application. But these movements were not precisely secular. Rather, they were ‘post-Protestant’, carrying into new cultural forms the moral virtues and spirituality of the churches they had left behind. Even the ‘high’ socio-political liberalism of the early twentieth-century Progressive Movement and the later political New Deal was so infused with Protestant liberalism that Kittlestrom refers to it as the ‘religion of democracy’.<sup>16</sup> Later generations experienced the liberality of mainline religion, with its openness to free thinking and religious diversity, as a ‘commodious halfway house’ to a uniquely post-Protestant form of secularism.<sup>17</sup> Rising numbers, identifying themselves as ‘spiritual but not religious’, left ‘organized’ religion to free themselves from the self-preoccupations of the churches – sensing ‘a vague and unspoken... feeling that it is somehow more Christian not to be a Christian’.<sup>18</sup> But though they may be secular in life, they remain Protestant in ethics, so deep is the Protestant hold on them.<sup>19</sup>

Second, we must not discount the social importance of the mainline’s collapse over the last four decades, whose ‘death’ even the conservative Roman Catholic social critic Joseph Bottum laments as ‘the central historical fact of our time’. Bottum reminds us of the extent to which the Protestant mainline anchored civil society. It provided, he says, a vital ‘social unity and cultural dimension that did not derive entirely from political arrangements and economic relations’. For generations American

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<sup>15</sup> Hollinger, *After Cloven Tongues of Fire*, 3.

<sup>16</sup> Kittlestrom, *Religion of Democracy*, 11, *inter alia*.

<sup>17</sup> Hollinger, *After Cloven Tongues of Fire*, 46.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph Bottum, *An Anxious Age: The Post-Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of America* (New York: Image/Random House, 2014), 108.

<sup>19</sup> Cf., Bottum, *An Anxious Age*, *inter alia*; and Hollinger, *After Cloven Tongues of Fire*, 45-49.

society was structured round the ‘three-legged stool’ of capitalism, democracy and Protestantism. Then ‘one leg – Mainline American Protestantism – simply collapsed, leaving only democracy and capitalism to battle it out in the public square’. What was lost is a normative Christian voice possessed of the coherent vocabulary, cultural authority, and respect to articulate and challenge the unique problems of American society – and to do so from the *inside* of the society as one of the principal historical architects of the American democratic project. Its loss left a void yet to be filled by other Christian perspectives.<sup>20</sup>

Third, with a weakened contemporary civil society, we are more exposed to competitive political and economic contests over interests, identities and power. These days ‘we find it difficult’, writes social theorist James Davison Hunter, ‘to think of a way to address public... problems or issues in any way that is not political. Public life tends to be reduced to the political. It is not an exaggeration to conclude that the public witness of the church today has become a political witness.’ Without a vital civil society, Hunter argues, politics is driven by the nihilism of the will to power. By so closely associating Christian witness with competitive politics, he warns, Christians ‘perpetuate the nihilism. In doing so, [they] undermine the message of the very gospel they cherish and desire to advance’.<sup>21</sup> Other political scientists and sociologists also observe the decline of Christian witness into political competition. The traditional ‘two-party system’ of American Protestantism – its progressive and conservative strains – they note, now so closely replicates the ‘real “two party” world’ of Republican and Democratic political parties that they are hard to distinguish.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps it is no wonder, as a landmark survey has shown, that a leading cause of defection of young Christians from their churches is ‘aversion to religion... rooted in unease with the association between religion and... politics’.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Bottum, *An Anxious Age*, 109, 128, 278-79. Bottum traces the attempts and failure of Roman Catholic and evangelical Protestant conservatives to convincingly replace mainline Protestantism as a cultural authority since the 1970s. A similar argument is made by George Marsden, *The Twilight of the American Enlightenment: The 1950s and the Crisis of Liberal Belief* (New York: Basic Books, 2014).

<sup>21</sup> James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (Oxford: OUP, 2010), 105, 169, 275.

<sup>22</sup> James L. Guth, John C. Green, Corwin E. Smidt, Lyman A. Kellstedt and Margaret M. Poloma, *Bully Pulpit: The Politics of Protestant Clergy* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1997), 191.

<sup>23</sup> Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 3; cf. 120-23.

### Divisive Liberalisms and Divided Churches

The obvious concern is that the churches' public witness in the United States has split into competing and increasingly politicized factions, and that the various church traditions risk capture (if they haven't already succumbed) by competing political ideologies in their desire to remain relevant to society. This is a relatively new development. Historian George Marsden points out that as recently as the 1960s there remained a Protestant-inflected liberal consensus that mediated political and social disputes and had done so for more than a century and a half. This consensus was centrist in nature and required compromise on all sides. But, in return, it offered a universal perspective that all points of view could be accommodated within a single cultural vision.<sup>24</sup> Under the weight of social protest, however, the liberal centre collapsed and since the 1970s has itself split into competing factions, each with its own claims to the meaning of liberty. These factions are creating a realignment of American politics – its outcome in flux – as well as reinforcing differences in church traditions and their forms of public witness. Versions of competing liberalisms follow below, with a few examples of churches from my own local community to illustrate them.

#### *The ecumenical mainline and positive liberty*

One of our city's oldest churches, an ecumenical, mainline, city-centre, institutional complex blends its historical revivalist roots with progressive public social engagement. Its witness to the wider community is centred squarely on 'Outreach and Service' to those in the city lacking resources and friends to advocate for them. Indeed, service to the community (*diakonia*) is its largest budget item beyond congregational worship. Its nineteen defined social programmes include affordable housing facilities for the working homeless, impoverished elderly and the disabled; a food pantry, clothing thrift shop and emergency homeless shelter; adult day-care; direct-action community engagement; and educational programmes for at-risk youth. *Diakonia* defines its discipleship. By contrast, evangelism is spoken softly: Mostly it is an invitation offered to friends and neighbours to join its religiously diverse and socially inclusive fellowship. But such recruitment is also a material necessity in order to maintain the church's size and financial resources to serve the community.

The social imaginary out of which the church operates corresponds closely with what Isaiah Berlin once called 'positive liberty'.<sup>25</sup> Liberty, conceived as such, is defined chiefly as '*freedom to become*'. It emphasizes the liberation of individuals (particularly the disadvantaged) to fulfil their

<sup>24</sup> Marsden, *The Twilight of the American Enlightenment*.

<sup>25</sup> 'Positive' and 'negative' liberty, see Isaiah Berlin, 'Two Concepts of Liberty', in *Liberty: Isaiah Berlin*, Henry Hardy (ed), (Oxford: OUP, 2002), 166-217.

personal potential, be recognized and respected in society, and to integrate successfully into active democratic participation and social life. To do so requires meaningful equality – in terms of both equal opportunity and a reasonably equal share in the economic, political and cultural goods that society produces. Freedom in this sense best reflects the ‘communitarian’ Protestant-influenced ‘religion of democracy’ which remained politically dominant until the late 1960s, and which formed the rationale for the welfare state, racial integration and expansive public services. It is also the form in which mainline Protestantism found its clearest voice in support of the betterment of society at large.

### *Independent evangelicalism and negative liberty*

Grown from the same revivalist roots, our city’s largest ‘mega-church’ is an independent, four-campus, self-described ‘movement’. It places evangelism squarely at the centre of its witness, challenging each member to convert and baptize at least one friend each year. Mission, as the church describes it, entails ‘unleashing a revolution of love’ on the community. The aim is to offer individual freedom from sin and despair to all, and hope to the poor and forgotten – although ‘poor’ is defined generously to include any kind of spiritual, emotional or economic poverty. Ministries of service, from volunteer medical and mental health clinics, to community gardens and urban neighbourhood trash clean-up projects, are vehicles designed with the specific purpose of deploying individuals in the community so that others might witness their lifestyles and come to ‘desire what we have’. *Diakonia*, in this case, serves instrumentally as an evangelistic strategy.

This is a successful church in terms of its size and growth. Its ministry, which stresses congregational independence and individual conversion, resonates deeply in a segment of the wider local culture that perceives ‘liberty’ as ‘freedom from’, or ‘negative liberty’. This is the ‘individualist’ strand of American liberalism, one that historically has emphasized personal autonomy and resistance to dominant state and religious authorities. Its roots were formed in liberalism’s long history from the eighteenth century in which Free Church Protestants sought freedom from established church hierarchies, and *laissez-faire* commerce-sought economic liberties from taxation and regulation. These longstanding religious and economic values were radicalized and found renewed meaning, as well as common ground, among many Americans in the anti-communist ideologies of the Cold War which were very strong among evangelical churches. By the 1980s this convergence of individualist religious and neo-liberal economic interests had matured into what came to be called the ‘religious right’. And by then, to varying degrees, much of evangelicalism became nearly the opposite of the mainline tradition, reacting against the ‘statism’ of welfare liberalism and business regulation,

the moral openness of liberal culture, and perceived threats to religious liberty from secular 'authorities'.

*Historic Afro-American churches and collective liberty*

Another among our city's oldest churches grew from the imposed racial segregation of black and white congregations early in the nineteenth century. 'Unashamedly Black and Unapologetically Christian', it is a voice from the margins and an advocate for the Afro-American community in solidarity with its history of racial oppression and injustice. Witness, as both evangelistic proclamation and service to the community, is centred around the biblical prophetic tradition. Such prophetic 'forth-telling' raises consciousness about and explains the reality of oppression and insists on justice. Fair housing, voting rights, the mass incarceration of blacks, poverty and racial marginalization, along with enhancing black identity and culture, are themes and points of engagement with the wider community. The church's gospel proclamation is framed in the language of reconciliation, restoration and healing. Its public service supports community activism and a wider mission to 'multiply multi-ethnic [inter-racially reconciled], urban Christian faith communities'.

The struggle for black freedom has been long and brutal. Black churches were crucial in the 1950s and 1960s Civil Rights movement and remain vital institutions as the struggle continues. By the end of the 1960s, however, the civil rights movement divided over the question of whether assimilation into an integrated society, the traditional 'positive' liberalism encouraged by progressive whites, was adequate to address black interests. Instead, such interests could be better protected by resisting assimilation and by emphasizing black identity and solidarity over against the dominant white society in a form of racial nationalism.<sup>26</sup> What is sought is a '*collective liberty*' rather than an individualist one, and it demands legal rights, social recognition, and respect for its community's particular way of life apart from the dominant society. The recognition and acceptance of difference and the right to enjoy it free from white racial and patriarchal prejudice and legal interference extends beyond the black community to include other marginal communities ascribed by gender, race, ethnicity, language, poverty, disability, or minority religion. Difference is more than a matter of cultural tradition and identity. It suggests epistemological differences, even incommensurable ones, setting identity communities off from the dominant society as sites of indigenous truths, meanings and particular rights. Such characterized the 'identity politics' of the multiculturalism which emerged from the 1980s, and presents the clearest

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<sup>26</sup> James H. Cone, *Martin and Malcolm and America: A Dream or a Nightmare* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 3-16, *passim*.

challenge to the prevailing universal liberal consensus, its western assumptions, and its integrationist policies.<sup>27</sup>

### *Post-political libertarianism*

Despair looms, however, over the future of politics itself along with widespread cynicism toward the central institutions – governmental, economic, civic and religious – that traditionally organized a democratic society. Many believe that these have declined into a crisis of legitimacy so deep that they are incapable of containing the splintering interests and competing claims of a divided society. To the extent these have simply given up on social and political institutions, they can be called *post-political*. And to the extent they have turned to individual pursuits without much regard for the wider society, they can be called *libertarian*.

This post-political libertarian trend has yet to be fully described. But evidence for it grows. A recent study published by the American Psychological Association reports steady decline to the lowest levels of civil and political engagement among young adults recorded since it began following this trend in 1968, and their nearly exclusive concern for ‘individual self-advancement’.<sup>28</sup> Among the working class and the poor who struggle from loss of secure employment, throwing them into a lonely struggle to survive in the YOYO (‘You’re-On-Your-Own’) economy,<sup>29</sup> the resulting personal instability leads to disconnection from social and civic institutions.<sup>30</sup> In growing social movements, the language of anarchism (rejection of institutional hierarchies) and libertarianism (a radicalization of individual autonomy and self-expression) is strong. On the left, this is a reprise of the ‘old’ social libertarianism of nineteenth-century anarchism. It is reflected today in the social anarchism of ‘self-generating’ local collectives envisioning new institutions around direct, participatory democracy, exchange co-operatives and worker-controlled economic democracy.<sup>31</sup> On the right, this is a self-described anti-state/anti-corporation

<sup>27</sup> David A. Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (New York: Basic Books/HarperCollins, 1995), 51-77.

<sup>28</sup> Jean M. Twenge, W. Keith Campbell, and Elise C. Freeman, ‘Generational Differences in Young Adults’ Life Goals, Concern for Others, and Civic Orientation, 1966-2009’, in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, American Psychological Association, 102.5 (2012), 1045-62.

<sup>29</sup> Lawrence Mishel, Jared Bernstein and Heidi Shierholz, *The State of Working America, 2008-2009* (an Economic Policy Institute Book, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 15-16.

<sup>30</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

<sup>31</sup> Gar Alperovitz, *America Beyond Capitalism: Reclaiming Our Wealth, Our Liberty, and Our Democracy* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2005); Gregory P. Leffel, *Faith Seeking Action: Mission, Social Movements, and the Church in Motion* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2007), 79-109.

movement calling itself ‘anarcho-capitalism’, seeking to organize social life around unimpeded market exchanges.<sup>32</sup> These movements lie at the fringes but attract large audiences whose values and political interests are in turn shaped by them. Even among business and technological elites – particularly among those in the culturally influential West Coast centres of digital technology, media, and investment – there is a post-political sentiment to frame society in a capitalist-technological grid. Regarding the nation-state and ‘bureaucratic institutions’ as nuisances, this ‘Californian ideology’ looks to personal autonomy, calculated disruption, entrepreneurial creativity, big data, market forces, technological innovation, and self-directed spontaneous evolution as the new social foundation.<sup>33</sup>

Given that these post-political and libertarian trends are still unfolding, it may be more appropriate to identify them as subjects for new missiological reflection than to assume that churches have a ready answer for them. Yet there have been sensitive, small-scale, though quite tentative, Christian responses to them. These include ‘progressive evangelicals’ who have tried to articulate an ‘emerging’ post-modern culture; ‘neo-monastic’ communities organizing around social anarchist models to support social justice; and small ‘missional communities’ formed to include those who have departed ‘organized’ religion for good.

### Together towards Life

Our ongoing contextualization of Christian faith in the United States confronts a public deeply divided among four competing streams of the American liberty tradition. Factions of Americans seek liberty and equality for all in a benevolent commonwealth by building social welfare institutions. Others seek to tear them down in the name of individual autonomy and self-direction. Yet others seek solidarity and collective liberty through emancipation from, rather than assimilation into, the dominant society. And more have given up altogether on ‘institutionalized benevolence’, pursuing radical democratization, self-direction, new technologies and spontaneous social development. It is obvious that America’s liberal dream of uniting all its citizens in a single, universal democratic consensus, almost unchallenged in 1960, is gone today. Perhaps the best we can hope for, writes social philosopher John Gray, is a live-and-let-live *modus vivendi* without a social centre and with only a vanishing

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<sup>32</sup> Gary Chartier and Charles W. Johnson (eds), *Markets Not Capitalism: Individualist Anarchism Against Bosses, Inequality, Corporate Power, and Structural Poverty* (New York: Minor Compositions, n.d.).

<sup>33</sup> Richard Barbrook and Andy Cameron, ‘The Californian Ideology’, in *Science as Culture*, 6.1 (1996), 44-72; Fred Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

hope that social conflict can be restrained.<sup>34</sup> But this is the troubled context in which evangelism must publicly proclaim the message of the reign of God and redemption in God's Son among the political ideologies defending one or another claim to liberty; and in which service in love and justice must demonstrate the living virtue of Christian faith to a public divided within itself about what a virtuous society could even be.

In a society becoming stripped bare of all but the empty space of political and economic interests and power, we might do well to revisit the American Reformation from which most of our Protestant traditions descend, and ask again what Christian faith and liberty have to do with each other. Certainly they have great affinity. But there are limits to liberty. As Paul tells us: 'You were called to freedom... only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another' (Gal. 5:13-4).<sup>35</sup> It is liberty bounded by love that squares the circle to bring the individualist and communitarian values of American liberalism together. The WCC's *Together towards Life* reminds us also of the core of the gospel's vision – that 'life in all its fullness is Jesus Christ's ultimate concern' – and that in this vision are the seeds of a renewed civil society and of the contribution the churches can make to it. And it further reminds us to abandon the internal differences that divide our churches and unite for the life of the world. We seek healing – facing the reality that today our divisions are as much political as they are credal – as a public sign of our capacity to reconcile competing visions of liberty in a common witness. Short of 'unity in mission' we have little to offer a divided public.<sup>36</sup>

Beyond this, it is important to expand our concept of 'together' to include an even larger ecumenical whole, that of American society itself in which Christians are also citizens, who, in spite of their differences, seek the flourishing of an abundant life. What is good news about the gospel ought to be transparently good for all. To be persuasive, our evangelism must place its particular claims about God's reign in a rhetorical master framework that explains concretely what is at stake in the partisan struggles for liberation which preoccupy us, and how our insistent individualism and competing liberalisms can be reconciled with the common good. Evangelism's call to faith must also be a call to action in discipleship that transcends self-interest to place freedom in the service of one's neighbour. Likewise, our works of service in love and justice that prove the moral virtue of our message must find their particular meaning in the natural human longing for recognition, respect and freedom that has long been voiced in the American liberal tradition. This requires, at minimum, diaconal practices that recognize and accord respect to everyone equally as

<sup>34</sup> John Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism* (New York: The New Press, 2000).

<sup>35</sup> Scripture citation from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, third edition, New Revised Standard Bible (Oxford: OUP, 2007).

<sup>36</sup> *Together towards Life*, 4, 22-6.

rightful members of a single society; that insist on an equal sharing in social goods sufficient to allow each individual and community the opportunity to fulfil their human potential; and that remove the obstacles to participation in a free society.

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# THE ROLE OF THE MARGINALIZED IN EVANGELISM AND DIAKONIA: THE MANJO CONTRIBUTION

Kirsi Leikola

## Introduction

When some people are called marginalized, there are other people who have marginalized them or left them to be marginalized. In Christ's feast, the marginalized are not excluded, on the contrary, they are the ones who certainly are included. But the others will be there too, if they repent and are ready to follow Christ. One of the roles of the marginalized in evangelism and *diakonia* is to contribute their alternative approach, knowledge and understanding, so that all parties may grow in faith and work for the Kingdom of God where justice prevails.

The Manjo, the marginalized group of former hunters, refer to their non-Manjo fellow Christians in the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) with the phrase 'the people who greet us by hugging' (*noon tiqqaa beet asheena'o*). The phrase itself summarizes the key points of how the members of this marginalized minority see the essence of evangelism and *diakonia* in their context. In order to elaborate on this emic (from the perspective of one who participates in the culture being studied) conceptualization the following themes need to be discussed: First, the question of relationship; second, the holistic nature of 'sharing'; and third, how marginalization experienced as spatial (being outside, far away or below) can hinder getting one's voice heard. After discussing the issues mentioned above, I will share how the things learned from the Manjo perspective are used for evangelism and *diakonia* in EECMY.

## Exclusion Due to Work and/or Descent

The Manjo live in south-west Ethiopia, scattered all over the Kafa Zone.<sup>1</sup> In the statistics for the Kafa Zone, the members of the Manjo minority are included under the ethnic group of Kafa. The majority, the non-Manjo Kafa members, are often referred to as Gomaro.<sup>2</sup> Both the Manjo and the

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<sup>1</sup> The Kafa Zone is one of the zones of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR). There are also Manjo minorities in the Sheka, Benji Maji and Dawro Zones of the SNNPR and in the Oromiya and Gambella Regions.

<sup>2</sup> According to Lange, the name 'Gomara' is a designation given to languages used by the Kafa, Sheka, Hinario and Bosha by the neighbouring Bench and She. W. Lange, *History of the Southern Gonga, Southwest Ethiopia* (Studien zur

Gomaro speak *Kafi noono*, which is an Omotic language. In anthropological literature, the minority status of the groups that resemble the Manjo form a special case when inter-ethnic relations are studied. On the one hand, the host population actively rejects these groups, but on the other, it also finds them useful in some specific ways. The boundary is strongly maintained and leaves little scope for interaction with the majority population. They have a special economic niche; their source of subsistence is in relationship with other people through the provision of specialized goods or services.<sup>3</sup> The situation is often a result of external historical events, e.g. in a time of ecological stress, impoverished groups or clans of agriculturalists or pastorals have turned to hunting and relate to other groups in various kinds of symbiosis. The hunters choose different economic strategies according to socio-ecological determinants. However, the moral code of the majority society negatively evaluates the strategies left to them.<sup>4</sup>

Although this exclusion bears some similarities with the case of Dalits in India (endogamy, restrictions on commensality, hierarchical grading, concept of pollution, traditional occupation and ascribed status), there are also other important differences than just the Hinduism. Particularly in south-west Ethiopia, among the Omotic people, the impurity concept is more stressed than that of purity, and transgressions of taboos may also cause farmers to become temporarily impure. Impurity is primarily related to food taboos as dietary proscriptions are crucial status and identity markers.<sup>5</sup> The Manjo describe the boundaries inside society as relating to what the majority of its members do or feel: *Ciigo* include despising and a feeling of disgust, *hoxo* refers to not being appreciated, 'given no respect',

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Kulturkunde 61, Wiesbaden, Germany: Steiner, 1982), 3. Bekele Woldemariam translates the name as 'distinguished people': Bekele Woldemariam, *The History of the Kingdom of Kaffa: The Birth Place of Coffee 1390-1935* (Hawassa, Ethiopia: Association for Research and Conservation of Culture, Indigenous Knowledge and Cultural Landscape 2010), 28.

<sup>3</sup> Frederic Barth, 'Introduction', in F. Barth (ed), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, 9-38 (Oslo: Johansen & Nielsen Boktrykkeri, 1969), 31-32.

<sup>4</sup> M. Bollig, 'Ethnic Relations and Spatial Mobility in Africa: A review of the peripatetic niche', in A. Rao (ed), *The Other Nomads: Peripatetic Minorities in Cross-cultural Perspectives* (Köln, Germany: Böhlau Verlag GmbH & cle, 1987), 210. See also C. Chang 'Nomads without cattle: East African foragers in historical perspective', in E. Leacock and R. Lee (eds), *Politics and History in Band Societies* (Cambridge: CUP, 1982), 269-82; R. van Zwanenberg, 'Dorobo hunting and gathering: a way of life or a mode of production?', in *African Economic History*, 2 (1976), 12-14.

<sup>5</sup> A. Pankhurst, 'Introduction', in D. Freeman and A. Pankhurst (eds), *Living on the Edge: Marginalized Minorities of Craftworkers and Hunters in Southern Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2001), 13.

respect being one of the central issues in society, and *qesho* specifies exclusion from the Gomaro group due to impurity.

### Evangelism and Diakonia in Relationships

Although the importance of relationships and their effect on one's existence are obvious in all societies, the special importance that relationships have in non-western societies need to be noted. Eriksen points out how in western societies, the self is usually conceived of as an independent agent whereas, as in many non-western societies, the self may be seen rather as the sum-total of the social relationships of the individual.<sup>6</sup> Brøgger describes how the daily meal, prepared from the *ensete* plant, can be seen as an end-product of a series of processes in which the produce of tribal land and the labour contributed by people in close, multiplex relationships are fused, and he states that 'the consumption of a meal is therefore at the same time the consummation of a complex set of social relationships, which implies an enduring commitment and responsibility'.<sup>7</sup> The marginalized members of society are excluded from this kind of relationship.

In Kafa, the local concept of relationships includes three categories: *giidoona*, 'by force', *qaawoona*, 'by will according to need', and *shoodoona*, 'by love'. The Manjo describe the relationships that are by force by listing the duties imposed on the Manjo and by introducing the greetings that were used. The concept of *madda*, 'the work that needed to be done for superiors', includes ploughing, weeding, making fences, hanging beehives in trees, collecting firewood, etc.

In the submissive greetings of the past, 'down' is emphasized: *Shawooch qebane*, *moogooch qebane*, *addiyo*, 'let me lie down on the earth for prestige, your honour/provider'. The words are for honouring, to give respect and 'add to prestige'. To show respect in different ways was, and is, part of the culture, but with the Manjo the rules were different, e.g. elderly Manjo men were obliged to say this greeting also to the Gomaro women and children to show submission. It underlined that the Manjo did not belong to the same system with the others. Other communication was to be avoided.

The second category for relationships includes those relationships that come into being when needed (*qaawoona*). Mainly, they include those with whom one gets together in meetings and different kinds of offices and institutions. The relationships in this category are considered to be complicated since there were two components involved: a person and a

<sup>6</sup> T.H. Eriksen, *Small places, large issues: An Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology*, 2nd edition (London: Pluto Press 2001 [1995]), 54.

<sup>7</sup> J. Brøgger, *Belief and Experience among the Sidamo: A Case Study towards an Anthropology of Knowledge* (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1986), 81. *Ensete*, commonly known as 'false banana', is the main staple food in the highlands of south-west Ethiopia.

position. Actually, the respect that should be shown is combined with the position a person is holding. However, the people in these positions constantly change and the nature of the relationship changes when a person loses his position. So the question is to what extent is it good to relate, how much information is it good to give, and how will getting into this relationship affect one's life in practice. At present, some of the Manjo-Gomaro relationships, especially those relating to government and other institutions, are seen as this kind of relationship.

The most cherished relationships are those described with the word *shoodoona*, 'by love'. It is used as a definition of certain kinds of relationships that are usually found among family members, relatives and close neighbours; these relationships are considered long-lasting and those concerned not only meet regularly, but also spend time together. It includes working in each other's workforce, helping each other, sitting and eating together, spending time together, talking together, celebrating weddings together, mourning together, greeting by hugging, borrowing and lending money and things, sharing knowledge, secrets and inner thoughts. Rather than being a feeling of felt love, *shoodoona* is better described as a commitment of sharing life together. This is the kind of relationship that is expected from fellow Christians, who, by being children of God, belong to one family.<sup>8</sup>

### The Holistic Nature of 'Sharing'

As mentioned above, both material sharing and the sharing of work play a role. But that is only part of the picture. Two things especially need to be noted from the holistic nature of sharing: the sharing of difficulties and of ideas.

What is meant by sharing the difficulties? There are two ways of assisting people. The first and most usual way is based on belonging to the same network in which everyone in turn can be a helper and the one who is being helped. It is not a matter of reciprocity, but about sharing the challenges (and also joys). This strengthens relationships and commitment. The second way is that the one who has more gives to someone in need. It solves the problem in hand, but if it continues in this way, the relationship will remain a giver-receiver relationship and not 'sharing'. In real sharing, all – including the poor and marginalized – contribute to the common good, and those who might have been under the false idea that they do not need such a contribution discover that they actually do.

The second point noted from the Manjo conceptualization of sharing is the sharing of ideas, thoughts, knowledge and information, together with the means of accessing them. In a society that is mainly oral, where formal

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<sup>8</sup> Kirsi Leikola, *Talking Manjo: Linguistic repertoires as means of negotiating marginalization* (Helsinki: Unigrafia 2014), 91-99.

education and written material are out of the reach of the majority of the population, learning takes place through contacts and interaction with other people. Although the Manjo are very confident about the know-how they have in their own domain, e.g. relating to forests and honey, they feel that they have been deprived of other kinds of know-how needed in society.

*Quotation 1<sup>9</sup>*

<p>To make an ox fat, they have ways (means). We do not have means, yesterday by getting used to go to forest, being chased before, being hastily ousted, we went and we are ignorant...</p> <p>... getting near to them, they do not hug. Getting near to them, they do not share their secrets. They do not give us secrets... we are (still) wrestlings, people do not allow us in, let us in, pulling/leading by hand.</p>	<p>We do not know how to fatten an ox as they do. We do not have the know-how. In the past, we were chased to the forest; our experience is from there, but that has made us ignorant about other things.</p> <p>... many of them do not let us come near; we do not belong to those who are greeted by hugging. They are not sharing their secrets... we are struggling as they do not let us learn what they know.</p>
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The kind of people one associates with defines the knowledge one is to acquire. The information is available to those who can enter into discussions, to be in a situation where information is shared. In order to be able to get access to new groups, to new domains of practice, network connections are needed. Insofar as the individuals are integrated into local networks, they have access to information that allows them to be part of social mechanisms by which local conventions and norms are negotiated and created.<sup>10</sup> In addition, one needs to be able to master the communicative rules of the domain where that particular information is available. Heller points out that the linguistic resources available affect a person's or a group's ability to gain access to other resources, symbolic or material. It is necessary to display appropriate linguistic and cultural knowledge in order to gain access to the game, and playing it well, in turn requires mastery of the kinds of linguistic and cultural knowledge that

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<sup>9</sup> Leikola, *Talking Manjo*, 116-7. In addition to the Standard English translation, I give a more accurate, word-for-word, translation which tries to catch the nuances. It is not only what is said, but how it is said that is meaningful. All quotations are from the data collected in Kafa Zone during 2009-12 for my PhD thesis (Leikola, *Talking Manjo*).

<sup>10</sup> P. Eckert, *Linguistic Variation as Social Practice: The Linguistic Construction of Identity in Belten High* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 210-11.

constitutes its rules.<sup>11</sup> There are different opinions inside the Manjo group about how their relationship with the Gomaro members of society should be in the future. Some are for integration, even for assimilation. Some want the Manjo to be recognized as an ethnic group. Some want to continue as an annexed but separate group, yet with equal rights. Whatever the case, all express the importance of the cross-group communication skills needed for reaching their goal.

### The Gospel in Action

The Manjo articulate 'being Manjo' by relating it to the relationship with the Gomaro members of society. It is not so much *who* the Manjo are, but *where* they are: being outside, far away or below. This has had its consequences: The one who is outside cannot share what is available within. Being far away, it is not possible to know what is going on in the whole of society, while being below cuts one out of normal communication. There is no relationship to provide the connection.<sup>12</sup> The fact that the Gomaro members of society wanted to share the news of the salvation of Christ was something new. The importance of inclusion, the novelty of Christian ideas, and the feelings that arose, can be verified in the following quotation from one of the Manjo elders, who describes the time when the Protestant Christianity started to influence the life of people in the late 1970s.

After some time, things started to be more complicated again. The Protestants were a minority group and pressure from the majority community was felt. The acceptance of Manjo members made the situation even more difficult. The Protestant Gomaro members differed from each other with regard to what kind of relationship they were willing to enter into with the Manjo, and the new Manjo believers were also sensitive regarding any kind of behaviour that could be interpreted as disrespect. In some cases, this led to the formation of separate congregations. However, in most of the congregations both groups continued together, worshipped together, participated in meetings and discussions together, served on committees, worked for church construction and maintenance, and participated in income-generating activities. Usually this kind of case was due to the commitment of Gomaro church leaders in continuing together with the Manjo, regardless outside pressures. Many Gomaro pastors were excluded from the rest of Gomaro society and their relatives refused to eat with them. However, through their 'carrying the cross', the gospel in action started to transform unjust structures. The expression *shoodoona*, 'by love',

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<sup>11</sup> M. Heller 'Code-switching and the politics of language', in L. Milroy and P. Muysken (eds), *One speaker, two languages: Cross-disciplinary perspectives on code-switching*, 158-74 (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), 161.

<sup>12</sup> Leikola, *Talking Manjo*, 49-67.

is especially used when the change that has taken place in relationships with the Gomaro is evaluated. Those who greet with a hug, enter the house of the Manjo, eat with them and engage in mutual assistance, are counted as 'loving'. This did not happen if the relationship belonged to the category of *qaawoona*, 'when needed'. It was the power of the word of God, preaching and teaching of the scriptures, and a readiness to enter into 'a sharing relationship' that were emphasised.

Quotation 2<sup>13</sup>

<p>... 'God where shall we get in, God, you who created earth and sky, did you really not create us? Who has created us' saying we prayed to God.</p> <p>At the time when we were praying, Protestant religion, it is not said (that you are) Manjo, it is not said Manno (tanner), without estimating the clan of a person, it is not said Greek clan, the Gojam clan is not said, Tigrai clan is not said, Oromo clan is not said, Galli (Oromo) clan is not said, Amhara clan is not said, a man's clan what is, 'you are different from him, you are different from him go there' is not said. 'The religion that receives people whom God has created is Praying Protestant religion', they said. Really! 'If it is so are they receiving also Manjo' They receive. 'If it is so, what shall we do?' We went to that place. Went slowly (carefully), one went, after one had gone and reached, went and reached.</p> <p>'Why did you come?' 'How about if I believed, with you will you put/let me in?' he said. 'Woo, we receive. Come here, come here' the Protestant religion received, received.</p>	<p>... We prayed to God asking whom shall we join. We asked God, did he who created heaven and earth not create us also? If not, who was the one who created us?</p> <p>When we were praying like this we heard that in Protestant Christianity there is no Greek no Manjo, no Manno, there is no ranking of clans. There is no Gojam, no Tigre, no Oromo or Amhara; people are not differentiated by descent.</p> <p>The religion that receives all God's created people is this Protestant religion in which they pray a lot.</p> <p>We doubted if they were also receiving the Manjo, but we heard that they did. Still hesitating we approached them. They asked why we had come and we told them that we were wondering would they receive us if we believed. They said that they would receive us with joy and told us to come quickly.</p> <p>.</p>
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<sup>13</sup> Leikola, *Talking Manjo*, 104.

Quotation 3<sup>14</sup>

<p>Now what did they say to those Gomaro who hugged us, to those who believed? ‘What have you become, do not hug them’, was said, ‘you (have become) Manjo’, was said, their clans again segregated them. But even when their clans were segregating them, they came out being filled by word, reading the book ‘we will not abandon... we hear the one word, it is one place we eat from, it is one place we drink from’, by saying again they were advising us...</p>	<p>Some of those Gomaro who had believed greeted us by hugging. The other Gomaro did not like them to do so and started to segregate from them saying that now you yourselves have become Manjo.</p> <p>But as they read the Bible they were filled by the word and refused to give up. They said that as we hear the word together we also eat and drink together and they stayed with us and advised us.</p>
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### The Gospel in Verbal Interaction

From a socio-linguistic viewpoint, the inclusion of the Manjo into local (and global) networks and communities of practice of EECMY, provided access to linguistic resources in which the language ideology and rhetoric used are, at least to a certain extent, based on Christian values. By crossing over to a linguistic repertoire that has a shared domain with another group, the social boundary becomes negotiable. There is a system in which things can be negotiated and constructed. As one of the Manjo elders indicated: ‘We were not even able to say *iinana*’, which is a phrase that people use in order to enter into a discussion. Now, access to these ways of speaking is seen as a way of entering into a discussion in which communication does not necessarily have to be according to the practices and behaviour on which the relationships of society in the past were based.

In these communities of practice that include people from both groups, the natural acquisition of linguistic practices can take place. Both parties gain components for their linguistic repertoires. The evolving communities of practice are not to be regarded as arenas where the members of a marginalized group associate with the more prominent prestige group, but as a means for all participants to ‘become part’ of or be included in different cohesive communities of practice where prestige allows you to talk, to hear and to be heard. It is there that different concepts of language and knowledge meet and are available for negotiation. What is said and how, what is left unspoken and what language is used for, all has its consequences in shaping the reality as talking itself constructs social context.

<sup>14</sup> Leikola, *Talking Manjo*, 109.

### From Ideas to Practice in EECMY

The work approach for evangelism and *diakonia* presented here tries to take into account the issues learned from the Manjo perspective. It is based on decade-long teamwork and experience shared between the representatives of the Manjo and some other marginalized minority groups, pastors, evangelists and the staff of EECMY Illubabor Bethel Synod, which included two co-workers from the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission. Later, after three members of the team had been called to work at the EECMY Central Office, these ideas were further developed in co-operation with the personnel of other synods of EECMY, and the 'Jump Start' programme was launched.<sup>15</sup> On the one hand, it is a teaching method that combines theory and practice. On the other hand, it is a learning tool for all engaged in the process, as it constantly provides material for experience-sharing.

For various reasons, there are different boundaries inside Ethiopia. Groups referred to as 'marginalized minorities' are many and the degree of exclusion varies. Those segregated 'due to work or descent' include craft workers (potters, tanners, smiths) and former hunters. With some of these groups the main reason for segregation has been the craft that the group has been engaged in. In some cases, the occupation has been due to their free choice of specialization, while in other cases they have been forced to do so due to loss of the land for some reason. Some of the craft workers are associated with *buda*, the evil eye, and are feared and avoided for that reason. Many of these groups are considered 'polluting'.

Cultural differences or painful history have hindered the willingness of the people to engage in interaction across boundaries. As the body of Christ, the church does not acknowledge these man-made boundaries. By the power of the Holy Spirit, congregations are communities of practice where people come together to worship, to share the word of God and the sacraments, to work for evangelism and *diakonia*, reconciliation and peace. In congregations there can be unity in diversity, in which different cultural backgrounds are valued in agreement and cohesion. They can serve as communities of mutual love, where one can ask and receive forgiveness. Although all levels of the church (and also partners from abroad) need to be activated, the main 'owner' of ministry is the local congregation. EECMY has over 12,000 congregations and preaching stations all over the country. It is an influential network for working against injustice and for promoting advocacy work in the whole of society.

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<sup>15</sup> Rev. Yonas Yigezu currently works as the Director of the EECMY Department for Mission and Theology, and Rev. Risto Leikola and Dr Kirsi Leikola as advising co-ordinators for the EECMY Inclusion of Marginalized Minorities programme in the same department. The work approach/Jump Start Program was presented at one of the workshops of the Tenth Assembly of WCC in Busan by the same group.

The Jump Start programme starts with Bible teaching at synod level. Although some subjects are more relevant to the majority and others to minorities, they are learned together. In the Ethiopian context, for a congregation to be open and committed, the following lessons are needed: Craft workers and nomads in the Bible, The relationship of the Old and the New Testaments, The Love of God, The holistic mission of Jesus, Pure and impure in the New covenant, The Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15), and The theology of reconciliation.

The next step is taken at a congregational level, with the elders and pastors/evangelists and the representatives of the marginalized minorities. The planning phase starts with their joint evaluation of relationships in the congregation. Based on his evaluation, the work plan and the budget are prepared with help from personnel in the synod concerned and the Central Office. The plan is discussed with the members of the congregation, who clarify their pledge for contribution and confirm their commitment to the future of the work. The Jump Start programme, as indicated in its name, is an incentive that should lead to the ongoing work of the congregation. Outside funding is restricted to a maximum of US\$1,200 over two years. Such an approach is holistic, including preaching the gospel and growing in faith, sharing both material issues, along with knowledge and experience from both groups, aiming to create a climate of self-support, and activities to empower and promote the participation of representatives of marginalized groups in leadership. E.g. one Jump Start programme included the following two-year plan: Bible teaching to mixed group by synod, training a young woman from the potter community in Bible School (to be assigned to work for a mixed congregation), buying a donkey and the carriage for more effective marketing, coffee fellowship, and participation in each other's mourning across the former boundaries, and joint efforts to renovate the church.

The aim is that, after doing some Jump Start initiatives, the synod can start using the method by itself in other congregations of the synod. The results and challenges are discussed in church forums. All levels of the church are invited to participate in experience sharing and evaluation. In addition, the co-operation and sharing of ideas is done with the Development and Social Service Commission of EECMY. Some development projects, run in co-operation with government offices, have been implemented in remote areas where the population includes marginalized minorities. Bearing in mind the issues mentioned, the project components are designed so that they both secure the special needs of the marginalized and bring together the majority and minority members by addressing the whole of society.

### Conclusion

As affirmed in several mission documents, ‘the marginalized are agents of mission and exercise a prophetic role which emphasizes that fullness of life is for all’, and ‘we have to listen to the voices from the margins’.<sup>16</sup> It is when these things are put into the practice that the results start to be seen. By making their voices heard, the Manjo and other marginalized minorities in Ethiopia are contributing their share for understanding and practising evangelism and *diakonia* as grounded in the life of an inclusive local congregation in which people grow in faith, witness, worship and have fellowship. Could their insights about relationships, sharing and talking, be part of ‘sharing the challenges’ in other contexts as well? When seen from another angle, something that has previously been taken for granted may start to be questioned.

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<sup>16</sup> E.g. Jooseop Keum (ed), *Together towards life, Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes –with a practical guide* (Geneva: WCC 2013), 39.

# DELIVER US FROM EVIL: EVANGELISM, SPIRITUAL CONFLICT, ‘SIGNS AND WONDERS’

Tormod Engelsviken

## Introduction, Including a Remarkable Norwegian Case

One of the most remarkable public debates in Norway during the winter of 2016 concerned a documentary movie made by the famous Norwegian film-maker Margreth Olin. In this documentary, which was seen by a large number of Norwegians in cinemas all over the country, she portrays Joralf Gjerstad, a well-known psychic and healer with so-called ‘warm hands’. The film-maker, who has made several documentaries before, said that this time she wanted to portray goodness rather than evil as she had done in her former films.<sup>1</sup>

Joralf Gjerstad is almost 90 years old, comes from Snåsa, a small community in rural mid-Norway, and has during most of his life received people with problems or diseases into his home where he has counselled them and laid hands upon them for healing. Lots of people from various walks of life have afterwards testified to the fact that they have been healed or become significantly better through Gjerstad’s ministry. Remarkably, the film-maker portrays Gjerstad and his ministry positively, and Gjerstad, a confessing Christian layman who has been employed in the local Norwegian Lutheran church, claims that his powers are a gift from God.

In the debate spurred by Gjerstad’s ministry, critics have argued that there are no supernatural causes for the ‘cures’ but that they are a result of the *placebo* effect or the loving and positive attention that Gjerstad shows towards his clients. Many of the clients who have been helped, both Christians and non-Christians, however, reject this simple explanation and attribute their healing to forces yet unknown, or to God. Gjerstad has also been criticized for supporting the ‘alternative’ movement by offering healing outside the scientific medical tradition, although he himself strongly recommends his clients to seek help also from the medical profession. He does not want to be an alternative to medical science, but a supplement.

The reaction of church leaders has been positive. The Lutheran bishop Per Arne Dahl has said publicly during a discussion in Oslo cathedral that he wanted to ask forgiveness for the church’s neglect of the healing

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Olin in the Norwegian Christian daily *Vårt Land*, 19th February 2016, 48.

ministry and to support the practice of anointing for healing and the use of the gift of healing in the church. Jan Olav Henriksen, professor of Systematic theology at MF Norwegian School of Theology, has co-authored a book about paranormal experiences<sup>2</sup> and tells how he himself has ‘warm hands’ and has laid hands on and prayed for people who have been healed.

One of the most popular television programmes in Scandinavia is called ‘The Powers of the Spirits’. It is a reality (!) series, showing people who are bothered by spirits or ‘energies’ in their homes, and how these disturbances are diagnosed most often as being caused by the spirits of the deceased, who are then removed from the home by psychics or other specialists in dealing with the spirit-world.

These examples may suffice to show that interest in and experience of non-medical healing and dealing with the spirit-world are strong in some of the most modern and secularized countries of the world. This is the context in which I live today but, based on studies and personal experience of quite different cultures in the global South, I would claim that healing and spiritual conflict are *universals* or *constants* that the church has to deal with in all cultures and at all times. Amanda Porterfield argues that ‘(Christian) healing has persisted over time and across cultural spaces as a defining element of Christianity and a major contributor to Christianity’s endurance, expansion, and success’.<sup>3</sup>

When the Lausanne Theology Working Group was planning a new theological consultation in the late 1990s, it consulted evangelical church and mission leaders all over the world to ask what was the most urgent theme for a theological and missiological consultation. The overwhelming majority suggested spiritual warfare or spiritual conflict as the most relevant topic for the consultation. The consultation with the title ‘Deliver Us from Evil’ was held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2000. It resulted in a ‘Consultation Statement’, a short Lausanne Occasional Paper (LOP)<sup>4</sup> and the full volume ‘Deliver Us from Evil’.<sup>5</sup> The Statement claims that the church should be engaged in a ministry of spiritual conflict, and it confirms that Satan is a real, personal, spiritual and created being: ‘A primary

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<sup>2</sup> Jan Olav Henriksen and Kathrin Pabst, *Uventet og ubedt – paranormale erfaringer i møte med tradisjonell tro* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2013). (In English: Unexpected and unasked for – paranormal experiences encountering traditional faith.)

<sup>3</sup> Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (Oxford: OUP, 2005), 19.

<sup>4</sup> Tormod Engelsen, *Spiritual Conflict in Today’s Mission* (Monrovia, CA: Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, Marc Publications, 2001). The Consultation Statement is found on 82-96.

<sup>5</sup> A. Scott Moreau and others (eds), *Deliver Us from Evil: An Uneasy Frontier in Christian Mission* (Monrovia, CA: Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, Marc Publications, 2002).

purpose of the life and ministry of Jesus was to expose, confront and defeat Satan and destroy his works.’ The Statement further argues that there are striking similarities between what happened in the early church and what is happening in demonic encounters and deliverance today, and that every Christian has access to the authority of Christ. The statement also issues warnings against syncretism, using magical means or taking ideas, methods and strategies developed in one society and using them uncritically in another.<sup>6</sup>

The question that will be dealt with in this chapter is what is the nature and place of ministries of delivering people from oppression or possession by evil spiritual forces, and prayer for and experience of non-medical healing in relation to the *diakonia* of the church, especially in its missionary outreach.<sup>7</sup>

### The Biblical Basis

The mission of the church has its origin and mandate from Jesus Christ. While the mission of the Triune God (*missio Dei*) may be seen in the totality of the biblical narrative, it may nevertheless be appropriate here to focus initially on the mission commissions of the risen Christ.

While the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 does not explicitly mention deliverance or healing ministries as part of the mission of the apostles, this silence cannot be used as an argument for the view that there was a deliberate change in the apostles’ task from the one they received from the earthly Jesus when he sent them out to the people of Israel, a task that included expulsion of evil spirits and healing (Matt. 10:1, 6-8).

Luke emphasizes the preaching of repentance and forgiveness to all nations and the witness of the apostles to the ends of the earth without mentioning exorcism and healing (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). His narrative of the mission of the early church in Acts, however, includes several accounts of healing and exorcism (e.g. Acts 3:1-10; 8:6-7; 14:8-18; 16:16-18). Sometimes these events are simply summarized as ‘signs and wonders’ (Greek: *terata kai semeia*, Acts 2:43). The role of these in the mission of

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<sup>6</sup> *Deliver Us from Evil*, 2002, xx-xxv. Copyrighted Material

<sup>7</sup> We are aware of the fact that the topics we are dealing with here are sensitive, controversial and complex. We should warn against any easy answers to deep existential questions. There is an enormous amount of literature on these and related topics. In a short chapter, we are not able to cover all the important angles – for instance, such questions as the relationship between the natural and the supernatural, what belongs to creation and what to redemption, why some are healed and others not, and what should be the church’s view and practice in this regard. Neither are we explicitly addressing the issues raised by the so-called ‘prosperity gospel’, but we share the views expressed in the *Cape Town Commitment: A Confession of Faith and a Call to Action* (The Lausanne Movement, 2011, 63-65).

the apostles is succinctly expressed in Acts 14:3: ‘The apostles stayed there (in Iconium) for a long time, speaking boldly about the Lord who proved that their message about his grace was true by giving them the power to perform miracles and wonders’ (Good News Bible). The term that is translated ‘proved’ is the Greek *martyreo* which means ‘to give testimony’ or ‘to witness’. Here God himself gives corroborating evidence to the apostles’ preaching of the Gospel by enabling them to perform signs and wonders. This is a most significant statement on how Luke values the role of signs and wonders for the mission of the church.<sup>8</sup>

The mission commission in John 20:21-22: ‘As the Father sent me, so I send you. Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit”, has become very important in missiology over the last fifty years or so. There are at least two reasons for this. First, the text lays the basis for an understanding of mission as God’s mission: the Father sends the Son, the Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit, and the Son sends the church with the Spirit to the world.<sup>9</sup> The nature and identity of the church as being sent to the world by the Triune God as a witness to the Gospel is central in recent missiology, not least in the ‘missional church’ movement.

Secondly, and especially relevant for our topic, is the *holistic* understanding of mission that is based on Jesus and his earthly ministry as a model or pattern for mission. The ‘as’ in John 20:21 is not only understood as a reference to the fact *that* the church is sent by Jesus, but also as a reference to *how* and *for what purpose* the church is being sent. Just as Jesus’ ministry included a ministry of the *word* in preaching and teaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, it also included a ministry in *deed*, a demonstration of the character and power of the kingdom, as seen in his healings, expulsion of evil spirits, caring for the needs of the hungry, recognizing and raising up the downtrodden and despised, such as poor people, leprosy sufferers, publicans, prostitutes and Samaritans. The programme of Jesus according to Luke 4:18-19 was preaching the good news of God’s salvation in the power of the Spirit, which meant liberty for captives, recovery of sight for the blind, and freedom from oppression. Whether these words are taken mainly metaphorically or literally, they still indicate the comprehensiveness of Jesus’ mission in meeting the basic needs of people.

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<sup>8</sup> The secondary ending of Mark 9:9-20 places great emphasis on the signs that will accompany the believers, including exorcism and healing of the sick through laying on of hands (Mark 16:17-18). Although this was not originally written by the author of Mark’s Gospel, it may nevertheless faithfully reflect the view and experience of the early church.

<sup>9</sup> To various understandings of the concept of God’s mission or *Missio Dei*, see Tormod Engelsen, ‘Missio Dei: the understanding and misunderstanding of a theological concept in European churches and missiology’, in *International Review of Mission*, 92 (2003), No. 367, 481-97.

Against this background of Jesus' ministry, one is fully justified in arguing that loving service – or *diakonia* – to people in need is a central task of the church in its mission to the world. Mission is mission in word (evangelism) and deed (*diakonia*).

If we accept this comprehensive nature of the church's missionary task, it is the more surprising that the ministry of Jesus as healer and exorcist is so often ignored or denied as a model for the church's ministry today. Especially in the theology of western post-Enlightenment Protestantism, both in its more conservative and liberal forms, it seems to have caused some embarrassment that Jesus in the gospels is portrayed as a miracle worker, and that this was central to his ministry and even to his proclamation of the coming of God's kingdom.

The kingdom of God is a comprehensive expression for everything that God's redemption includes. The church is the people of the kingdom who believe in, follow, serve and proclaim Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. Without entering the discussion of the meaning of the term kingdom of God (Greek: *basileia tou Theou*), I would argue that the concept 'the realm of God's salvation' catches the meaning better than the more common 'the rule of God'. It is generally agreed, however, that the kingdom has *already* arrived with Jesus (Mark 1:14), but that it is *not yet* fulfilled. This 'already' and 'not yet' distinction is important because it raises the question about which of the gifts of salvation have already been given and may be experienced here and now, and which are still future and will not be realized until the return of Christ and the redemption of God's creation. Among the gifts that are given in the present to those who enter the kingdom of God through faith in Jesus are forgiveness of sins, a new and right relationship with God our Father and Jesus the Messiah, freedom from Satan's power, a fellowship of believers (Greek: *koinonia*), eternal life, the gift of the Holy Spirit, righteousness, peace and joy (Rom. 14:17).

In the gospels, healings and exorcisms are signs (Greek: singular *semeion*, plural *semeia*). It is especially in John's Gospel that we find the term 'sign' frequently used about Jesus' miracles (e.g. John 2:11; 20:30). It may also be used in a negative sense when people demand signs in order to believe (Matt. 12:38-39). The signs have various meanings. We may discern at least four dimensions: a Christological, an eschatological, a diaconal and a missiological.<sup>10</sup>

The *Christological* dimension points to who Jesus is. Jesus did in fact refer to the miracles and his preaching of the gospel when asked who he was (Matt. 11:4-6). There is an ongoing debate, prompted by some charismatic teachers, whether Jesus did his miracles as a human being anointed with the Spirit or in his capacity as the Son of God. The Gospels

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<sup>10</sup> See also Tormod Engelsen, 'Tegn og under: deres betydning i kirkens og misjonens liv.' in *Norsk tidsskrift for misjon*, 41 (1987), No. 1, 32-47. (In English: Signs and wonders: their significance for the life of the church and its mission.)

and Acts present Jesus both as endowed with the Spirit and doing his mighty deeds by the power of the Spirit (e.g. Luke 4:14, 18; Matt. 12:28; Acts 10:38). Yet there is something *unique* about Jesus' ministry. His healings and exorcisms were performed through his word and on his own authority without invoking any other power.<sup>11</sup> The disciples, however, both in the Gospels and Acts healed and expelled evil spirits *in the name of Jesus*, which implies that it was Jesus, not the disciples, who actually healed and expelled the spirits. After Pentecost it was God or the risen and ascended Christ who performed the signs and wonders through the ministry of the disciples. The earthly Jesus had authority as God both to forgive sins and to heal diseases (Mark 2:6-12). We also notice that Jesus is never said to have faith in God, while the disciples are encouraged to believe in God and Jesus (Matt 17:19-20; John 13:14). There is therefore a fundamental difference between the healings and exorcisms done by the earthly Jesus and those done by the disciples in the name of Jesus, although both Jesus and the disciples were empowered by the Holy Spirit for their ministries.

The *eschatological* dimension is primarily expressed by the fact that the mighty deeds were signs of the coming of the kingdom of God. We have mentioned above that the kingdom has *already* arrived with the coming of Jesus, and his message of repentance and faith in the Gospel (Mark 1:14; 4:17). Further evidence of the kingdom is the expulsion of evil spirits from people who are possessed: 'If I cast out evil spirits by the Spirit of God then the kingdom of God has come to you' (Matt. 12:28; Luke 11:20). The defeat of Satan and the liberation of those who were possessed or oppressed by him or his demons were one of the central features of Jesus' earthly ministry. Together with the healing ministry, they represent a foretaste or anticipation of the kingdom that will come in power at the end of time. Then the devil and his evil powers will finally be defeated and all disease will be gone for ever through the resurrection of the body to eternal life. There is, however, a basic difference between the healings and the exorcisms: in the healings there are two people involved: Jesus and the sick person; and Jesus speaks words of comfort and encouragement to the sick person who is then healed. In the exorcisms, however, there are three people involved: Jesus, the possessed and the demon. It is the demon(s) that is spoken to and driven out by a strict command from Jesus, while the possessed person is fully restored to life. The expulsions demonstrate that the kingdom of Satan loses its power in the encounter with Jesus and kingdom of God, and that those who have been bound by Satan are set free (Matt. 12:24-29).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> See the discussion particularly with regard to expulsion of evil spirits in Tormod Engelsviken, *Besettelse og åndsutdrivelse i Bibelen, historien og vår egen tid* (Oslo: Lunde forlag, 1978), 40-43. (In English: Possession and expulsion of spirits in the Bible, in history and our own time.)

<sup>12</sup> See Engelsviken, *Besettelse*, 1978, 43-54.

Especially significant in the context of the theme of this volume is what we have called the *diaconal* dimension. The wonders and the exorcisms are motivated by Jesus' love and compassion for people who suffer or have deep needs, whether they are sick, marginalized or possessed by evil spirits (e.g. Matt. 20:34). Matthew 9:36 portrays Jesus as being 'moved with compassion' for 'sheep without a shepherd'. This attitude of love and compassion has been correctly used as a foundation for the church's diaconal ministry, yet it should be pointed out that it is Jesus' (and the apostles') preaching of the gospel and miraculous healing ministry which is the context of Matthew 9:36 (Matt. 9:35-10:1).

Finally, the miracles of Jesus presuppose faith or imply a call to faith. This is the *missiological* dimension. This faith may be that of the suffering person, the faith of others or, in the case of the disciples, of those who perform the miracle. Faith, on the part of the suffering person, is not demanded, neither is it seen as a prerequisite for healing. Nevertheless, Jesus encourages people to believe and performs some of his miracles in response to faith. It is not the strength of the person's faith but its direction towards Jesus that is decisive. In the story of the boy with an evil spirit (Mark 9:17-29), Jesus rebuked the lack of faith by the people (v. 19). When the father of the boy asked for Jesus' help, Jesus answered that 'everything is possible for the person who has faith' (v. 23). The father confessed his lack of faith: 'I believe, help my unbelief' (v. 24), yet Jesus threw out the evil spirit and healed the boy. The story ends with Jesus' word about the need for prayer in the ministry of exorcism (v.29).

The wonders of Jesus may also lead to praise of God and faith in Jesus, both among those who are helped and those who witness the healing or the exorcism (Matt. 9:8; 15:30-31; John 2:23; 4:53). This is one of the purposes of Jesus' miracles (John 20:3). There are, however, also texts that warn against demanding signs or making faith dependent upon them (e.g. Matt. 12:38-39; John 4:48; 20:29).

We have looked briefly at some central features of Jesus' earthly ministry that may be carried forward by the church as it emulates the ministry of Jesus, according to Jesus' word in John 20:21. In the early church as described in Acts, the healing and exorcism ministry of Jesus is continued by the apostles and other Christians in Jesus' name and with some of the same dimensions as in Jesus' own ministry – particularly the Christological, diaconal and missiological. There are general references to 'signs and wonders'<sup>13</sup> and specific references to healing<sup>14</sup> and deliverance from evil spirits.<sup>15</sup> The high number of references to these sign and wonders show the importance that Luke attributes to them in the early mission of the church.

<sup>13</sup> E.g. Acts 2:43; 4:30; 5:12; 8:6-7; 14:3.

<sup>14</sup> E.g. Acts 3:6-8, 16; 4:14, 16; 5:15-16; 8:7; 9:34-42; 19:12; 28:8-9.

<sup>15</sup> E.g. Acts 5:16; 8:7; 16:16-18; 19:12.

A *caveat* is in place here, however, since the healings in themselves are not unambiguous signs. The story of Paul's and Barnabas' healing of a lame man in Lystra (Acts 14:8-18) shows that Christian healing without the accompanying word may be interpreted within and on the basis of the religious worldview of the observers. In this case, Paul and Barnabas were seen as Greek gods rather than representatives of the living God (vv. 11-12, 15). The lesson to be drawn from this incident is that the preaching of the Gospel and the healing ministry should always go together.

The significance of signs and wonders is also corroborated by Paul himself in his epistles. Paul could refer to the experience of the churches in Galatia (Gal. 3:5) and Corinth (1 Cor. 2:4; 12:9-10). When Paul in Rom. 15:15-21 presents his missionary programme and method, he includes 'signs and wonders': 'I will be bold and speak only about what Christ has done through me to lead the Gentiles to obey God. He has done this by means of word and deeds (Greek: *logos* / word, *ergon* / deed), by the power of miracles and wonders (Greek: *semeia kai terata*), and by the power of the Spirit of God' (v. 18-19). It is common in current missiology to speak of mission in word and deed,<sup>16</sup> and rightly so. It should be noted, however, that the deeds that Paul refers to here are not the more common diaconal ministry but the signs and wonders that are a result of the Spirit's power that accompanies Paul's preaching of the Gospel. When this text is used as an argument for holistic ministry, it should not be forgotten that it includes 'signs and wonders' and the 'power of the Spirit'.

In 1 Cor. 12:9 Paul includes gifts of healing by the Spirit among the charisms (from Greek: *charisma* / gift of grace) that are in operation in the church. In the introductory statement in 12:4-5, the gifts are called charisms and services (Greek: *diakonia* / service). We are aware of the fact that the Greek term *diakonia* may be used of any kind of service, yet it is significant that all the gifts that are mentioned in 1 Cor. 12:6-11 are called 'services'. They are supposed to be permanent features of the ministry of the church in the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>17</sup>

The New Testament text that has most influenced the church's *practice* of healing is James 5:14-16 which describes a simple rite of anointing and prayer. 'Is one of you ill? Let him send for the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord; the prayer offered in faith will heal the sick man, the Lord will restore him to health and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.' This text is the foundation for the Catholic and Orthodox sacrament of the anointing of the sick, and it has also been widely used in Protestant churches in connection with a healing ministry. This is the closest we come

<sup>16</sup> See e.g. Michael W. Goheen, *Introducing Christian Mission Today* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 227-63.

<sup>17</sup> Compare also the list of charisms in Romans 12:6-8 which includes a special charism called *diakonia* (v. 6).

to an institutional form of healing ministry in the New Testament. It does not, however, exclude more spontaneous and individual forms of healing with or without anointing or the laying on of hands.

### Healing and Exorcism in the Early Church

It is not possible to follow the long history of healing and exorcism in the church down through the ages, but a few observations may be useful. Contrary to the assumptions of some theologians in the past, these ministries did not disappear after the apostolic age. With regard to exorcism, the patristic scholar Oskar Skarsaune has, based on extensive textual evidence from early church fathers such as Tertullian, Justin Martyr, Origen and Athanasius, shown that a particular set of thought was consistent throughout the early church.<sup>18</sup>

First, Christians were convinced that the gods of the Gentiles were demons. Gentiles relate to real powers in their cult but the powers are demonic idols (cf. Ps. 96:5). Secondly, when people worship these demons in the pagan cult they risk possession. The early church placed possession in the pagan context and denied that baptized Christians could be possessed, unless they lapsed. Pre-baptismal exorcism has as its purpose getting rid of demonic forces before the seal of baptism. Thirdly, the context of possession and exorcism in the early church was people outside the church. Most of the evidence occurs in apologetic and missionary literature. It happened at the border between church and paganism. Exorcism is seen as a sign that demonstrates that Christ has conquered Satan and his hosts. It was also taken as a proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ because only a living Lord could exercise authority over demonic powers. The exorcisms made a great impression on people and contributed to the attraction and growth of the church. Fourthly, the church was of the conviction that Christian exorcism could be performed by any Christian. Both Christian and pagan authors confirm that Christians were recognized as effective exorcists without the use of complicated incantation techniques. Exorcisms were so impressive because they functioned as 'miracles of confrontation' where demons had to openly admit who Jesus was, and recognize his superiority and power.

In connection with Christian initiation in the early church, those who were baptized expected to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and charisms of the Spirit, such as healing and prophecy. The Catholic scholar Kilian McDonnell has shown how widespread the expectation and experience of

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<sup>18</sup> Oskar Skarsaune and Tormod Engelsen, 'Possession and exorcism in the history of the church', in Moreau, *Deliver*, 2002, 65-90, and Engelsen, *Spiritual Conflict*, 2001, 18-20. To the question of healing and exorcism in the New Testament and the ancient church, see also the study by Andrew Daunton-Fear, *Healing in the Early Church. The Church's Ministry of Healing and Exorcism from the First to the Fifth Century* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009).

the charisms were in different parts of the church during the first three hundred years. The charisms that are mentioned by the early church fathers in relation to Christian initiation include prophecy, healing, miracles and, in general, ‘all the divine gifts’.<sup>19</sup> Several of the fathers saw the baptism of Jesus as a model. The Spirit came upon Jesus at his baptism and then he began his public ministry in which healing and miracles were an integral part.<sup>20</sup> McDonnell and Montague conclude with regard to the normativity of the charisms:

We believe... that the prophetic gifts must continue until the final coming. In some way the charisms, including the prophetic ones, structure the church. If the church is built upon the apostles and the prophets (Eph. 2:20), the charisms are in some way essential.<sup>21</sup>

It was the German theologian Adolph von Harnack who first recognized healing as an important factor in the growth of the church during the early period. Others have built on Harnack and argued ‘that the new religion provided innovative forms of health care as well as rituals of spiritual healing that contributed to its attractiveness and figured importantly in its expansion’.<sup>22</sup> Although there are not always clear lines of demarcation between ordinary care for the sick and dying and prayer for divine healing, many documents attest that:

early Christians nursed the sick to emulate the healing ministry of Jesus, to express their faith in the healing power of Christ... In their ministrations to the sick, Christians adopted a simple rite, based on the healings Jesus performed, of anointing the sick with oil ‘in the name of the Lord’.<sup>23</sup>

The reason why we have put such a strong emphasis on the evidence of the New Testament and the early church, is the need to lay a theological foundation for the practice of healing and deliverance as part of the church’s *diakonia* today, and to show the inadequacy of the so-called ‘cessationist’ position where signs and wonders are seen as having ceased after the period of Jesus and the apostles. Both the New Testament writers and the early church believed in and practised Christian exorcism and healing without in any way assuming that these practices were not supposed to accompany the church at all times.

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<sup>19</sup> Kilian McDonnell and George T. Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit: Evidence from the First Eight Centuries* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1991, 309).

<sup>20</sup> *Christian Initiation*, 1991, 319.

<sup>21</sup> *Christian Initiation*, 1991, 333.

<sup>22</sup> Porterfield, *Healing*, 2005, 44. Porterfield enumerates several studies on healing in the early church in favour of her position.

<sup>23</sup> Porterfield, *Healing*, 2005, 47.

### Exorcism, Healing, ‘Signs and Wonders’ Today

The biblical and historical perspective does not, however, determine in what way ‘signs and wonders’ may be part of the diaconal and missionary ministry of the church in today’s multicultural and multi-religious world. In the mainline Protestant churches going back to the Reformation in the sixteenth century, the question of ‘signs and wonders’, including exorcism and healing, has not been very prominent. In the modern Protestant mission movement from about 1800, healing ministry through medical personnel, clinics and hospitals using the methods of medical science has been an integral part of the work of most missionary societies. It has not, however, in general included exorcism or what we may call Christian or divine healing through prayer, although many missionaries with an evangelical background have been open to it, at least in principle. In his famous article on ‘the excluded middle’ the American Mennonite scholar Paul Hiebert has pointed out how modern mission did not come to grips with some of the questions raised by the local context with regard to healing and the spirit-world.<sup>24</sup>

It was the healing movement of the last part of the nineteenth century and the classical Pentecostal movement from 1906 onwards that made Christian healing a central part of their understanding of the gospel and of their missionary ministry.<sup>25</sup> The charismatic movement among non-Pentecostal churches from the 1960s spread the ministry of Christian healing and exorcism to most of the mainline churches. It has been especially in the global South that these ministries have flourished, partly due to influence from western evangelists who have held huge healing rallies in many large cities in the South, and partly due to national and local initiatives where reading of the Bible, combined with local cultural and religious experience, have led to healing ministries for the sick and the possessed.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Paul G. Hiebert, ‘The Flaw of the Excluded Middle’, in *Missiology: An International Review*, 1982, 10:35-47.

<sup>25</sup> See Vinson Synan, *The Holiness Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997); D.E. Harrell, Jr., *All Things are Possible: The Healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press 1975).

<sup>26</sup> The writings of the Ghanaian professor Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu give very important documentation and evaluation of the characteristics and various healing ministries of the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Africa, see e.g. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, ‘Pentecostalism in Africa and the Changing Face of Christian Mission: Pentecostal/Charismatic Renewal Movements in Ghana’, in *Mission Studies*, Vol. XIX -2, 38, 2002, 14-39. See also the description of new models of mission in Africa and in Pentecostalism in Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004, 265-75). I have shown that exorcisms and healing ministries were practised with great impact in the evangelical churches in Ethiopia prior to the

Discussions among evangelicals concerning ‘signs and wonders’ were strong in the 1980s, not least due to the influence of the Vineyard pastor John Wimber and the development that took place at Fuller Theological Seminary in California, USA. The Lausanne Theology Working Group convened a consultation on the Work of the Holy Spirit and Evangelization in Oslo, Norway, in 1985. In the book based on this consultation, Professor David Wells dealt with the issue of spiritual power encounters and ‘signs and wonders’.<sup>27</sup> He takes a cautious stand, arguing that ‘miracles’ also take place in other religions and that there are false prophets who may produce signs that lead people astray. His conclusion is that “‘signs and wonders’ in themselves do not advance the gospel; only when they are done in the name of Jesus do they have evangelistic value’. He writes that ‘in specific contexts we may be brought face-to-face with overt demonic activity and its consequences’.<sup>28</sup>

In concluding this chapter, I would like to suggest seven characteristics or criteria for a sound practice of the ministries of spiritual conflict, healing and ‘signs and wonders’.

First, the ministries should be *caring* (from Latin: *caritas* / love). By this I mean that they should be inspired by God’s love and concern for people who are suffering, and come from the love that is poured out into the hearts of Christians by the gift of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). They should be carried out with an unselfish motivation and full focus on helping others, rather than to achieve anything for those who minister, or use others as a means to an end.

Secondly, the ministries should be *Christ-centred*. This means that they should produce a personal encounter between the suffering or healed person and the risen Christ. The honour and glory should be given to God (as it was in many of the New Testament stories), and the ministries should not be used to glorify any human being, or any effort or method on the part of ministers. The story of Simon in Acts 8 is an example of a man who sought the power of the Spirit and signs and wonders for the wrong reasons and was therefore judged by God (Acts 8:13, 19-24). When the focus is on charismatic personalities, saints, places, special words or material means, healing may draw attention away from Christ who is the real healer by his Holy Spirit.

Thirdly, the ministries should be *charismatic*. By this, I refer to the biblical meaning of charisms (Greek: *charisma* / gift of grace) as spiritual gifts of ministry given freely to individual Christians for the building up of the church (1 Cor. 12:4-11). The gifts should be recognized and given place

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influence of the Pentecostal movement in that country; see Tormod Engelsviken, ‘Exorcism and Healing in the evangelical churches in Ethiopia’, in *Journal of Mission Theology*, 1991, No. 1, 80-92.

<sup>27</sup> David F. Wells, *God the Evangelist: How the Holy Spirit Works to Bring Men and Women to Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 65-91.

<sup>28</sup> Wells, *God the Evangelist*, 1987, 90-91.

in the church, and they should be allowed to function in an orderly fashion (cf. 1 Cor. 12-14; Rom. 12; Eph. 4). The whole spectrum of gifts that is needed for these ministries should be desired, expected and sought by prayer.

Fourthly, the ministries should be *communal*. The gifts of healing are given to the fellowship of believers, the church, and they should as a rule be practiced in a communal setting. This is especially clear in the practice recommended in James 5:14-16. Without the prayerful support of the church, those who are healed may not be sustained. Especially with regard to new converts who are the result of an experience of God's healing power, inclusion in the church's fellowship is crucial.

Fifthly, *counselling* of people who seek help or have experienced healing of diseases or liberation from evil powers is important, both in order for them to be incorporated into Christian fellowship, receive attention for their specific needs, and receive instruction on the meaning of what will happen to them or what has happened. This means that, in my opinion, large healing rallies, without an opportunity for individual counselling is not an appropriate form of the healing ministry. In private counselling, *confession of sin and reception of forgiveness* may be a part of the healing process. In the teaching and counselling process, it is very important to deal biblically and truthfully with the fact that many or most of those who are prayed for do not experience full healing. Yet, they may receive a blessing from God and strength to endure suffering.

Sixthly, the ministries should be *contextual*. They should take into account the local context as far as religion and culture are concerned. The needs of suffering people may vary depending on their worldview, their relations, their socio-economic situation, etc. The Malaysian bishop Hwa Yung has pointed out how important the spiritual dimension and spiritual conflict are in a contextual Asian ministry.<sup>29</sup> The introduction to this chapter shows how such needs in Scandinavia may be related to fear of spiritual unrest in the home. The method of critical contextualization as outlined by Paul Hiebert may be useful as it aims at confirming and preserving what is good and true in all religions and cultures, and challenging and confronting what is evil in all religions and cultures.<sup>30</sup> This also means that the forms of the ministries may vary, and one form may not necessarily 'work' in another cultural or religious context.

Seventhly, the ministries should be evaluated *critically*. To some, this may seem to go against the need for faith, but the New Testament is very clear that there is a need for the gift of *discernment* (1 Cor. 12:10; 14:29). Spirits should be tested because there are false prophets leading people

<sup>29</sup> Hwa Yung, *Mangoes or Bananas? The Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology* (Oxford: Regnum, 1997, 71-76); Hwa Yung, 'The Integrity of Mission in Light of the Gospel: Bearing the Witness of the Spirit', in *Mission Studies*, Vol. IV, No.20 (2007).

<sup>30</sup> Paul G. Hiebert, *Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), 171-92.

astray (1 John 4:1-2). Jesus also warned against false Messiahs and prophets who will do great signs and wonders (Matt. 24:24). The criteria mentioned above may be used in the evaluation of the ministries, but first and foremost it is the confession of Christ as the incarnate, crucified and risen Lord that is the final criterion (1 John 4:2-3; 1 Cor. 12:3).

There is a fundamental difference between the preaching of the gospel in evangelism and *diakonia* as ministry to the poor and suffering, on the one hand, and ministries of Christian healing and exorcism, on the other. The former may be carried out by human beings as channels of God's love and grace, while the latter can only be prayed for and hoped for. Even if there is an expectation that Christ will intervene in a seemingly miraculous way, there is no guarantee. The Spirit is sovereign and distributes his gifts as he pleases (1 Cor. 12:11). Healing is in the hands of God. Yet, it is the task of the church in its missionary work to integrate these ministries in such a way that people are given the opportunity to pray for the sick and expel evil powers.<sup>31</sup> One should hope that ministries of healing and spiritual conflict will get a larger place both in the theory and practice of mission and *diakonia*.<sup>32</sup> We may close with a quote from the foremost authority on healing in a Christian perspective, Christoffer H. Grundmann, who admittedly has a somewhat more pessimistic view of the biological results of the healing ministry than this author, but nevertheless captures the tensions and visions when he writes:

The 'healing ministry' constantly reminds the church of the corporeality of salvation. It, however, has again and again to acknowledge sober-mindedly that healing happens only occasionally if it happens at all. This, however, does not mean a failure of the ministry, which actually has to consciously bear the tension between promise and fulfilment. This is its very task by which it powerfully reminds the church of its eschatological reality like no other.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Liturgies for prayer for (and anointing of) the sick are examples of such integration, cf. the Catholic sacrament of anointing the sick, and liturgies in the Anglican Church; see Morris Maddocks, *The Christian Healing Ministry* (London: SPCK, 1995, 243-46). The Church of Norway (Lutheran) has also made a liturgy for a ministry against 'unrest' in homes without offering any explanation of the causes of what is actually happening.

<sup>32</sup> The Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of the World Council of Churches (WCC) focused on healing and reconciliation in its conference in Athens 2005. In the official report from the conference there are many useful insights and discussions on the role of healing in the mission of the church. It is informative about recent developments and does also raise the question of the reality of spiritual powers and exorcism; cf. Jacques Matthey (ed), *Come Holy Spirit, heal and reconcile* (Geneva: WCC, 2008, 98-100). See also the document, 'The Healing Ministry of the Church', in 'You Are the Light of the World': *Statements on Mission by the World Council of Churches 1980-2005* (Geneva: WCC, 2005).

<sup>33</sup> Christoffer H. Grundmann, in Matthey, *Come Holy Spirit*, 322.

# CONTEXTUALIZATION REVISITED

## Interview with Stephen Bevans

Stephen Bevans is a priest in the Roman Catholic mission congregation, the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), and Louis J. Luzbetak, SVD Professor of Mission and Culture (Emeritus) at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago. He has taught in North America, Asia, Europe, and Africa, and spent nine years as a missionary in the Philippines. Among his publications are *Models of Contextual Theology* (2002) and *An Introduction to Theology in Global Perspective* (2009). Together with Roger P. Schroeder, he has authored *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (2004). He is the editor of *A Century of Catholic Mission* (2013) in the Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series, and a member of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelization.

Stephen Bevans is interviewed by Knud Jørgensen.

*Your book from 1992, with a second edition in 2002, 'Models of Contextual Theology'<sup>1</sup> was acclaimed as a classic examination of faith and culture. Does that description still hold true?*

I think it does. First of all, I am overwhelmed by that kind of description and that kind of distinction. One of the things that have amazed me over the years is that, after 25 years, the book is still in print.

*In the second edition, you review six models of contextual theology – the translation model, the anthropological model, the praxis model, the synthesis model, the transcendental model and the counter-cultural model. Are these models still valid or would you describe the models in a different manner?*

Yes, I revised it in 2002, but not very much, apart from adding one model. What I have done is really to try to look at the methodological possibilities of the interaction of faith and context, and not just culture because culture is only one aspect of context. I think I have rather exhausted the methodological possibilities along a kind of spectrum. I know that others have presented models, and there are variations of the models, but it seems to me that what I have presented is a pretty good picture of our options. And, of course, I leave the options open so that you can mix and match. You can have the various models interacting with one another. So amazingly, I think that the book is still valid. I am thinking of doing some kind of updating of it, but actually more in collaboration with younger theologians and theologians from the Majority World. If there is anything

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology: Revised and Expanded Edition* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002).

outdated, it is the examples that I give. The models as presented in the second edition still hold true.

*In 2004 you co-authored with Roger Schroeder 'Constants in Context'.<sup>2</sup> Here you describe a number of historical models as a background for presenting a theology of mission for today. What do you see as the connection between the models of contextual theology and the constants in context?*

I don't think there is a strong connection. I have never thought of the contextual models in terms of historical models; they belong in a different setting. The historical models are more examples rather than the methodological approach that is found in *Models of Contextual Theology*. They are more like ways that mission was done in particular contexts. Take the nineteenth century as a particular context: it called forth among the Protestants the 'society model'. Among Catholics it called forth the model that comes out of the religious orders, both women and men. So it is different from the methodological and theological models which I presented in *Models of Contextual Theology*.

Let me give some background for this: one of my dear colleagues and mentor, a man by the name of Larry Nemer, taught many years at the Catholic Theological Union (CTU) where I have taught. For the last 23-30 years he has been in Australia. When he was at CTU, he taught a course called 'Models of Mission'. He was a church historian. When Roger Schroeder came and Larry Nemer left, Schroeder took over that course about 'Models of Mission'. It is that understanding of historical models that made its way into *Constants in Context*.

*But which of the contextual models represents Stephen Bevans' missiology?*

This is a question people often ask me. My answer may sound as if I am dodging the question. The last line in the book on models of contextual theology says: 'It depends on the context.' That is my missiology. My approach is that you do not have a set contextual theology that you bring into every context. Every context demands a methodological discernment. I see myself, for instance, as I preach, and I preach quite regularly; I use different models depending on what the text calls for, depending on what is going on in the world at the present moment, depending on what strikes me about the text. Sometimes, for instance, I'll start out with a popular song and talk about the song, and then I will go to the text. That reflects the anthropological model because you are showing how the stuff is already in our culture. And then I will say that this is very similar to what Jesus or Moses are getting at in the text. At other times, it is a matter of translation or it is both translation and starting in our contemporary culture. So it depends on the context. Or if you are in a situation of real oppression, you are not going to glorify the culture of your context which is fraught with oppression. Rather, you will be much more prophetic, much more counter-

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<sup>2</sup> Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today*.

cultural. The same may apply in a secularistic situation where the gospel gives a prophetic witness over against the culture.

So my missiology is really based on *discernment*; it is based on listening, based on contemplation, trying to find the best way – not so much to express a message, but express the saving presence of God in a particular situation.

*David Bosch listed in 'Transforming Mission'<sup>3</sup> some of the arguments for contextualization: God is interested in this world he created, God gets involved with the world, taking the side of the victims; theology cannot be a bystander; Jesus became part of the world; a non-contextual theology reopens the gap between God and humanity; Jesus immersed himself in the real circumstances of the poor, the captives, the blind, etc.; the resurrected Jesus propels human history towards the end; theology has to do with history. Would you agree? Would you place the emphasis differently?*

I think he puts it really well. This is absolutely true. Let me as a Catholic add something, perhaps a bit less concrete than what Bosch says. Catholicism is posited on the analogy of being. This may be hard for Barthians to accept, but we believe there is continuity between our experience and our knowledge of God. Another way of saying that is that Catholicism is posited on a radical sacramentality – that the world matters, that the world is revelatory. That does not at all negate or relativize what we call 'special revelation', by no means. Special revelation only enhances it. But I think there is that dynamic that says: pay attention to your experience, pay attention to the world, pay attention to history, pay attention to events because this is where you are going to find God revealing God-self. It is not some kind of 'thing' that just comes out of the blue; it is in the midst of history; it is in the midst of our experiences.

I think that is what contextual theology tries to capture. And I think that is what David Bosch is saying. The Catholic perspective might say this – and say it in another kind of way, but what it means is that God does take the world seriously. God becomes part of the world – and so the world does become revelatory.

*The same Bosch also listed some of the potential pitfalls: we may take history too seriously, forgetting that God speaks as an independent being, and not always in ways we would expect; we may misread the signs of the times in history. Not all revolutions are a result of God's hand; the good news does not grow out of the context – the context is not the text; there is no praxis without theory, even where the theory is not spelled out. The context is not to be taken as the sole and basic authority for theological reflection; we may run the risk of relativism. We may forget that our contextual theology should be linked with the global body of Christ. How do you look at such pitfalls? Would you list other pitfalls?*

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<sup>3</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 425-32.

I think that the ones Bosch has mentioned are correct. But I sometimes wonder if we are too cautious when we talk about contextual theology. I wonder if we should not be more adventurous in this regard. I was really struck recently by a line in Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium* where he talks about the danger of just repeating orthodox phrases:

There are times when the faithful, in listening to completely orthodox language, take away something alien to the authentic Gospel of Jesus Christ, because that language is alien to their own way of speaking to and understanding one another. With the holy intent of communicating the truth about God and humanity, we sometimes give them a false god or a human ideal which is not really Christian. In this way, we hold fast to a formulation while failing to convey its substance. This is the greatest danger. Let us never forget that 'the expression of truth can take different forms. The renewal of these forms of expression becomes necessary for the sake of transmitting to the people of today the Gospel message in its unchanging meaning.'<sup>4</sup>

That is a greater risk than having a phrase wrong or unorthodox; we can correct that, but to worry *a priori*, 'Oh, my gosh, what about relativism?' or 'I am going to get into syncretism or something like that.' I think that hesitation in this regard is a real danger.

Another place where I have seen that expressed really nicely is in an essay by Andrew Walls.<sup>5</sup> Andrew Walls talks about the risk that the bishops took at the Council of Nicaea in using the term *homoousios*. To move away from biblical language to try to make the faith clearer was an immense risk and, of course, you saw the risk in history with *homoousios* and the Arian controversy. There definitely are risks, but I think that there really has to be a dialogue between experience, scripture and tradition. This dialogue has to be ongoing. If we are faithful to that – and if we are faithful to this in community and faithful in spirituality and prayer – then ultimately we are going to come out in the right direction. It can no more be so that, for instance, in Africa we write the definitive theology for Africa. It is a process, it is a dialogue.

So I think we should be aware of the risks, but the risks should not paralyze us because there is much more at stake. There is a wonderful line from Charles Kraft – evangelical, quite conservative; I am re-reading his book *Christianity and Culture*<sup>6</sup> for something I am writing. Kraft's understanding of theology is amazingly radical. He talks about theology as

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<sup>4</sup> See *Evangelii Gaudium* 41: [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html), quoting John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Ut Unum Sint*: [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_25051995\\_ut-unum-sint.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25051995_ut-unum-sint.html), 19.

<sup>5</sup> See Andrew F. Walls, 'Old Athens and New Jerusalem: Some Signposts for Christian Scholarship in the Early History of Mission Studies', in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 21, 4 (October, 1997), 153.

<sup>6</sup> Charles H. Kraft, *Christianity and Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1981).

‘perceptions of reality’ and one of the things he says – and which I have quoted in *Models of Contextual Theology* – is the following: ‘Theology that is perceived as irrelevant is irrelevant.’<sup>7</sup> Here is a real danger – and a danger we have to avoid.

*Kraft was my mentor at Fuller Theological Seminary. He took his doctoral students into a colloquium on the manuscript for Christianity and Culture. Some of us, I recall, tried hard to tell him that he could not say things the way he did.*

*A lot of studies on the topic of contextual theology have come out since 2002. Would you care to list some key studies which have opened new contextual windows?*

Among the many, many significant books on contextual theology to appear in the last fifteen years or so, let me highlight a few of them. A real classic in contextual theology is Clemens Sedmak’s *Doing Local Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002). An important contribution to African contextual theology is Laurenti Magesa’s *An Anatomy of Inculturation: Transforming the Church in Africa* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004). A beautiful book on doing Filipino theology in particular and Asian theology in general is José de Mesa’s *Why Theology is Never Far from Home* (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 2003). Tongan theologian Katalina Tahaafe-Williams and I have edited a small volume that focuses particularly on contextual theology in Australia and New Zealand, entitled *Contextual Theology for the Twenty-First Century* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011), and I have edited a volume that collects the first eleven Louis Luzbetak Lectures that my chair at Catholic Theological Union has sponsored *Mission and Culture: The Louis J. Luzbetak Lectures* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012). Scott Moreau of Wheaton College has published *Contextualization in World Missions: Mapping and Assessing Evangelical Models* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2012). To mention a wonderful book that surveys the field of contextual theology, Angie Pears has written *Doing Contextual Theology* (New York: Routledge, 2010) in which she has an extensive evaluation of my work, along with the work of Robert Schreiter, Emmanuel Lartey, Edward Farley and Sigurd Bergmann.

*In this volume, we shall bring together diakonia and evangelism. Ecumenical perspectives on how they relate will be in focus. At the same time, we shall deal with their particularities – and therefore have separate sections on each.*

*How do you view the relationship between diakonia and evangelism?*

Let me try to define *diakonia*. In my tradition, we talk about *diakonia*, *kerygma* and *koinonia*. *Diakonia* is here the whole area of service, particularly in terms of social justice, and in terms of charity and Catholic relief services. Is that what the volume will deal with?

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<sup>7</sup> Kraft, *Christianity and Culture*, 296.

*Yes, but also the more active dimensions, like the 'go-between' function. John Collins from Australia<sup>8</sup> has researched these dimensions of diakonia and shown that the deacon was a more active term – a messenger with a specific task.*

The term is a little unfamiliar to me in the way it is used here, but I get the gist of it. I think one of the characteristics of Catholicism is its 'both/and' character, as opposed to someone like Søren Kierkegaard's 'either/or'. Catholicism tends to be inclusive. We have always seen evangelism and *diakonia* as connecting closely together, particularly since 1891 with the beginning of our social encyclicals where you find a whole tradition of social teaching. In some ways it culminates in terms of official church teaching in 1971 where there is a synod of bishops where they were discussing justice. The line goes like this: 'Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel or, in other words, of the church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.'<sup>9</sup> I think that really captures it. That is why, in spite of some Roman opposition, you have the rise of liberation theology. And you have the strong justice tradition in many of our religious congregations, particularly the Jesuits.

I see an active working for the *promotio humana* – putting human development forward. That is part and parcel of what it means to preach the gospel: 'The deed without the word is dumb; the word without the deed is empty.'<sup>10</sup> I see the two really working together. You cannot have one without the other.

*And now you have a pope who personifies the connection between evangelism and diakonia?*

The previous popes also did that, but I think Pope Francis shows it more clearly. Of course, he comes out of the Latin American spirit of liberation theology, not quite as radical as some of the liberation theologians, but nevertheless certainly with a focus on the poor – and a focus on the poor as the hermeneutic of the gospel. That is clearly what he is about. This goes back to Jesus: 'Don't just say, "Lord, Lord"', or James's admonition to be not just hearers of the word, but doers also. This is clear in scripture – not just sacrifice, but mercy. Pope Francis is an amazing man, and has truly captivated the world. Yes, I think he personifies both the commitment to a robust, joyful evangelism and a passionate commitment to *diakonia*.

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<sup>8</sup> John N. Collins, *Diakonia: Re-interpreting the Ancient Sources* (New York/Oxford: OUP, 1990).

<sup>9</sup> 1971 Synod of Bishops, 'Justice in the World': [www.shc.edu/theolibrary/resources/synodjw.htm](http://www.shc.edu/theolibrary/resources/synodjw.htm), Introduction.

<sup>10</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 420.

**PART FIVE**

**CASE STUDIES FROM FIVE  
CONTINENTS ON  
EVANGELISM AND  
DIAKONIA IN CONTEXT**

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# REVIVAL, EVANGELISM AND DIAKONIA: A STUDY OF REVIVAL IN BRITAIN, 1857-1863

Ian Randall

## Introduction

In his book, *Victorian Religious Revivals*, David Bebbington describes how revivals in the nineteenth century can be seen as ‘outbursts of fresh vigour’, in which congregations or larger Christian bodies were stirred ‘to renewed faith and activism’, with many conversions taking place.<sup>1</sup> The longer history of the Christian church is a story that includes recurrent episodes of revival and resurgence.<sup>2</sup> This case study looks at what has often been called the ‘1859’ Revival, although I see it as a period of fresh vigour from 1857 to about 1863. The Revival was international.<sup>3</sup> Kathryn Long has written an excellent account of the events in North America.<sup>4</sup> Here I will look at the impact in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. There have been varied assessments of the Revival of this period. I follow the approach of Janice Holmes, who has argued, after detailed research, for the significance of what took place in the late 1850s and beyond.<sup>5</sup> This particular experience of spiritual renewal and revival was located within the evangelical constituency, which coheres with the view that the evangelical movement is at heart a spiritual tradition.<sup>6</sup>

## Prayer and Awakening

The beginnings of the Revival in the north of Ireland have been associated with four young Irishmen who in September 1857 began to hold weekly prayer meetings in County Antrim. Samuel Moore, a local Presbyterian minister, identified the four as crucial to the subsequent spiritual

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<sup>1</sup> David Bebbington, *Victorian Religious Revivals: Culture and Piety in Local and Global Contexts* (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 1.

<sup>2</sup> See K. Cooper and J. Gregory (eds), *Revival and Resurgence in Christian History* (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> I will use the designation ‘Revival’ to refer to this particular revival.

<sup>4</sup> Kathryn T. Long, *The Revival of 1857-58: Interpreting an American Religious Awakening* (New York: OUP, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> Janice Holmes, *Religious Revivals in Britain and Ireland, 1859-1905* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2000), 169.

<sup>6</sup> See I.M. Randall, *What a Friend we have in Jesus: The Evangelical Tradition* (London: DLT, 2005).

movement. There were descriptions of ‘the power of prayer’ beginning to be ‘known, and felt, and seen’, with several dramatic conversions taking place.<sup>7</sup> Holmes speaks about ‘semi-mythologised’ beginnings, especially in relation to the role of James McQuilkin, a handloom linen weaver.<sup>8</sup> William Gibson, another author, also noted how a Presbyterian Sunday school prayer meeting contributed.<sup>9</sup> William Arthur, a leading British Methodist who was originally from the area, described how the ‘small farmers, weavers and linen manufacturers’ were deeply affected, and that ‘faith in prayer, mighty prayer, seemed the first and deepest lesson of the Revival’.<sup>10</sup> Because Ireland had many links with North America through the thousands who had emigrated, the news about the rapidly growing prayer movement across the Atlantic came to Ireland.<sup>11</sup> Gibson was sent by Irish Presbyterians to find out more about these happenings. As a professor of Christian ethics, his positive assessment carried considerable weight.<sup>12</sup>

In Scotland, a period of concerted prayer began in Aberdeen in September 1858, with one of the factors being news from America. One of the most widely-read books about the American revival was *The Power of Prayer* (1858) by Samuel Irenaeus Prime, a Presbyterian minister who became editor of the *New York Observer*.<sup>13</sup> A group of young men began to meet for prayer in Aberdeen and soon united prayer meetings were being held daily in the city’s County Buildings, with 600 attending. An itinerant evangelist, Reginald Radcliffe (a lawyer), was invited by William Martin, Professor of Moral Philosophy at Marischal College, Aberdeen, to conduct evangelistic meetings. One Church of Scotland minister reported that ‘the blessing descended in large measure’.<sup>14</sup> By the middle of the following year large prayer meetings were being held in Glasgow. A Free Church of Scotland minister in the Scottish border country, Barbour Johnstone, wrote about visiting the Wynd Church (later St George’s Tron) in Glasgow. He saw many ‘deeply affected’.<sup>15</sup> Horatius Bonar, the hymn-writer and one of the best-known Free Church ministers of the period, commended these reports.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>7</sup> J. Weir, *The Ulster Awakening: Its Origin, Progress, and Fruit* (London: Arthur Hall, Virtue, and Co., 1860), 17-18, quoting Samuel Moore.

<sup>8</sup> Holmes, *Religious Revivals in Britain and Ireland*, 31.

<sup>9</sup> William Gibson, *The Year of Grace: A History of the Ulster Revival of 1859* (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliott, 1860), 20-23.

<sup>10</sup> Weir, *Ulster Awakening*, 17-18, quoting William Arthur.

<sup>11</sup> Holmes, *Religious Revivals in Britain and Ireland*, 4.

<sup>12</sup> Gibson, *Year of Grace*, 16.

<sup>13</sup> S.I. Prime, *The Power of Prayer* (New York: Scribner, 1858).

<sup>14</sup> K.S. Jeffrey, *When the Lord Walked the Land* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2002), 55-57.

<sup>15</sup> J. Barbour Johnstone, ‘What hath God wrought’, in W. Reid (ed), *Authentic Records of Revival, Now in Progress in the United Kingdom* (London: James Nisbet, 1860), 123.

<sup>16</sup> H. Bonar, ‘Preface’, in Reid (ed), *Authentic Records of Revival*, iv.

It appears that there was a heightened desire for prayer in parts of Wales in the summer of 1859. Developments were investigated and reported on by Thomas Phillips in *The Welsh Revival: Its Origin and Development* (1860).<sup>17</sup> One of those encouraging this movement was Humphrey Jones, who had emigrated from Wales to the United States and – having witnessed revival over there – was anxious on returning to Wales to see a movement of the Holy Spirit in his homeland. Another was David Morgan, a Calvinistic Methodist minister. At first David Morgan was uncertain – even sceptical – about Jones, not least because of his associations with America, but what the latter said to him had such a powerful effect that he could not sleep for several nights, and he prayed for guidance about what to do. Eventually he concluded, without much enthusiasm, ‘We cannot do much harm by keeping prayer meetings, and trying to rouse the country.’ Morgan, replying, expressed his conviction: ‘If you try, it will not be long before God will be with you.’ This proved to be the case.<sup>18</sup>

The beginning of the prayer revival in England can probably be traced to united prayer meetings in London, initially in the Cosby Hall, in August 1859. Soon attendance at this meeting reached 100 and similar meetings began in the much larger Exeter Hall, an evangelical centre in London. By the end of the year, twenty-four prayer meetings were being held daily and sixty were taking place weekly in the London area. The Earl of Shaftesbury (Lord Shaftesbury), the outstanding evangelical social reformer of the period, encouraged this prayer movement. C.H. Spurgeon, too, who had emerged as the most popular British Baptist minister of the time and had at this point been preaching for five years to very large crowds, found the new impetus significant. In December 1859 he wrote: ‘The times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord have at last dawned upon our land. Everywhere there are signs of aroused activity and increased earnestness. A spirit of Prayer is visiting our churches... The first breath of the rushing mighty wind is already discerned, while on rising evangelists the tongues of fire have evidently descended.’<sup>19</sup> In similar vein, Samuel Garratt, a leading Anglican evangelical clergyman in London, spoke of a ‘great outpouring of the Spirit’ among London’s population.<sup>20</sup> In varied situations across Britain, prayer was central.

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<sup>17</sup> Thomas Phillips, *The Welsh Revival: Its Origin and Development* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1995, reprint of 1860).

<sup>18</sup> Phillips, *Welsh Revival*, 7-8.

<sup>19</sup> C.H. Spurgeon, *The New Park Street Pulpit*, Vol. V, 1859 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1894), v.

<sup>20</sup> See John Weir, ‘London’, in Reid (ed), *Authentic Records of Revival*, 420-21.

### Working Together

Churches of different denominations working together was a prominent feature of the Revival.<sup>21</sup> Although in Ireland the Presbyterian churches gave the lead, other denominations participated. United meetings of Presbyterians, Methodists, Episcopalians, Independents and Baptists were held. In September 1859 a prayer meeting for the whole of Ireland was arranged in Armagh. Weir wrote in *The Ulster Awakening*: ‘On Wednesday, 16th September, the second day after I left Armagh, a multitudinous meeting was held there by the friends of the movement in that and in the adjoining counties.’ Special trains were put on. 20,000 people were present and the event was written up by *The Times*.<sup>22</sup> Verner White, minister of a Presbyterian Church in Liverpool, came back from visiting Ireland, and in the summer of 1859 a meeting was held at the instigation of the Liverpool YMCA (Young Men’s Christian Association), so that White could give an account of the Revival.<sup>23</sup> Interdenominational evangelistic meetings began, for example in the Adelphi Theatre in Liverpool. To give one example of the impact on the churches, of the 11,000 Wesleyan Methodist members on the roll in the Liverpool Circuit in the spring of 1860, 1,800 were new or probationary members.<sup>24</sup>

All the main denominations in Scotland were involved. The spirit of unity was such that after large interdenominational meetings in 1860 in Perthshire – at one meeting 4,000 people were present – those responsible for the meetings stated rather dramatically that they had ‘buried sectarianism... and saw no Christian weep over its grave’.<sup>25</sup> Wales, in the same period, was similar, with a strong emphasis on ‘union’ prayer meetings. One Welsh minister, writing to Thomas Phillips, said, ‘Clergymen, preachers, and people, pray together, and God is among us. Where there was much bigotry, bickering, and unpleasant feeling between parties before, and had continued for years, there is nothing now but co-operation, love and zeal.’ An old and experienced Welsh Christian, at one of the united meetings, prayed in vivid terms: ‘O Lord, we thank thee that the straw partition, which has so long separated us, is now on fire!’<sup>26</sup>

By early 1860, in a ‘Revival Sermon’ he preached, Spurgeon spoke about the way in which – as he saw it – a new spiritual vision was evident across the churches. United prayer was linked with action. He spoke of the ‘life’ and ‘vigour’ being experienced. ‘Everybody seems to have a mission,’ he pronounced, ‘and everybody is doing it. There may be a great

<sup>21</sup> For the role of ministers, see I.M. Randall. *Rhythms of Revival: The Spiritual Awakening of 1857-1863* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2010), 29-48.

<sup>22</sup> Weir, *Ulster Awakening*, 151-53.

<sup>23</sup> Weir, *Ulster Awakening*, 113.

<sup>24</sup> J. Edwin Orr, *The Second Evangelical Awakening in Britain* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1949), 156-57.

<sup>25</sup> Orr, *Second Evangelical Awakening*, 72.

<sup>26</sup> Phillips, *Welsh Revival*, 84.

many sluggards, but they do not come across my path now. I used to be always kicking at them, and always being kicked for doing so. But now there is nothing to kick at – everyone is at work – Church of England, Independents, Methodists and Baptists.<sup>27</sup> Handley Moule, later Bishop of Durham, spoke of 1859 as that ‘year of the right hand of the Most High’. He continued: ‘Ulster was profoundly and lastingly moved and blessed. Here and there in England it was the same.’ Moule spoke specifically of the parish work of his father and mother. ‘Up and down the village the pastor, the pastress and their faithful helpers found “the anxious”.’<sup>28</sup> Among those affected was Thomas Hardy, later the famous novelist, but Hardy’s commitment to evangelical Christianity was not maintained after his move to London in 1862.<sup>29</sup>

Across London, the Earl of Shaftesbury was taking initiatives to link Anglicans and Nonconformists in evangelism. As a result of these efforts, in 1860 the Britannia, Garrick and Sadler’s Wells Theatres were used for the first time for Sunday evening services. They attracted huge audiences to hear speakers from different denominations. Soon seven theatres in London were serving as ‘preaching centres’, with a total of 20,000 people attending.<sup>30</sup> Shaftesbury was enthusiastic about the young preachers who were associated with Spurgeon and whom he heard speaking in theatres. He noted their colloquial way of addressing people who would not find ordinary services comprehensible.<sup>31</sup> Shaftesbury also referred to an observation made by an Anglican clergyman in Lambeth, once a missionary in Sierra Leone, who believed that spiritual and moral conditions in Lambeth were worse than in Sierra Leone. This bleak assessment was a good reason in Shaftesbury’s view for united action to reach those who had no church contact.<sup>32</sup>

One important vehicle for interdenominational news was the publication in Britain of *The Revival*, edited by R.C. Morgan, a young evangelical who had wide sympathies across the evangelical constituency. This weekly publication was seen as serving ‘as a record, an advocate, and a stimulus’.<sup>33</sup> In tune with this pan-denominational stimulus, the first Evangelical Alliance ‘universal week of prayer’, in January 1861, came out of the

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<sup>27</sup> C.H. Spurgeon, ‘A Revival Sermon’, in *The New Park Street Pulpit*, Vol. VI, 1860 (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1964), 84.

<sup>28</sup> H.C.G. Moule, *Memories of a Vicarage* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1913), 48–49.

<sup>29</sup> Ralph Pite, *Thomas Hardy: The Guarded Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 79–85.

<sup>30</sup> Orr, *Second Evangelical Awakening*, 97.

<sup>31</sup> R. Shindler, *From the Usher’s Desk to the Tabernacle Pulpit* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1892), 142–43.

<sup>32</sup> Orr, *Second Evangelical Awakening*, 97–98.

<sup>33</sup> G.E. Morgan, ‘A Veteran in Revival’: *R.C. Morgan: His Life and Times* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1909), 97.

spreading concern for united prayer. In 1860, American missionaries in Ludhiana, India, invited churches to come together in prayer cross-denominationally during the second week in January. The effects of this initiative were far-reaching, with tens of thousands of copies of a call to prayer being distributed in several languages for use during the first week in January each year.<sup>34</sup>

### Working-Class Evangelists

In the 1850s, there was considerable concern in the British evangelical context about reaching working-class people.<sup>35</sup> Local churches sought to contact those in the growing industrial sector, working in textiles, wood, metal and building, as well as agricultural labourers.<sup>36</sup> The efforts being made were boosted considerably by working-class evangelists.<sup>37</sup> A good example is Henry (Harry) Moorhouse, who before his conversion was always ready for a fight and was also known as a ‘prince among card players’. His conversion took place when he heard a great deal of noise within the Alhambra Theatre and thought it might be a riot – in which he could become involved – but found an ex-boxer, Richard Weaver (known as ‘Undaunted Dick’, after winning a fight lasting thirty-two rounds), preaching the gospel.<sup>38</sup> Moorhouse, together with some friends, came to Christ. In his subsequent work he preached in America as well as Britain. In 1867, when in America, Moorhouse delivered seven sermons on John 3:16 – ‘For God so loved the world...’ The evangelist D.L. Moody heard this message and was deeply impressed, realising in a new way the importance of the message of the love of God.<sup>39</sup>

Often working-class evangelists used methods that were unorthodox – and they did not win the support of all evangelicals. William and Catherine Booth, however, Methodists who became the founders of the Salvation Army, saw the great potential of fresh communicators. In 1863 William held open-air meetings that drew about 5,000 people, of whom three-quarters were men, and realised that a new approach was needed which

<sup>34</sup> *Evangelical Christendom*, August 1860, 447; cf. I.M. Randall and D. Hilborn, *One Body in Christ: The History and Significance of the Evangelical Alliance* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2001), 140-2.

<sup>35</sup> See D.M. Lewis, *Lighten their Darkness: The Evangelical Mission to Working-class London, 1828-1860* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2001).

<sup>36</sup> For the wider picture, see H. McLeod, *Religion and Society in England, 1850-1914* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1996).

<sup>37</sup> For more on the wider impact of lay evangelists, see I.M. Randall, ‘Lay People in Revival: A Case Study of the “1859” Revival’, in *Transformation*, Vol. XXVI, No. 4 (2009), 217-31.

<sup>38</sup> For Weaver, see J. Paterson, *Richard Weaver’s Life Story* (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1897); cf. Holmes, *Religious Revivals in Britain and Ireland*, 138.

<sup>39</sup> Orr, *Second Evangelical Awakening*, 160.

addressed these men – most of them working-class – ‘in their own language’. Accordingly, he recruited a team whom he described as ‘just of the stamp to grapple with this class, chiefly of their own order, talking to them in their own language, regarding themselves as illustrations of the power of the Gospel’. One of the team was William Mee, who had committed great silk robberies on the Midland Railway. Among others was one man who had been so violent that it had needed five or six policemen to restrain him. Booth noted with approval that they ‘were not troubled with any scruples about vulgarity’.<sup>40</sup>

It was in part out of these experiences that the ‘Hallelujah Bands’ flourished. One of the Hallelujah Bands, known as the ‘Flying Artillery’, which achieved some fame, began to evangelise round Nottingham. One report described the members of some of these Bands as including former ‘prize-fighters, dog-fighters, prize-runners, gamblers, poachers, infidels, robbers, bear-wrestlers’. The Nottingham Band continued to grow and by 1865 its members had taken over a chapel which was dying out – it had a congregation of under twenty people – and held meetings which attracted 4,000 people over the course of each week.<sup>41</sup> The Bands also used various public buildings, including circus tents, as venues to make the message known.

Although much of this kind of evangelistic work was done in urban settings, there was also an impact on working-class people in rural areas. An Anglican clergyman, R. Killin, in Ffestiniog, Wales, wrote in 1860: ‘Between the 7th of September and the 10th of October [1859], when the revival broke out like a torrent which carries everything before it, the deepest feeling was manifested... A large open-air prayer meeting was held in one of the quarries, which deeply affected many. Some young people broke out rejoicing, in a prayer meeting held amongst themselves in one of the chapels. There was an unusual solemnity of feeling in church, and some of my people assembled in a cottage afterwards, and held a prayer meeting, which continued until midnight. The week following... prayer meetings were held in every place of worship every night of the week.’ Killin spoke of many people joining local churches of different denominations.<sup>42</sup>

### The Contribution of Women

The place of women in the Revival of this period was a crucial one. It has often been asserted that in the Victorian period the concept of ‘separate spheres’ was given prominence.<sup>43</sup> The home was seen as the domain of

<sup>40</sup> Holmes, *Religious Revivals in Britain and Ireland*, 148-49.

<sup>41</sup> See Orr, *Second Evangelical Awakening*, 138-44.

<sup>42</sup> Phillips, *Welsh Revival*, 53-4.

<sup>43</sup> For a discussion, see Amanda Vickery, ‘Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women’s History’, in *The Historical Journal*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 2 (1993), 383-414.

women – especially middle-class women. However, the picture is a complex one. An increasing number of women in Britain were involved in charitable work. In 1857 Ellen Ranyard pioneered the use of working-class women through founding the London Bible Domestic and Female Mission, and by 1867 this employed 234 women who reached into areas that were far removed from much church life.<sup>44</sup> Most denominations refused to sanction the wider preaching ministry of women, but some were given backing, such as Mary Clarissa Buck, a Primitive Methodist. Mary Buck was a popular preacher and travelled vast distances taking special services. At times the crowds wanting to hear her meant that people had to be turned away.<sup>45</sup>

Phoebe Palmer, from the USA, played an influential role in Britain as an advocate of women's ministry. She never claimed to be a preacher, defining what she said from the platform as public testimony, but her vision was that 'all Christ's disciples', whether male or female, should, as she put it in 1859, 'be endowed with the gift of prophecy', to proclaim 'Christ crucified'. She particularly associated this proclamation with the 'last days' before the return of Christ. One of her last publications, *The Tongue of Fire on the Daughters of the Lord*, reiterated this position.<sup>46</sup> As with Phoebe and her husband Walter, another couple prominent in the Revival, Grattan and Fanny Guinness, illustrated how women as well as men had a leadership role. Fanny bluntly spoke of many ministers who were 'useless or worse than useless in the work of soul-saving and preach for years without being instrumental in a single conversion', and put the case for women's ministry. Janice Holmes comments: 'Biblical restrictions became unimportant; it was simply a case of who was better at saving souls.'<sup>47</sup>

Within Anglicanism the public ministry of women was highly controversial. Yet William Haslam, a vicar in Norfolk, wrote this about the visit of Geraldine Hooper (later Denning), a female evangelist, to his parish in 1863: 'When it was known that she would speak at the barn meeting in the evening, the people came out in crowds, and the place was filled in every corner.' Haslam affirmed her ministry and spoke about her address as 'like kindling a fresh flame'. Local newspapers took up the story. One editor was fiercely opposed but, as Haslam noted, his 'fierce and long

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<sup>44</sup> F.K. Prochaska, 'Body and Soul: Bible Nurses and the Poor in Victorian London', in *Historical Review*, Vol. LX (1987), 336-48.

<sup>45</sup> E.D. Graham, 'Chosen by God: The Female Travelling Preachers of Early Primitive Methodism', in T. Macquiban (ed), *Methodism in its Cultural Milieu*, Westminster Wesley Series, No. 2 (Cambridge: Applied Theology Press, 1994), 85-98.

<sup>46</sup> Phoebe Palmer, *The Promise of the Father; Or, a Neglected Spirituality of the Last Days* (Boston, 1859); cf. Margaret H. McFadden, *Golden Cables of Sympathy: The Transatlantic Sources of Nineteenth-Century Feminism* (Lexington, KY.: University Press of Kentucky, 2014), 53.

<sup>47</sup> Holmes, *Religious Revivals in Britain and Ireland*, 110.

articles' did not stamp out the fire of revival but rather 'added fuel to it'.<sup>48</sup> Geraldine Hooper Dening inspired other women. Matilda Bass, for example, was not sympathetic to women preaching but when she heard the stylish Geraldine speaking in 1867 – with 'intense earnestness and enthusiasm' – her views changed. She herself became a preacher.<sup>49</sup>

Among the Brethren, a movement not generally associated with female preachers, there were several women who preached, particularly in Scotland, in the 1860s. Jessie MacFarlane, who had been brought up as a Presbyterian, began a preaching ministry in 1862 in Edinburgh as a result of encouragement from a Brethren evangelist, Gordon Forlong, a Scottish lawyer. Forlong had become convinced about female preaching. A year later, Jessie MacFarlane wrote *Scriptural Warrant for Women to Preach the Gospel*. Another Brethren preacher was Isabella Armstrong from Ireland, who began preaching in 1859 in County Tyrone. She wrote a pamphlet, *Plea for Modern Prophetesses*. Mary Hamilton and Mary Paterson were working-class women from Lanarkshire who were converted during the Revival and preached in Brethren assemblies in Scotland.<sup>50</sup> The Brethren experienced considerable growth as a result of the Revival of this period.<sup>51</sup>

It was during the Revival (on 8th January 1860) that Catherine Booth announced that she was going to preach. The event took place in a Methodist Chapel in Gateshead. Catherine 'felt the Spirit come' and asked to 'say a word'. Earlier, at the age of twenty-six, she had come to the conclusion that there was a need for the liberation of women.<sup>52</sup> In the early 1860s, part of the Booths' growing operation in the East End of London was a team of twelve women called the 'Christian Female Pioneers' or 'the Female Band'. One of the group, Caroline Reynolds, spoke of the sensation the team caused in London.<sup>53</sup> The women came from a variety of backgrounds – a candle factory worker, a former barmaid, a rag sorter, a domestic servant and a stay-maker. A few became particularly well known. In Poplar, in the East End of London, Annie Davis' impact was overwhelming – initially she frightened the members of a prayer meeting she led and they all left. However, she built up a successful work. Her obituary described Davis as the first of 'a new order of feminine leaders

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<sup>48</sup> William Haslam, *Yet Not I: Or, More Years of My Ministry* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1882), 163.

<sup>49</sup> Holmes, *Religious Revivals in Britain and Ireland*, 116-19.

<sup>50</sup> N.T.R. Dickson, *Brethren in Scotland, 1838-2000* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2002), 74-77.

<sup>51</sup> The story of the Open Brethren is told in T. Grass, *Gathering to His Name* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2006).

<sup>52</sup> N.H. Murdoch, 'Female Ministry in the Thought and Work of Catherine Booth', in *Church History*, Vol. LIII, No. 3 (1984), 348-62.

<sup>53</sup> *War Cry*, 4th September 1886, 1.

who developed capacity to get together and manage a congregation and society, as well as preach to it'.<sup>54</sup>

### Young People Mobilised for Mission

Both the YMCA and the YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) were active in the Revival. Indeed, the YWCA emerged out of meetings for young women which included having meals together and Bible study and prayer. Referring to one evening in London when talks were given and prayers offered by those present, the YWCA secretary wrote that the subsequent awakening 'surpassed in interest anything that I have witnessed of a revival character in England'.<sup>55</sup> University students were also affected. In Dublin, one student whose life was changed through the 1859 Revival was Robert Anderson, a student at Trinity College. Robert's sister had been converted through evangelistic meetings in the city and she persuaded her brother to attend. He was not enthusiastic, but his life was profoundly redirected. Anderson (later Sir Robert) was an influential evangelical layman, known more widely for his work in directing the CID at Scotland Yard and as Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.<sup>56</sup> The impact of the Revival on young people was a long-term one.

Harry Strange, in his very informative book entitled *Children in Revival*, offers many valuable insights into the experiences of children in various revivals in Scotland.<sup>57</sup> In Findochty, in the north-east of Scotland, a boy of eight spoke at one meeting, and it was reckoned that his words made such an impression that more were converted to Christ at that meeting than on any other occasion in this powerful local revival.<sup>58</sup> There were also examples of revival in schools in Ulster. In Ballymena, a schoolboy felt a strong sense of conviction about his sin and the meetings held in that school in turn affected adults. In a girls' school in Armagh it seemed to observers that the Holy Spirit 'was preparing the soil for a special shower of blessing', and one morning a girl came into the school, threw up her arms and exclaimed, 'I have found Jesus!' The effect was electric.<sup>59</sup> The place of children in revival was also evident in Wales. In Breconshire, in South Wales, about a dozen children began to pray and sing together, and this led to others coming considerable distances to hear their witness.<sup>60</sup>

In March 1859 David Morgan, as a visiting preacher active in the Revival, preached at Bethel Baptist Church, Caio, in Wales, and reported: 'It was a very hard service.' But the Baptist minister saw things differently.

<sup>54</sup> Holmes, *Religious Revivals in Britain and Ireland*, 121.

<sup>55</sup> Weir, 'London', in Reid (ed), *Authentic Records of Revival*, 412-14.

<sup>56</sup> Orr, *Second Evangelical Awakening*, 56.

<sup>57</sup> Harry Sprange, *Children in Revival* (Fearn, UK: Christian Focus, 2002).

<sup>58</sup> *The Revival*, 5th March 1863.

<sup>59</sup> Weir, *Ulster Awakening*, 146-47.

<sup>60</sup> Phillips, *Welsh Revival*, 35-36.

He wrote: 'It was a remarkable service. The appeals of the preacher were extraordinarily powerful.' Up to eighty people asked for baptism. The first to be baptised, Timothy Richard, became one of the most outstanding missionaries in China of his generation. Brian Stanley describes him as 'an original and controversial missionary thinker without parallel in the [Baptist Missionary] Society's history'.<sup>61</sup> Others found that their mission field was in Britain. At Dublin Revival meetings, Thomas Barnardo, then a teenager, was initially scornful, but he was converted in 1862 and joined a Bible class run by Grattan Guinness. Later he was introduced to Hudson Taylor. Barnardo hoped that he might go overseas, but while studying medicine in London was deeply challenged by the conditions of unwanted children of London's East End. By 1878 he had established fifty orphanages.<sup>62</sup>

Henry Venn, the director of the Church Missionary Society, said in 1859 that he was 'anxious to connect the Revival with missionary zeal'. A year later a conference on mission was arranged in Liverpool. Reports spoke of 'blessed outpourings in America, in Sweden, in Ireland, in Scotland, in various parts of the metropolis, and other places'. In connection with this conference, there was a public meeting in Liverpool's Philharmonic Hall and Shaftesbury, as chairman, spoke of this as an 'Ecumenical Council', united for the purpose of mission involving 'all evangelical and orthodox denominations'. This historic conference was followed by others, in London in 1888, New York in 1900, and Edinburgh in 1910. As Edwin Orr argues, the Revival helped to lay the foundations for 'modern international and interdenominational mission'.<sup>63</sup> The impact of the spiritual power experienced in revival was felt across the world, with those who encountered that power as young people having a very significant part to play.

### Diaconal Ministry

The Revival issued in social as well as evangelistic ministry. The efforts made by George Müller, through his huge orphanage work in Bristol, to care for children and young people, had enormous influence. In the history of the orphanage ministry, 1858 was seen as especially notable for the conversions that took place among the children. In July 1859, in a school of 120 girls, more than half were described as being 'under deep spiritual concern' and their experience proved to be long-lasting. In January and February 1860, 'another mighty wave of Holy Spirit power swept over the institution'. It began among girls from six to nine years old, then extended

<sup>61</sup> Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society, 1792-1992* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1992), 180-81.

<sup>62</sup> Orr, *Second Evangelical Awakening*, 210-11.

<sup>63</sup> Edwin Orr, *The Fervent Prayer: The Worldwide Impact of the Great Awakening of 1858* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1974), 130-31.

to older girls, and then to boys, until over 200 were asking about personal faith. The young people asked to hold prayer meetings among themselves. Out of the 700 orphans under Müller's care, about 260 were seen as giving evidence of conversion.<sup>64</sup>

Another aspect of social ministry was the attempt to address problem caused by the misuse of alcohol. In Wales, after twelve months of Revival, a report from Cardiganshire spoke about those who had been known as drunkards being radically changed. One young man said he would get something to drink so as to be better able to disrupt revival meetings. He approached a meeting-place and shouted, 'I am Saul of Tarsus coming to persecute you,' but before he left the place he became sober and began to cry for mercy.<sup>65</sup> In Berwickshire, Scotland, a report from November 1859 said that, as a result of the Revival, local pubs had been closed most of the time. One telling incident was recounted. It had been necessary to pull a large fishing boat up the shore, and when this task was required, at least 100 and perhaps 150 men normally came to do the work. In the past they had always been recompensed in whisky. On this occasion whisky was obtained, the boat was hauled up – and the men went away, leaving the whisky cask with its seal unbroken.<sup>66</sup> The message of 'temperance' had a powerful effect on communities.

A further area of social endeavour was the attempt made to reduce levels of prostitution, for example, in the West End of London. 'Midnight Meetings', as they were called, were arranged and held in different languages since a number of the women were from abroad. Women who wanted to leave prostitution were taken to safe houses. This movement spread to other cities.<sup>67</sup> In Belfast, Hugh Hanna, a Presbyterian minister, considered that before the Revival came, Christians simply ignored the problem of prostitution in the city. However, the Revival challenged churches to arrange meetings for victims of prostitution. Hanna was aware of about fifteen women who had left prostitution and found a new life. His evidence was supplemented by a report from an Episcopalian, Theophilus Campbell, regarding women leaving brothels because of the effect of the Revival message.<sup>68</sup> The wider movement to help prostitutes became more organised. By August 1860, a report on London Midnight Meetings said that 2,000 women had attended (average age twenty-two) and that ninety-one had been able to be provided with new homes.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>64</sup> A.T. Pierson, *George Mueller of Bristol* (London: James Nisbet, 1899), chap. 23.

<sup>65</sup> Phillips, *Welsh Revival*, 103.

<sup>66</sup> John Turnball, 'Eyemouth, Berwickshire', in Reid (ed), *Authentic Records of Revival*, 331.

<sup>67</sup> Orr, *Second Evangelical Awakening*, 214.

<sup>68</sup> Weir, *Ulster Awakening*, 151, 189-90.

<sup>69</sup> John Kent, *Holding the Fort: Studies in Victorian Revivalism* (London: Epworth Press, 1978), 111.

A range of outcomes appeared in Revival reports. Hugh Hanna's perspective was that the Revival had brought about a desire for education. He made a point of visiting evening classes that had opened in working-class areas. About 750 people were present in the classes he visited. As a result of the new 'thirst for education', as Hanna described it, it had been discovered that there were many more people who were illiterate than had previously been thought. Hanna spoke of old men sitting in classes with children, learning to read, and in particular to read the Bible.<sup>70</sup> Other reports spoke of the Revival reducing criminal behaviour. Henry Venn, the Anglican evangelical leader, made a tour of areas of Ireland affected by revival and came back with reports of conversations he had held with a range of people who had confirmed that crime had 'exceedingly diminished'.<sup>71</sup>

There were, however, criticisms of the effect of the Revival in Ulster. *The Lancet*, in an article in 1859, 'The physical phenomena of revival', spoke of physical manifestations as 'morbid and injurious'.<sup>72</sup> Some also questioned the social impact. In the light of criticisms, for example of 'emotional' meetings, the Evangelical Alliance asked Professor James McCosh, a leading Presbyterian theologian, to write on the subject. In October 1859 he published a paper defending the Revival.<sup>73</sup> Also, a book by Benjamin Scott, *The Revival in Ulster: Its Moral and Social Results* (1859), contained a great deal of evidence of how the Revival had brought beneficial results to a wider society. William Arthur, in a letter which *The Times* refused to print, and which appeared in the *Daily News*, commented that he had 'never witnessed anything to be compared with what I found from Coleraine to Belfast, in evidence of a great and sudden improvement in the lives of a population... My favourite informants were not parsons, religious men, or new converts, but boys in the street, working-men, cart-drivers, policemen, and strangers... As to all other things connected with the Revival, I found much difference of opinion; but as to the moral results, none, except that some would ask – will this reformation last?'<sup>74</sup>

## Conclusion

This study has probed the significant impact of a mid-nineteenth-century revival on mission and social ministry. Although this movement had a global reach, I have looked only at England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. Study of similar periods of major awakening at other times in church history suggests that certain patterns are repeated: notably the conjunction

<sup>70</sup> Weir, *Ulster Awakening*, 150-51.

<sup>71</sup> Weir, *Ulster Awakening*, 196.

<sup>72</sup> *The Lancet*, 23rd July 1859, 94.

<sup>73</sup> *Evangelical Christendom*, October 1859, 368; cf. Randall and Hilborn, *One Body in Christ*, 108-89.

<sup>74</sup> Weir, *Ulster Awakening*, 192.

of prayer, a wider view of the church, networks of fellowship, new initiatives in evangelistic mission at home and overseas, and social transformation. As an example, Noel Gibbard has looked especially at the Welsh Revival of 1904-05 and its international impact.<sup>75</sup> This is not to say that revival can be manufactured. Perhaps all the elements of revival are normally present in some way in the life of the church. There is praying, worshipping and witnessing. But in revival these elements are heightened and intensified.<sup>76</sup> New spiritual life and power creates renewed vision for evangelism and *diakonia*, and as a consequence the churches approach their mission in new ways.

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<sup>75</sup> Noel Gibbard, *On the Wings of the Dove: The international effects of the 1904-05 Revival* (Bridgend, UK: Bryntirion Press, 2002).

<sup>76</sup> Brian H. Edwards, *Revival! A People Saturated with God* (Darlington, UK: Evangelical Press, 1990), 30.

# RETRACING DIAKONIA IN THE EAST AFRICAN REVIVAL MOVEMENT

Julius Gathogo

## Introduction

The East African Revival Movement had its roots in Rwanda. The seed was sown when Dr Joe Church (a British medical doctor who had gone to Gahini in Rwanda to help during a period of drought and famine) and Ugandan Simeoni Nsibambi undertook serious Bible study on the Holy Spirit. This study led to a deep spiritual experience, which became the driving force behind a series of conventions. These included the Gahini Convention (1933, Rwanda), the Kabale Convention (1935, Uganda) and the Mbarara Convention (1936, also Uganda). By 1937, the revival had also reached Maseno in Western Kenya.

This article retraces some of the background and elements of selfless service (*diakonia*) of the revival movement. Were the founders inspired by the *diakonia* ministry of the early church? Was the revival a by-product of growing protest against European dominance that marginalized the vast majority of Africans? Did the *diakonia* ministries of pioneer European missionaries such as Henry Venn, Ludwig Krapf and Walter Owen, among others, prepare the ground for the birth of the movement?

## The Spirit of *Diakonia* in the Movement

In washing the disciples' feet (John 13:12-17), Jesus set an example of *diakonia*. The East African Revival Movement applied this through ministry to the poor and lowly in society. In the vast region of East Africa, it was the early European missionaries who demonstrated that service should be to all: Jews and Gentiles, women and men, poor and rich, Europeans and Africans, all alike, in the spirit of Galatians 3:28.

The Movement was meant to revive spirituality in the church in general. From the beginning, it was non-denominational, non-sexist, non-racial and non-ethnic – among other polarizing dimensions. It was, however, too legalistic. For instance, it forbade beer drinking, smoking, taking snuff, clitoridectomy (female genital mutilation), and also tightly controlled all relationships between boys and girls and between men and women. Frequent confession was demanded, and elders arranged all marriages. Anyone who broke this code was excommunicated. Despite this legalism, the desire was (and is) for service to God and humanity.

### Inspiration by Pioneer Missionaries?

Protestant Christianity in Kenya began in 1844 with the arrival of the Rev. Dr Ludwig Krapf, the first worker of the Church Missionary Society (CMS). Before long, a number of other agencies were also at work, usually operating within agreed comity arrangements. Among them were individuals whose love and service of Africans were a shining example of *diakonia*. For instance, Bishop Alfred Tucker in 1890 appealed to the British government when the Imperial British East Africa Company decided to withdraw from Uganda and Kenya because of losing money: Tucker believed this would be disastrous for the mission, but also for the whole local economy and for employment. Through Tucker, the CMS raised funds to save the situation.<sup>1</sup>

Another great missionary who demonstrated the spirit of *diakonia* in the dark days of church history in eastern Africa, and indeed the person who, in my view, implicitly prepared the ground for the birth of the Revival Movement, is Archdeacon Walter Edwin Owen. Owen was called ‘Archdemon’ by European Settlers and farmers because he fought for African rights and was deeply concerned about justice.<sup>2</sup> In 1922, Owen founded the Kavirondo Taxpayers’ Welfare Association to teach Africans how to run their own affairs. This in turn supported a welfare movement for them to manage planned economic development, through introducing ploughs, watermills, new crops and bookkeeping. Over the years, he educated many Luo and Luhya civic and political leaders.<sup>3</sup>

Krapf, Tucker and Owen’s ministry serving the very margins of society does not rule out the sad pattern of other European missionaries whose ministry left a lot to be desired. Bolaji Idowu pointed out that some missionaries served as ‘liaison officers between the Colonial Government and the people. Some of them became part-time civil servants. And some even brought in a war of supremacy between tribes.’<sup>4</sup> But it is also the case that some European missionaries worked hand-in-hand with indigenous Africans to found indigenous churches, and/or revival movements which were basically a ‘church within a church’. For example, the East African Revival, while at first being concerned with the development of the

<sup>1</sup> Keith Cole, *The Cross over Mount Kenya: A Short History of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Mount Kenya (1900-1970)*, (Melbourne, Australia: Ridley College, 1970), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Gideon G. Githiga, *The Church as a Bulwark against Extremism* (Nairobi: Uzima, 2001), 217.

<sup>3</sup> For details, see David B. Barrett, ‘Walter Edwin Owen 1878 to 1945 Church Missionary Society (CMS), Kenya/Uganda’, in Gerald H. Anderson (ed), *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, MI, 1998), 201-02.

<sup>4</sup> C.G. Baeta, *Christianity in Tropical Africa: Studies Presented and Discussed at the International African Seminar, University of Ghana, April 1965* (London: OUP, 1965), 424.

spiritual life, ‘beneath the superficiality of much official Christianity, [and it] challenged European superiority and made room for African leadership’, promoting African spirituality in a manner hitherto unknown.<sup>5</sup>

### The Revival during the Missionary Era

In the early missionary era, prior to the emergence of the East African Revival at the end of the 1920s, the Anglican Bishop of Uganda, Alfred Tucker (1849-1914), demonstrated selfless and non-racial service to God and humanity. Despite opposition from his juniors and fellow European missionaries, he gave indigenous Africans a significant measure of participation in decision-making, especially through the Diocesan Synods.<sup>6</sup> In particular, like Henry Venn (1796-1873), who urged that churches growing from mission activity should quickly become self-propagating, self-governing and self-supporting, Tucker was keen to foster an indigenous clergy; his first ordination service took place as early as 1893.<sup>7</sup>

Venn’s influence had actually led to the first African Bishop, Samuel Adjai Crowther (1809-1891), being appointed in 1864. However, racial prejudice and colonialism, along with the poor educational level of early African clergy, their low status and poor pay, all prevented the realization of Venn’s visionary missiological insights. Tucker’s successor, Bishop Willis, showed little respect for African clergy, and in 1920 appointed a European as Assistant Bishop (and one without previous experience of working in Africa) when Ugandans were expecting one from among their own people. Even when a Ugandan bishop was finally appointed in 1947, ethnic sensitivities were ignored. Such events deepened spiritual malaise.<sup>8</sup>

When the East African Revival was born in the late 1920s, it was in the context of a polarized environment where some Anglicans, Presbyterians and other African adherents were deeply unhappy with the state of affairs, and indeed were joining the newly emerging African Instituted Churches. Those who did not want to go back to the cultural practices that were allowed in these emerging churches, such as female circumcision, polygamy, the use of African traditional melodies in worship, and their nationalistic leanings, willingly joined the new spirituality that was being propounded by the East African Revival Movement. Indeed, the revival was the answer that the dissatisfied Protestants in the mission churches were looking for, and they zealously joined it. In a short while, it spread

<sup>5</sup> Geoffrey Parrinder, *Religion in Africa* (London: Penguin African Library, 1969), 155.

<sup>6</sup> Kevin Ward, ‘A History of Christianity in Uganda’, in Zablon Nthamburi (ed), *From Mission to Church: A Handbook of Christianity in East Africa* (Nairobi: Uzima, 1995), 103.

<sup>7</sup> Jonathan Hildebrand, *History of the Church in Africa: A Survey* (Achimota, Ghana: Africa Christian Press, 1990).

<sup>8</sup> Ward, ‘A History of Christianity in Uganda’, 104.

like a bush-fire. Conference after conference was taking place; people were raising money to support these East African conventions. There was money for it, yet they would complain of lack in other material needs.

The brethren (also called *Balokole* or the 'Born Again') rekindled the ministry of the first seven deacons in Acts 7, with service to all races and to men, women and children, in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The revival spread across denominations. It also created some confusion, for instance in relation to polygamists, who were told to drop all wives except the first. This caused great suffering for subsequent wives and their children. The lack of theological training made some of the brethren vulnerable to legalism, syncretism and ignorant decisions, and narrow piety.

Nevertheless, converted Africans working in industries, companies, schools and other places began to return things they had stolen, as proof of being born again. Day by day, dramatic happenings could be heard, as former thieves, witches, wife-beaters, husband-takers, fornicators and adulterers, killers during the Mau-Mau rebellion of political independence, among others, confessed and denounced their past sins in these huge conventions, often with over 20,000 attendants. One example was when a lady stood up and announced, 'You see this Anglican Bishop, he fathered my only child when he was just a Reverend, and I now realize that that was sin, and is still sin today.' As the confession was made, the brethren in the Voi, Kenya, gathering began to sing their anthem, '*Tukutendereza, Yesu...* Praise thee, Oh Christ... you got me from very far.' Despite his initial protestation that he was innocent, the bishop was forced to step down.

### **The Social Impact of the Revival Movement**

In addition to addressing vices such as stealing, adultery, wife-beating and immodesty in dress, there were also some strange instructions: for instance, don't take a bank loan in case the Lord returns and finds you in debt; don't keep a dog for protection in your compound because it is God who protects. But there was a noticeable reduction in abuse of alcohol, cigarette smoking, cases of rape and domestic violence. An emphasis on cleanliness and a balanced diet ensured hygienic living. Since the Movement did not believe in officials, the group empowered its members in leadership at all levels and especially at home.

The *Balokole* changed the socio-political landscape, even as people seeking elective positions wanted to identify subtly with them and their insistence of 'always walking in the light'. A further revival in 1967 saw many people from the mainline churches converted to this faith. Years later, an eyewitness spoke of people being liberated from hypocrisy and from all sorts of darkness.

The year 1967 was also when Festo Kivengere was ordained, becoming Anglican Bishop of Kigezi, Uganda, in 1972. Five years later, he had to

flee his country after death threats during the dictatorial regime of President Idi Amin, and following the murder of Archbishop Janani Luwum. Influenced by the spirit of the East African Revival, Kivengere established the pan-African Evangelistic Enterprise, then returned to Uganda after Amin was overthrown in 1979, openly denouncing human rights violations during the post-Amin regimes just as he had in Amin's era. He also reached out to Rwandan refugees fleeing from the ethnic tensions that would in 1994 erupt in the appalling Rwandan genocide. As a result of revival influence, he also became a pace-setter by ordaining women at a time when other East African church leaders were fiercely opposed.<sup>9</sup> Kivengere died of cancer in 1988, but the revival spirit had indeed reshaped him to serve God and creation passionately.

The imprints of the revival movement have been evident in East African politics, too. During the struggle for independence, most of the *Balokole* would not fight the colonial government because 'there is no authority except that which God has established' (Rom. 13:1). Nor could a *Balokole* take a Mau-Mau oath, which earned them beheadings during the Mau-Mau guerrilla war against the British. Today, many political leaders claim to be Christian, so their speeches and behaviour may be closely watched: do they match up? On the national day of prayer, several politicians appear to confess in a way akin to the revivals, though their sincerity is subject to further debate!

### Conclusion

Some of the early pioneer missionaries to East Africa and Africa at large – Venn, Krapf, Owen and Tucker among them – played a critical role in modelling a pattern of selfless service. The revival from the 1920s onwards has continued to bring a holistic influence in the region that lasts to the present day.

When Jomo Kenyatta (1889-1978) became the first President of Kenya in 1963, he found a polarized country where relatives of some *Balokole* were still mourning loved ones martyred by Mau-Mau combatants. Tension rose as some considered revenge, demanded compensation, or indulged in open hatred. Kenyatta used the *Balokole's diakonia* reconciliation slogans and cleverly told the wounded nation to forget the past and begin the task of reconstruction. He would, like the *Balokole* group, confess on national radio and television and in public gatherings that he, too, had forgiven those who gave false witness that he was a Mau-Mau oath administrator, which resulted in his imprisonment for seven years. And indeed his 'betrayal' and jailers were never harassed till he died peacefully of a heart attack in 1978 at the age of 90.

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<sup>9</sup> Julius Gathogo, 'The Struggle against Patriarchalism in Kenya (1980-1992)', in *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, South Africa (April 2008, Vol. XXXIV), 265-88.

The East African Revival Movement can be likened to an African-instituted church within the mainline churches, with unique teachings from the missionary churches. The joint service and example of a European missionary and an African, in a unique combination, was used by God to serve all races, men and women, poor and rich, and all categories of people during the colonial era. Its influence can still be felt to the present day.

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# DOING MISSION WITH THE POOR: AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE<sup>1</sup>

Samuel Jayakumar

## Introduction

During the last hundred years, the church in Asian countries has grown in quality as well as in quantity. Asian churches have contributed a great deal to developing indigenous leaders, articulating wholesome theologies, establishing various types of missions and ministries, as well as training institutions. Christians in Asia got involved in various new forms of ministries as the situation demanded. In a number of ways, churches contributed to nation-building, correcting injustice and social oppressions. In this chapter, I will discuss at two Indian case studies of holistic mission as understood and practised by the Asian church. I will first look at the Dornakal Mission (a single great movement of this era among the Dalits headed by V.S. Azariah) and, secondly, at two remarkable evangelical movements of the twentieth century – namely, the Friends Missionary Prayer Band (FMPB) and the Evangelical Church of India (ECI).

### The Dornakal Mission:

#### A Case Study in Holistic Mission Practised Among the Dalits

V.S. Azariah was a champion of ecumenism among the younger churches of South India. Along with a few other Indian Christians, he founded the first indigenous missionary society, the Indian Missionary Society (IMS) of Tirunelveli, in 1903, and the National Missionary Society (NMS) in 1905. Azariah had great zeal for missionary activities combining evangelism and social concerns.

He was modern India's most successful leader of the Dalits and of non-Brahmin conversion movements to the gospel of Christ during the early twentieth century. His evangelistic work among the Telugus resulted in the enormous growth of Christian congregations. He was consecrated Bishop of Dornakal in 1912, the first Indian to become a bishop of the then Anglican Church in India. He contended that churches had to become missionary churches.

By the year 1928, his diocese contained 158,000 Christians. All the pastoral work was organized under a system of pastorates which were

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<sup>1</sup> The major part of this chapter has previously been published in Brian Woolnough and Wonsuk Ma (eds), *Holistic Mission: God's Plan for God's People* (Oxford: Regnum, 2010), 87-101. It is here reprinted with permission.

grouped into district church councils. While the Indian clergymen were directly responsible to the Bishop, the Indian lay workers were responsible to their own clergy. Accordingly, each of the outcaste villages had its own corporate church life with independent activities – village schools, morning and evening prayers in each village, and Bible study and classes for catechumens.

The work in Dornakal had general and liberal support from foreign money. Azariah and his associates, year after year, wrote numerous letters and travelled to many countries to promote the work among the oppressed classes. He evolved an elaborate network through which parishes in England were linked with Christian villages in Dornakal. Azariah insisted that older churches round the world whom God had blessed with wealth must give, and must give cheerfully and with abandon for the work of God among poor and the oppressed communities.

From the beginning, Azariah had the conviction that the gospel of Jesus Christ was meant for the poor and the oppressed, and when it was preached to them, it evoked their response. As he loved the rural poor and rural congregations, he understood their problems and needs so that he could serve them effectively in many ways.

The church in India, therefore, is essentially a village church. Its problems are village problems, its education needs to be adapted to the conditions of village life and its leaders must be men and women able and willing to live and work among village folk. And it is the church of the poor. This has often been cast back in its teeth as a reproach.<sup>2</sup>

The Dalits were struggling hard with Christian discipline and character-formation. As the first generation of converts were from illiterate and poverty-stricken groups, their understanding and knowledge was very limited. They often had to endure persecution from Brahmins and caste Hindus, and spiritual and moral achievement was imperfect. However, Christian teachings had been accepted as a challenge by the Dalits so that they were continually helped with their all-round advancement.

Azariah, like his missionary predecessors, regarded the gospel of Christ as a social religion and Christian conversion as an instrument of social change. He showed a harmony between evangelism and social action. He understood the church as not only an agent of evangelism but also the bearer of civilization. He wrote: 'Where Christianity goes, education, civilization, and habits of cleanliness in body, dress, and food, in speech and conduct, are the concomitant results.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> V.S. Azariah and H. Whitehead, *Christ in the Indian Villages* (London, SCM, 1930), 18.

<sup>3</sup> V.S. Azariah, 'The Church in Rural India', in *Dornakal Diocesan Magazine*, 5:10 (October 1928), 3-4.

Azariah and his co-workers accepted social change as 'the very essence of the gospel of Christ and therefore an integral part of the Christian message'. They asserted that 'its sure sanction was Jesus Christ himself'.<sup>4</sup>

Azariah maintained that rural uplift and the awakening of outcaste villagers was effected through Christian education. He wrote:

Through Christianity too, illiteracy is being chased out of rural India. It was well known that the first thing done for a village which desires to join the Christian church is to send a resident teacher there to instruct the village in the Christian Faith and open a school for their children. The teacher and his wife – if he has one – are truly the introducers of Light and Learning.<sup>5</sup>

He often asserted that 'to teach, teach, teach' is one of the needs of the hour.<sup>6</sup> According to Azariah, the education of a single girl means the uplifting of the whole family. He rightly understood that in India, among the poor and the oppressed, the success of male education depended on women's education. Azariah encouraged the education of girls and women. He made elaborate arrangements to promote adult literacy and education among illiterate women.<sup>7</sup>

The purpose of education among the outcaste Christians of Dornakal was to empower as well as enlighten the Dalit converts so that they might be restored to personal awareness. Moreover, he wanted the education given to them to prepare them for life, believing that, thus trained, Christians would become centres of light wherever they were. Hence he maintained:

Any education given to such people must, we believe, include education to prepare them for life. Our aim then is to produce through this school a new generation of men – men who will not be ashamed of manual labour, men who will be willing to go back to the village with knowledge of some handicraft, and settle down there to earn an honest livelihood and to become centres of light, in their turn creating a sturdy, self-respecting rural Christian manhood.<sup>8</sup>

Christian education greatly awakened the Dalits' consciousness of the injustice and deceit caused by the caste Hindus. Azariah's co-workers reported that the young adults who learnt to read and write, generally at night schools, in due course began to question their Hindu masters about their 'debts' and became aware in many cases of how they had been

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<sup>4</sup> V.S. Azariah, 'Rural Reconstruction', in *Dornakal Diocesan Magazine*, 7:8 (August 1930), 16.

<sup>5</sup> V.S. Azariah, 'Church in Rural India', in *Dornakal Diocesan Magazine*, 5:10 (October 1928), 4.

<sup>6</sup> V.S. Azariah, 'A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of Dornakal' (14th, November 1923), 9-10.

<sup>7</sup> V.S. Azariah, 'The Bishop's Letter', *Dornakal Diocesan Magazine* 6:1 (January, 1932), 12f.

<sup>8</sup> V.S. Azariah, *SPG-DL, India II*, (February 27, 1930), 2.

deceived.<sup>9</sup> Azariah observed that Dalit Christians ‘on account of integrity, command higher field wages; that Christian labourers are in demand for transplantation and harvesting because they do not require close supervision’.<sup>10</sup>

Azariah understood education as something that belonged to the Judeo-Christian tradition. Furthermore, Azariah’s concept of education was very much value-based. It was offered as an instrument to correct, to direct, to change and to transform the lives of the Dalits. Education offered by the mission was useful to them in their day-to-day living. It prepared them to take up jobs and earn their livelihood. It provided them with strong self-awareness which in turn established their sense of individuality. It helped them to be careful with their wages and to maintain their health and hygiene.<sup>11</sup>

The first-generation Dalit Christians of South India confessed that ‘Christianity has brought us fellowship and brotherhood. It has treated us with respect, and it has given us self-respect. It has never despised us because of our lowly origin, but on the contrary has held us as individuals who are valuable before God and man as any man of any origin’.<sup>12</sup>

The need, then, of Dalits was not a false hope or even a positive feeling, but faith and confidence in a tangible personal God the Saviour who removes guilt, both real and false, such as *karma*. Proclamation of the gospel provided the poor and the oppressed with a general confidence that life was meaningful and that it was possible to change one’s quality of life by one’s own efforts. Bishop Picket (Jarrell Waskom Pickett (1890-1981) was a Methodist minister and missionary to India). came up with a similar conclusion after undertaking a thorough study of Dalit conversion movements:

The depressed classes in India are desperately poor. But their chief economic need is not financial; it is an antidote to the poisonous ideas that have made them incapable of struggling successfully with their environment. As severe as is the physical oppression to which they are continuously subjected, the depressed classes could not have been reduced by its operation alone to the low state in which they have lived for centuries. Much more devastating than physical oppression has been the psychological oppression inflicted by the Hindu doctrines of karma and rebirth, which have taught them that they are a degraded, worthless people suffering just retribution for sins committed in earlier lives. It is, then, a true instinct that makes the depressed classes respond more eagerly to the preaching of the Christian gospel than to any direct ministry to their social and economic ills. The concepts that the Christian gospel gives them of themselves and of God in relation to their

<sup>9</sup> A.F.R. Bird, *Telugu Mission*, SPG – R, 1922, 7.

<sup>10</sup> V.S. Azariah, *The Church in Rural Inida*, 5.

<sup>11</sup> V.S. Azariah, ‘Bishop’s Letter’ *Dornakal Diocesan Magazine* 7:6 (June, 1930), 2-3.

<sup>12</sup> V.S. Azariah, ‘Open Letter to Our Country Men...’, *Indian Witness* (September 17, 1936), 598.

sufferings and sins are worth incomparably more to them than any direct social or economic service the church could offer.<sup>13</sup>

Other Indian leaders involved in community development among the poor concur with this view. For example, Vishal Mangalwadi wrote:

Perhaps the most devastating effect of the centuries of poverty and oppression is total loss of self-respect, self-confidence, trust in others and hope for any change... Poverty is not their main problem. The lack of hope (for a better future), lack of faith (in man, government or God) and lack of initiative (born out of dehumanizing oppression and loss of self-confidence) are paralyzing mental and cultural factors which prevent them from any action towards freedom and development.<sup>14</sup>

It was the gospel which provided the ultimate antidote to this cultural, psychological and, ultimately, spiritual, oppression!

### **The Evangelical Legacy of Holistic Mission Continues through Evangelism and Church Growth Movements**

The foreign mission in the Indian sub-continent (including countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Burma, Nepal) began to end following the withdrawal of the British in 1947. By the early 1960s, most missionaries who required visas had been withdrawn. However, Indian Christians for the most part continued the legacy of the missionaries, combining evangelism and social concern – churches continued with medical, educational and other philanthropic enterprises. But the primary motivation for mission in India was the spread of the gospel and the growth of churches.

For evangelicals in the 1950s and 1960s, although Christian mission was the mission of saving souls, it never lost sight of human misery. Missions and ministries that were started with soul-winning and church planting could not ignore social concerns such as community development – involving themselves in health care, poverty alleviation programmes, the provision of drinking water, opening up schools and orphanages, and other rehabilitation activities. For example, the Evangelical Church of India (ECI), Friends Missionary Prayer Band (FMPB), Indian Evangelical Mission (IEM), Indian Missionary Society (IMS), National Missionary Society (NMS), as well as many other missions and ministries, while they speak of evangelism as their priority, in practice they have been holistic – in mission that combines evangelism and social concern.

Here we may refer to two outstanding missionary statesmen of the twentieth century, John Mott and Donald McGavran who made great

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<sup>13</sup> J.W. Picket, *Christ's Way to India's Heart* (Lucknow, India: Lucknow Publishing, 1938), 173.

<sup>14</sup> Vishal Mangalwadi, 'A Theology of Power in the Context of Social Development', in *TRACI Journal*, April 1981, 15.

impact on the minds of Asian Christian lay leaders, especially in India. Mott's ideas of mission originally come from the Enlightenment,<sup>15</sup> being influenced by the popular evangelist D.L. Moody, whereas McGavran's ideas emerged from his three decades of missionary work in India. Both insisted on implementing the Great Commission. Mott wrote about implementing the Commission in this generation and created a sense of urgency among evangelical Christians.<sup>16</sup>

After about approximately fifty years, in the 1960s and 1970s, Mott's slogan, 'The evangelization of the world in this generation', came alive in some circles in South India. The slogan created urgency, especially among Tamil Christians, and paved the way for further consideration of what would happen to the unevangelized. Indian lay Christian leaders and evangelists began to preach categorically that the unevangelized were lost. Indian missions such as FMPB were founded on this premise.<sup>17</sup> Its lay leaders were very successful in recruiting hundreds of young men and women as well as forming prayer groups for the prayerful support of cross-cultural missions in the northern parts of India. Indeed, mission was understood in terms of *rescuing* people who would otherwise be lost.

The same idea of the 'loss of the unevangelized' was introduced among seminary students. For instance, the Hindustan Bible Institute (HBI), founded in the city of Madras (now Chennai) by an upper-caste Hindu convert named Paul Gupta, instilled this doctrine into the minds of young boys and girls and prepared them for cross-cultural mission. During the 1960s and 1970s, almost all the graduates of HBI went to northern parts of India as missionaries.<sup>18</sup> Like HBI, many Bible schools were founded especially in Chennai, professing to train young people for cross-cultural

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<sup>15</sup> Being affected by the liberalism of the Enlightenment and the Victorian discourse of social development, the missionaries were anxious to see a visible Christian social order. In Britain, evangelical belief was that the regenerative power of the Gospel would drive a society along basically the same path of socio-economic and political progress. This is perhaps one of the reasons why Mott wanted to see the evangelization of the world in this generation. For details, see Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Leicester, UK: Apollos, 1990), 173; David Hempton, 'Evangelicalism and Reform', in J. Wolfe (ed), *Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal* (London: SPCK, 1995), 17ff.

<sup>16</sup> John R. Mott, *The Evangelization of the World in This Generation* (New York: SVM, 1900), 3, 6-7, 15-16, 105, 109, 115-17.

<sup>17</sup> FMPB is indigenous both in its finance and personnel. Membership is restricted to Christian Indians. FMPB is a sodality body, serving as an arm of the church to plant churches across the country. Therefore, FMPB is not a church, it is a non-denominational, a trans-denominational and a non-sectarian society. The mission works with the goal of doing saturation evangelism among 300 people groups, and aims to place 2,500 cross-cultural missionaries among these many people groups during the next few years.

<sup>18</sup> Files maintained by the Student Missionary Secretaries provided this information.

mission in North India. These seminaries were established solely to equip the people of God to fulfil the Great Commission. They did not train 'parish priests' because that was not their goal.<sup>19</sup> They were committed only to training 'harvesters' for harvesting. Consequently, these schools did not see theological education in India as primarily for the ministry of the church. For them, the urgency of the evangelistic task should determine the nature and purpose of seminary training, and not the ministerial needs of the church.<sup>20</sup>

The revival that was going on in Tamil Nadu was further fuelled by the ideas of McGavran who spent much of his life trying to overcome social barriers to Christian conversion.<sup>21</sup> He promoted aggressive evangelism among responsive people groups. Asian evangelicals were challenged by his slogan: 'Win the winnable while they are winnable.' He often criticised the World Council of Churches for their omission of a clear statement on the priority of the Great Commission as the heart of their theology of mission. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, in a response to Uppsala's draft document on mission, McGavran wrote, 'Do not betray the two billion.' He insisted on the importance of the evangelization of non-Christians, baptizing them and making them disciples:

This is a time to emphasize discipling, not to turn from it. This is not a time to betray the two billion but to reconcile as many as possible of them to God in the church of Jesus Christ. For the peace of the world, for justice between (peoples) and nations, for advance in learning, for breaking down hostilities between peoples, for the spiritual health of countless individuals and the corporate welfare of (humankind) *this is a time to disciple nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and teaching them whatsoever our Lord has commanded us.*<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> The tradition of the Bible school movement is related to the modern missionary movement. Bible schools are primarily meant for preparing non-ordained missionaries and to train lay-people for witness. See B. Ott, 'Mission Oriented Theological Education', in *Transformation*, 18:2 (April 2001), 75-76.

<sup>20</sup> This is still one of the weaknesses of this type of seminaries. For details, see Gnana Robinson's criticisms after many years of the existence of such seminaries in Madras. Gnana Robinson, 'Theological Education in India Today', in *NCC Review*, 115:4 (April 1995), 292-93.

<sup>21</sup> In recent decades, Christians in some parts of India in particular, and in south Asian countries such as Singapore, Indonesia and Nepal in general, have been experiencing a new vitality, life and vision. S.P. Athyal, 'Southern Asia', in J.M. Philips and R.T. Coote (eds), *Toward the 21st Century in Christian Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 61-62. But liberal circles in India, especially among theologians such as M.M. Thomas, were equating humanization with evangelism. After Bangkok, the WCC emphasis strengthened the secular liberation movements in line with emerging Latin American liberation theologies.

<sup>22</sup> A. Glasser and D.A. McGavran, *The Conciliar Evangelical Debate* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1972), 233-34.

It is noteworthy that the ideas of Mott and McGavran spread in India in the early 1960s and 1970s when secular theologies were popular in the West. The whole idea of that period was that the world would be secular. At the same time, in South India there was much revival among lay Christian leaders.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, they reacted very strongly to secular and liberal theologies, but appropriated any teaching that was conservative and orthodox.

McGavran's thinking greatly influenced the evangelical churches especially. Many evangelical missions and ministries adopted the church planting approach to mission and still cherish this singular aim. Their mission is nothing but pioneer evangelism and planting churches. This is how most of the missionaries understand and practise mission. Consequently, they continue to carry on their work of preaching the gospel and conversion of people to Christ. Some of these missions are very successful and have led thousands of people to Christ and formed hundreds of new congregations. For instance, the Evangelical Church of India (ECI), over the last forty years, planted over 2,500 churches across the country and paved the way for three new dioceses and the consecration of two additional bishops.<sup>24</sup> The ECI has established a large number of schools, children's homes, and relief and rehabilitation structures. In a unique manner, it addresses social injustice through its body, the Social Justice Movement of India, an arm of ECI. The ECI bishops, particularly Ezra Sargunam, have easy access to the top leadership of the Indian state and central governments to address social evils. He himself was the Chairman of the State Minority Commission and held several other positions whilst bishop.

Similarly, FMPB has had a phenomenal growth of congregations, especially in North India, and has laid the foundation of three new dioceses in the Church of North India. FMPB grew out of the evangelistic concern in 1958 of a group of young people belonging to the Diocese of Tirunelveli, South India. Bands of concerned Christians were formed to pray for the unevangelized. The fieldwork of the mission began in 1967 when the first missionary was sent to one of the hill tribes in South India. In 1972, the vision was enlarged to include the eleven states of North India. A target was set to send 440 missionaries to the 220 districts of these eleven states by 1982. The goal was steadily realized. At present, FMPB has over 1,100 cross-cultural missionaries serving all over India. It has won 4,000,000 people for Christ, founded sixty homes for children, erected 900 church buildings, prepared 1,100 local evangelists, translated the Bible into thirteen languages, and

<sup>23</sup> Most of India's indigenous missions were founded during this period.

<sup>24</sup> Recently two dioceses, Delhi and Chennai, have been formed. The Rev. Dr Jagthri Mashi and the Rev. Dr Sundar Singh are the consecrated bishops for these two dioceses. The third one will be the formation of Andhra diocese and the fourth one will be the Delhi Diocese. At present, the Rev. Richard Howell is the Bishop's Commissary for Delhi ECI.

reached 240 people groups. Further, the mission has established about 5,500 worshipping communities/congregations while hundreds of smaller congregations are emerging among the tribals. Evangelism, church planting, Bible translation and social uplift are the main ministries of the organization. It works in 23 Indian states, based in 260 mission fields. FMPB is a missionary movement of Christian Indians to present the gospel of Jesus Christ personally to every person of India, particularly to those who have never heard the gospel.<sup>25</sup>

For the most part, Asian indigenous missions and ministries adopted holistic mission practice. For example, both FMPB and ECI partnered with NGOs such as EFICOR, World Vision, CASA, Compassion, etc. to minister to their poor and oppressed believers. Roger Hedlund explains such partnerships for uplifting the tribal communities such as Maltos:

The experience of the Malto people in Jharkand is an impressive story of social and spiritual redemption. Decimated by malnutrition, tuberculosis, goiter, jaundice, cholera, malaria and various water-born diseases, the Malto people also were exploited by rapacious money lenders. Addiction to alcohol and other substances was a further degrading influence. This dehumanized tribe had declined from one million to less than 70,000 during the past forty years and was moving toward extinction. Into this context of human despair, missionaries of the Friends Missionary Prayer Band and other social development workers came to live and serve. Despite opposition by vested interests, community development is underway, and the Maltos are no longer a population in decline. From the work of the FMPB among the Malto people of North Bihar has arisen an entire new diocese. Previously illiterate, oppressed and exploited, and decimated by rampant diseases, today the downward trend has ended. The Maltos are receiving rudimentary education, learning basic norms of health and hygiene, resulting in a new sense of human dignity. Today the Malto people find their self-identity in Christianity...<sup>26</sup>

Like the evangelicals, Pentecostal and charismatic leaders had been using the *rescue model* in many parts of Asia. Great crowds follow leaders who offer salvation for their souls. Their slogans are: 'Believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, you can be saved today, you shall be saved today.' They have vowed 'to plunder hell, to populate heaven'.<sup>27</sup> However, many Pentecostal and charismatic leaders who were known for 'winning souls', also opened orphanages and homes for the elderly in Asian countries.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden (eds), *Mission as Transformation* (Oxford: Regnum, 1999), xvi.

<sup>26</sup> Roger E Hedlund, 'The Witness of New Christian Movements in India'. Paper presented at the IAMS assembly, Malaysia, 2004.

<sup>27</sup> 'Plundering Hell to Populate Heaven', in *Missionaries* (London: BBC Books, 1990), 100ff.

<sup>28</sup> In India, a number of orphanages, and homes for children and the elderly are run by evangelical and Pentecostal missions and ministries. See Rebecca Samuel Shah (ed), *Handbook on Christian Missions and Ministries* (Oxford: OCMS, 1998).

### **Conclusion**

There is no doubt that at present many Asian missions and ministries are holistic in their practice, although some missionaries of Indian missions who are involved in cross-cultural evangelism and church planting continue to see mission as ‘rescuing souls’ for heaven. They often try to provide a scriptural basis for what they are doing. Mission is seen as a matter of winning the lost souls, reaching the unreached, evangelizing the unevangelized.

The rescue model often works well with those who understand salvation in terms of personal and individualistic terms. But those who use it do not get the maximum benefit out of it when their interests limit the power of the gospel of Christ. So the rescue model is not complete in itself if it does not lead to holistic mission practice. However, at present, for the most part, Asian missions are partnering with NGOs so that their practice does become holistic.

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# TRENDS AND PRACTICES OF EVANGELISM AMONG MIGRANT CHURCHES: EXAMPLES FROM THE ETHIOPIAN DIASPORA IN SCANDINAVIA

Dawit Olika Terfassa

## Introduction

The aim of this volume is to bring Evangelism and *Diakonia* together as two important and complementary aspects of the identity, call and service of a church. This is a necessary balance that needs to be kept in line with the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20 and the Edinburgh 2010 Common Call which calls us "... to proclaim the good news of salvation, of forgiveness of sin, of life in abundance, and of liberation for all poor and oppressed"<sup>1</sup> as an essential way of conveying God's love to the world. This is done in diverse ways and at different levels by different churches and Christians that have a lot to learn from one another to develop and carry out this ministry in a better way. Therefore a mutual sharing of experience is both important and enriching in order to find better and more effective ways of communicating God's love. In this article, I will present examples in relation to the understanding and practice of evangelism as holistic ministry in order to highlight existing trends and practices among migrant Christians in the multicultural, multi-religious and globalized contexts of the Scandinavian countries. Even if I sometimes refer to the experiences of other migrant congregations, the focus is mainly on the practical experiences of the Ethiopian Christian diaspora community in Sweden and Norway. It is not the intention of this article to claim to be representative of all migrants in Scandinavia or Europe. It is hoped that lessons and inspirations from these experiences can contribute to the search for new and relevant ways of evangelism and *diakonia* as complementary components of holistic ministry in the new landscape of Europe created by migration, and contribute to a renewed understanding and commitment of this ministry.<sup>2</sup>

Evangelism is a confident but humble sharing of our faith and conviction with other people. Such sharing is a gift to others which announces the love, grace and mercy of God in Christ ... in each generation; the church must

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<sup>1</sup> The Edinburgh 2010 Common Call, [www.edinburgh2010.org/](http://www.edinburgh2010.org/) (accessed 30th September 2015).

<sup>2</sup> World Council of Churches, *Resource Book; WCC 10th Assembly, Busan* (Geneva: WCC, 2013), 74.

renew its commitment to Evangelism as an essential part of the way we convey God's love to the world.<sup>3</sup>

### Migration and the New era of Evangelism

Europe is going through an era where migration is given central focus in the public space, media, religious organizations, political discussion and debates, and governmental and non-governmental organizations.<sup>4</sup> Since World War II, Europe has never received as many migrants as today. Migration is therefore one of the most influential forces that have changed the demographic, social, cultural, religious, economic and political landscapes of our contexts.<sup>5</sup> A large number of people are daily on the move due to war and conflict, persecution, economic and political problems, and natural disaster.<sup>6</sup> According to the UN, 250 million people are migrants, or about 3% of the world's population.<sup>7</sup> According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the number of international migrants is increasing at about 2.1% per annum, adding some ten million migrants each year.<sup>8</sup> Among global migrants today, the largest group is Christian (49%) and its major destination is Europe.<sup>9</sup> As a result, the number of migrant churches and fellowships in Europe is increasing rapidly.

Migration and multicultural ministries are core issues for mission, evangelism and ecclesiology for the 21st-century church and must be taken seriously in

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<sup>3</sup> Jooseop Keum (ed), *Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes, with Practical Guide* (Geneva: WCC, 2013), 6.

<sup>4</sup> 'In Europe, massive immigration of Muslims has not only been transforming the spiritual landscape but has now become a major political issue, notably in France, Germany, Austria and Italy, as well as in plans for European Union expansion': Todd M. Johnson and Gina A. Zurlo, 'Global Christianity and Global Diasporas', in H.C. Im and A. Yong (eds). *Global Diasporas and Mission* (Oxford: Regnum, 2014), 49.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson and Zurlo, 'Global Christianity and Global Diasporas', 48-49.

<sup>6</sup> Jehu J. Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom: Globalization, African Migration and the Transformation of the West* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 176ff., 181ff.; IASFM International Association for the Study of Forced Migration: [www.efms.uni-bamberg.de/iasfm/mission.htm](http://www.efms.uni-bamberg.de/iasfm/mission.htm) (accessed 31st May 2014).

<sup>7</sup> Adele Halliday, 'Migration and multi-cultural ministries as mission', in *International Review of Mission*, 101:2 (Geneva: WCC, 2012), 406-07.

<sup>8</sup> Stephen Bevans, Teresa Chai, Knud Jorgensen, Nelson Jennings and Dietrich Werner (eds), *Reflecting on and Equipping for Christian Mission* (Oxford: Regnum, 2015), 11.

<sup>9</sup> Melisande Lorke and Dietrich Werner, "'Other" is My Neighbor – Developing an Ecumenical Response to Migration: Conference of the global ecumenical network on migration, Beirut/Geneva', in Melisande Lorke and Dietrich Werner (eds), *Ecumenical Visions for the 21st Century; A Reader for Theological Education* (Geneva: WCC, 2013), 272.

the shaping of the church's mission and ecclesial thinking, now and in the future.<sup>10</sup>

The presence of a large migrant/diaspora community in Europe with its multicultural and multi-religious dimensions introduces new lifestyles, models of worship, theological insights, together with fresh trends and methods of evangelism. According to tradition, the West has been the main source of all knowledge and missionary activities. But not only as a result of the shift of the centre of gravity of Christianity to the global South and East, but also due to the effects of migration, there are evangelistic and diaconal activities that have been launched by migrant Christians and congregations in Europe.<sup>11</sup>

It therefore comes as a surprise that there is growing evidence that Christian mission is proceeding in the opposite direction, i.e. non-Western Christians are attempting to be the agents of a re-evangelization of the West. A primary factor making this possible is the movement of migration.<sup>12</sup>

Various writers have pointed out that the presence of migrant churches in the West demands a rethinking of missiological understanding and practice in order to identify missiological challenges and mission frontiers as well as to humbly promote mutual learning and respect.<sup>13</sup> I have in an earlier article<sup>14</sup> attempted to point out three different ways in which migrants can contribute to the understanding and practice of evangelism in Europe. These are: migrants as a mission field – the presence and openness of hundreds of migrants to hear the gospel; migrants as fresh partners and co-partners – a fresh and positive view of evangelism is a resource for the local churches; and migrants as missionaries to Europe. There are similar voices that underline the new dimensions and opportunities for the

<sup>10</sup> Halliday, 'Migration and multi-cultural ministries as mission', 413.

<sup>11</sup> Babatunde A. Adedibu, 'Reverse Mission or Migrant Sanctuaries? Migration, Symbolic Mapping, and Missionary Challenges of Britain's Black Majority Churches', in *Penuma*, Volume 35 (Leiden, Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2003), 405-06.

<sup>12</sup> Kenneth R. Ross, 'Non-Western Christians in Scotland: Mission in Reverse', in *Theology in Scotland*, 12:2: [www.ctbi.org.uk/pdf\\_view.php?id=210](http://www.ctbi.org.uk/pdf_view.php?id=210) (University of St Andrews, 2005), 71. 'Most often in such a way that migration and mission moved from the powerful to the poor and powerless. Today it is the migrants and refugees themselves rather than the missionaries who bring the faith from one place to another': Knud Jørgensen, 'Edinburgh 2010 in Global Perspective', in T. Engelsviken, E. Lundebj and D. Solheim (eds), *The Church Going Global: Mission and Globalization* (Oxford: Regnum, 2011), 11.

<sup>13</sup> Knud Jørgensen, 'Mission in Post-modern Society', in K.O. Sannes, E. Grandhagen, T. Hegertun, K. Jørgensen, K. Norseth and R. Olsen (eds), *Med Kristus til Jordens ender: festskrift til Tormud Engelsviken* (Trondheim, Norway: Tapir akademisk forlag, 2008), 122; Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 119ff.; Halliday, 'Migration and Multi-cultural Ministries as Mission', 410.

<sup>14</sup> See Dawit O. Terfassa, 'The Impact of Migrants on Evangelism in Europe', in *International Review of Mission*, 103:2 (Geneva: WCC, 2014), 265-74.

understanding and practice of evangelism brought to Europe by migrants.<sup>15</sup> I will attempt to present some of these with special reference to the Ethiopian diaspora community.

### One-to-One Evangelism: Story-Telling – A Relational Approach

What is generally true for most migrant Christians is that they have a passionate commitment and fresh experience as well as a long experience of bearing witness for the Gospel to people of diverse backgrounds.<sup>16</sup> They know best how to reach their own people and other immigrants without being limited by cultural and language barriers. In addition, most migrant Christians have the conviction that God has called them to be missionaries to diverse groups of people in Europe.<sup>17</sup> The Oromo<sup>18</sup> Theologians' Forum held in Oslo, 6th-8th March 2015 was attended by over 25 Oromo theologians, and was devoted to a practical and theological reflection on the issue of contextualization and integration in order to be able to share the gospel in Europe effectively.<sup>19</sup> So far there is no organized structure, mission organization or network for migrant Christians/congregations as far as the Ethiopian diaspora is concerned. But most of the members are active supporters of the International Mission Society (IMS) established by their home church, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus

<sup>15</sup> Pope Benedict's Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees in 2012 on the theme 'Migration and the New Evangelization' was underlining both the fact that the migration gives us an opportunity for evangelism and that migrants themselves can 'become "heralds of God's word and witnesses to the Risen Jesus, the hope of the world"' (Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini*, No. 105, 2012): [http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/migration/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20110921\\_world-migrants-day.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/migration/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20110921_world-migrants-day.html) (accessed 8th October 2015). See also Paul Steffen, 'The Evangelizing Power of Migrant Ministry: Towards a Theology of Migrant Ministry': [www.sedosmission.org/web/en/component/content/article/27-english/articles-from-the-bulletin/march-april-2013/48-the-evangelizing-power-of-migrant-ministry](http://www.sedosmission.org/web/en/component/content/article/27-english/articles-from-the-bulletin/march-april-2013/48-the-evangelizing-power-of-migrant-ministry), 2013, (accessed 26th May 2015).

<sup>16</sup> Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 278; Jan A. B. Jongeneel, 'The mission of migrant churches in Europe', in *Missiology: An International Review*, 31:1: <http://mis.sagepub.com/content/31/1/29>, Sage Publications, 2013 (accessed 3rd November 2015).

<sup>17</sup> Ogbu U. Kalu, 'Multicultural Theological Education in a Non-Western Context, 1975-2000', in David V. Esterline and Ogbu U. Kalu (eds), *Shaping Beloved Community: Multicultural Theological Education* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 238.

<sup>18</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oromo\\_people](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oromo_people) and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oromo\\_language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oromo_language) (accessed 1st October 2015).

<sup>19</sup> Oromo Theologians' Forum was established and organized by the Evangelical Oromo Churches: [www.oromochurchoslo.org](http://www.oromochurchoslo.org), [www.uoece.org](http://www.uoece.org) and <http://oromochurchtrondheim.org/index.html> for more information about some of these churches.

(EECMY).<sup>20</sup> Despite the absence of an organized network or organization, evangelistic activity is carried out by migrants using networks and contacts the migrants themselves have established. This is because they come from a church background where evangelism/mission is not just treated as an activity and programme assigned to a specific group but is a central part and identity in the DNA of being a Christian.

Migrant congregations potentially have a missionary function... They model religious commitment, apply the message of the Gospel directly to daily exigencies, and comprise communities that interact on a daily basis with other marginalized segments of society.<sup>21</sup>

As a result of such a missional self-understanding, they consider themselves evangelists or disciples that are called to participate in God's mission by conveying God's love through verbal and life witness. This plays a key role in motivating and encouraging members to engage actively and use all possible opportunities to share their faith or witness about Christ. They share their stories of the joy of following Christ with other immigrants and local people they meet in different places, in refugee camps, schools, workplaces and with friends face-to-face, as well as via the internet, blogs and public sites like Facebook and YouTube.<sup>22</sup> In addition, the strong social and communal view of society has contributed towards being courageous and interested in making contact with other people. The fact that religion and faith in God are among the most exciting issues of life makes it natural for migrants to tell others about their faith. The fact that 'a majority of the migrants are profoundly Christian and explicitly evangelistic',<sup>23</sup> and that many have heard about Christ through relational evangelism, makes this an effective approach because it gives room for the listeners to make their own reflection and decision without feeling confronted. That is why missiologists like Jørgensen and Hanciles agree that 'every Christian migrant is a potential missionary'.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> The International Mission Society (IMS) was established in 2009. It has a long-term plan to send missionaries to Europe, and currently they are working on mobilizing and organizing the diaspora community that is already scattered over Europe: [www.eecmy.org/?home=ims](http://www.eecmy.org/?home=ims)

<sup>21</sup> Hanciles, *Beyond Christendom*, 299.

<sup>22</sup> This is reflecting the priority and commitment given to evangelism by their home church. For example, as observed by Temesgen, 'EECMY evangelism is an active effort. The witnesses are deliberate about sharing what Christ has done with others in proclamation with a specific desired result. Active evangelism is also indicated in its itinerary nature where believers go from one place to another with the purpose of winning people for Christ', in Temesgen S. Galla, 'The Missional thinking of the Ethiopian Evangelical Mekane Yesus (EECMY)'. MTh thesis: Norwegian School of Theology (MF), 2011, 34.

<sup>23</sup> Jørgensen, 'Edinburgh 2010 in Global Perspective', 11.

<sup>24</sup> Jehu J. Hanciles, 'Migration, Diaspora Communities, and the New Missionary Encounter with Western Society', in *Lausanne World Pulse Archives*, Issue 07:

Another important aspect of migrants' evangelistic life and ministry is the role of the family as an area for evangelism. A majority of Christian migrants place a great emphasis on the devotional life of their family and passing on the faith to their children and the next generation. Most migrant parents believe in what the Bible says: 'Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it' (Prov. 22:6 RSV). Accordingly, children are encouraged to participate regularly and actively in daily devotions, church services and Sunday school. Participation in these activities, along with the good example and the views of their parents, contribute to the introduction of children and youth to the Christian faith from an early age and equip them to grow in their faith. In addition, regular family devotionals often provides the opportunity for non-Christian family members, visiting guests and neighbours to hear the Gospel.

### **Biblical Teaching, Prayer and Leadership of the Holy Spirit: Key Impulses of Evangelism**

The soteriological motif in the Bible is a dominant factor that creates feeling and a sense of a missional accountability among migrant Christians to bring the message of salvation to those who have not yet heard it. How this is done and expressed can vary depending on church background and the local context, but witnessing to the saving work of God on the cross and his great love for humanity, in line with texts like John 3:16 and Luke 24:43-27, is commonly shared as the key inspiration and motivation for daily engagement in evangelism. Most of the examples of early Christians and apostles in the Book of Acts serve to many as 'a blueprint' for the fulfilment of their ministry.<sup>25</sup> Such a view is grounded on and inspired by strong biblical teaching at all levels of Christian education aimed at equipping authentic disciples committed and faithful to the Great Commission. Migrant Christians and churches want continuity of discipleship through time and generations following in the footsteps of the apostles and early Christians. According to Walldorf's observation, mission or evangelism in Europe today may need:

... to share the biblical story of the Living God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, with Europeans in a holistic way as an invitation to life and truth. Since

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[www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles-php/975/07-2008](http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/themedarticles-php/975/07-2008) – Lausanne World Pulse Archives, (accessed 16th October 2015).

<sup>25</sup> 'The common denominator is the conviction to follow a call from God and to fulfil an important function in the salvific plan of God for the world. Easily the migrant evangelists can identify with early Christian figures engaged in missionary activities.' Werner Kahl, 'Migrants as Instruments of Evangelization: In Early Christianity and in Contemporary Christianity' in Im and Yong (eds), *Global Diasporas and Mission* (Oxford: Regnum, 2014), 84, see also 74-75.

European media culture is filled with moving but imaginary stories, it is decisive that the biblical story be true, as well as life-transforming.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to the biblical motif, the commitment, passion and zeal of the majority of migrant Christians are often the result of the impulse of the Holy Spirit and prayer. They believe that without being filled and led by the Holy Spirit, no effective evangelism can take place. They devote much time to prayer to be filled by the Holy Spirit and seek his guidance as they engage in evangelism. This identifies easily with the pneumatological emphasis in *Together towards Life*, when it says:

Life in the Holy Spirit is the essence of mission, the core of why we do what we do, and how we live our lives. Spirituality gives deepest meaning to our lives and motivates our actions. It is a sacred gift from the Creator, the energy for affirming and caring for life.<sup>27</sup>

Giving a central place to the role of the Holy Spirit, migrant Christians often pray for unbelievers in general but also for someone they have thought to share the gospel with before taking any action. Prayer for an unbelieving husband, family member, neighbour or colleague is quite common and often has positive results. It is more effective and easier to sow the seeds of the gospel in hearts and minds that have been prepared by prayer and the Holy Spirit. Such close contact and relationship with the Holy Spirit through regular prayer makes for effective and powerful witness. Jesus' words to his disciples – 'when you receive the power of the Holy Spirit you will be my witnesses to the end of the world' – and evidence of the role and work of the Holy Spirit in the apostles' engagement in evangelism in the book of Acts, remind us of the central role and place the Holy Spirit has in evangelism. A well-designed mission strategy, missionary courses and mission techniques that neglect the place and role of the Holy Spirit are wasted effort.<sup>28</sup> It is only God's Spirit who can create new life and bring about rebirth (John 3:5-8, 1 Thess. 1:4-6).

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<sup>26</sup> Friedemann Walldorf, 'Searching for the Soul of Europe: Missiological Models in the Ecumenical Debate on Mission in Post-modern Europe', in *Mission and Postmodernities* (Oxford: Regnum, 2011), 81, 69ff. 'Re-reading the Bible under the impression of their own migration experiences, these Christians are often able to uncover biblical reflections of migration and diaspora existence which tend to be neglected or which are completely overlooked in northern Christianity and theology, including biblical scholarship': Kahl, 'Migrants as Instruments of Evangelization', 73.

<sup>27</sup> Keum (ed), *Together towards Life*, 4.

<sup>28</sup> '... (re-)translation of the biblical witness of Jesus Christ into the lives of modern Europeans – in the power of the Holy Spirit and through the missionary witness of Christian churches and fellowships. John Stott highlighted the Christological centre, "The only way to be delivered from Euro pessimism is to catch a fresh vision of Christ!": Walldorf, 'Searching for the Soul of Europe', 62.

### **Diaconal Services and Christian Fellowships: Witnessing through Presence and Action**

The evangelistic ministry of migrant Christians is not limited to oral proclamation of the good news. It has a holistic character and a holistic mission as its goal in catering for all the needs of human beings, including the economic, physical, social, spiritual, emotional and psychological dimensions of life. Ethiopia is affected by poverty. The country is among those at the bottom of the league table of poor countries although significant economic growth has been achieved during the past decade. Most of the people still live below the poverty line, on less than US\$1.50 a day. Lacking basic needs like food, housing and access to medical help and schools is something that people experience on a day-to-day basis. People come to church questioning their daunting economic situation, their financial problems and their joblessness.<sup>29</sup>

The social context of developing societies requires Christians to take social issues into their mission thinking, such as poverty, health issues (HIV /AIDS, etc.), women and children, education, etc.<sup>30</sup>

With the overall goal of providing a holistic service to meet all these needs as expressed by its motto 'Wholistic ministry', the EECMY has shaped Ethiopian evangelical churches and Christians to engage in all aspects and problems of life in order to provide holistic liberation through an equal emphasis on the proclamation of the gospel and social involvement as two sides of the coin, as we express God's love in word and action. Such a concern has been at the core of the EECMY's identity since its establishment.<sup>31</sup>

Through a document from 1972, 'On the Interrelation between Proclamation of the Gospel and Human Development',<sup>32</sup> the EECMY brought this concern to international attention. In addition, the legacy of the missionaries that introduced the concept of holistic ministry, the strong commitment of prominent leaders like the Rev. Gudina Tumsa to maintain a proper balance between the spiritual and physical aspects of life and the charismatic revivals that led to holistic transformation, should be mentioned as key factors inspiring the development of EECMY's holistic

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<sup>29</sup> Dawit O. Terfassa, 'Prophecy: a blessing or a problem; a critical study of the understanding and practice of prophecy in EECMY'. MTh thesis: Norwegian School of Theology Oslo 2007, 21-22.

<sup>30</sup> Julie C. Ma and Wonsuk Ma, 'Mission in the Spirit: Towards a Pentecostal/Charismatic Theology' (Oxford: Regnum, 2011), 5-6.

<sup>31</sup> 'Theology must grow out of the daily experiences from our dealing with ordinary affairs of life as we experience them in our situation, in our cultural setting, in our economic life, in our political experience and in our social practice': [www.dacb.org/stories/ethiopia/gudina\\_tumsa.html](http://www.dacb.org/stories/ethiopia/gudina_tumsa.html) (accessed 1st September 2015).

<sup>32</sup> See Megersa Guta's presentation and discussion of this document in this volume for more information.

ministry. As a result of charismatic revivals, significant for the growth and history of this church, many Christians experienced conversion and transformation which enabled them to be devoted to a pious life and become good models for society in terms of behaviour, social relationships, love for one another, and a care and concern for the poor and needy.<sup>33</sup>

The Ethiopian Christian diaspora community is living according to this legacy and expresses it through its diaconal services and Christian fellowship where people's needs of various types are met. In a diaspora context, due to common financial limitations and the host country's social welfare system through which those with economic, social and physical problems receive help, most of the diaconal services of the migrants are provided for those with similar problems but located in the sending countries. This includes financially assisting poor congregations by paying the salary of pastors or evangelists, helping poor families with basic needs, sponsoring poor students to complete their schooling, as well as supporting marginalized groups based on sex, ethnic background or social status, including homeless (street) children and women. In addition, there are several other situations that demand diaconal care and Christian love among migrants also in the host countries. Migrant Christians continually provide care and help for individuals and families in the case of the loss of a family member (and the related costs, as it often involves a sudden trip to the home country), severe economic problems during sickness, family crises, and the experience of violation and discrimination. This underlines that fact that 'word without deed can be abstract and powerless, and deed without word can be mute and open for any interpretation'.<sup>34</sup>

The strong bonds of love and fellowship among migrant Christians often attract and invite non-Christians to Christ or the church. Fellowships that provide a context for such an exchange of God's love are often cultivated through Bible study groups and home prayer fellowships on weekdays in addition to Sunday worship services. Members of the fellowships support one another in times of happiness and sorrow or crises. Fellowships are welcoming – they are about coming together, eating together, living through different aspects of the Christian life, and sharing joy and happiness. Migrant Christians strive to make a church a place where everyone feels welcome despite diversity of background, colour or social status. Student fellowships, international gatherings and the celebration of important days like AIDS Day, Women's Day and UN Day are contexts which can help a community to be inclusive for migrant Christians. Such gatherings are neutral because they make everyone feel welcomed. This does not only strengthen a passion for evangelism, but also provides a sense of belonging and self-esteem for all members of the community. It

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<sup>33</sup> Terfassa, 'Prophecy: a blessing or a problem', 67-68.

<sup>34</sup> *Mission in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment, an LWF Contribution to the Understanding and Practice of Mission* (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 2004), 38.

makes those of diverse religious and cultural backgrounds willing to accept invitations to join the fellowship. Arranging such gatherings has given an opportunity to develop a sense of belonging, to make close friends and for non-Christians, including Muslims, to hear about the Christian faith. Seeing the way migrant Christians love one another, help one another and care for one another in times of need, colleagues, friends, classmates and neighbours become curious to know more about their faith. Often this gives them the chance to get to know Christ. The gospel has often been introduced in diaconal situations. Fard describes examples of such an experience from the context of the Iranian Christian fellowships in Scandinavia which are also common among Ethiopian migrant Christians and local churches that are working with migrants.

According to those who are part of the Iranian Christian community, most of them have been led to Jesus by friends. Real friendship, real concern and the communication of God's love through practical deeds are drawing people into the kingdom of God. If we wish to share our faith with Muslims, the road passes through friendship.<sup>35</sup>

Such an experience where diaconal services and Christian love provide evidence of the two-dimensional aspect of evangelism without misusing the vulnerability of the receivers is similar to the concern that has been emphasized by the ecumenical movement during the last decade.<sup>36</sup>

### **The New Era of Evangelism and Some Practical Challenges**

Despite discussion and debate on the dichotomy that makes it difficult to hold a positive and effective view of evangelism with a proper balance between the proclamation of the gospel and diaconal services, there is a common problem of falling into a reductionist position.

Jesus responded to situations with a touch of the hand, a word of encouragement, or a word of judgement; in each case there was power... We,

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<sup>35</sup> Nasser Fard, 'Global Migration: Mission to Iranians in Scandinavia – Example of a Development through Immigration', in *The Church Going Global: Mission and Globalization* (Oxford: Regnum, 2011), 11, 142.

<sup>36</sup> There is a common global consensus that 'Effective communication of the Christian message should contain an authentic concern and respect for the other person, and not regard him or her as objects of conversion, but in a true interpersonal and intercultural spirit': Øyvind Økland, 'Dialogue and Mission in a Globalized World: Developments in the World Council of Churches and the Lausanne Movement', in L. Dahle, S.M. Dahle and K. Jørgensen (eds), *The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives* (Oxford: Regnum, 2014), 378-79.

however tend to be reductionist, promoting verbal evangelism alone, or promoting works of mercy alone. Jesus does not recognize this dichotomy.<sup>37</sup>

Even if this unbalance is not limited to the global North and South, most migrant Christians introduce various trends, practices and experiences of holistic ministry as indicated above. Their focus on the invitation to a holistic transformation may provide experience and learning that can help local and migrant churches.<sup>38</sup> This could be a source of inspiration and contribute to the search for a renewed understanding and commitment to a holistic ministry that could promote effective and relevant evangelism in the new landscapes of Europe.

Despite their strong conviction of following God's call to be instruments of evangelism in Europe, the common hope of the majority of migrant Christians and congregations for successful evangelism among local people is referred to as 'mission impossible'.<sup>39</sup> This is mainly due to the absence of sufficient cross-cultural skills, integration and contextualization on the migrant side and a lack of positive openness and recognition of migrant Christians and congregations as 'contributors' among local people. Several challenges and obstacles to such mutual learning between local and migrant congregations have been pointed out. Here is Kahl's observation of African migrants in Germany which is also true for other migrants including the Ethiopian diaspora:

The African evangelists were not able to communicate their message across the divides in language, semantic universe, culture, and belief. There are exceptions, but the vast majority of the migrant evangelists had no skills in cross-cultural communication... Due to their failure in winning converts among the European people, most evangelists and preachers then focused on the growing African population.<sup>40</sup>

Mogensen's empirical study on conversion and baptism in Denmark has also pointed out that problems of ethnic identity and the need of their self-esteem being confirmed, the need to protect their cultural heritage, and the

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<sup>37</sup> Scott W. Sunquist, *Understanding Christian Mission, Participation in Suffering and Glory* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 217ff.; David. J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 135-39.

<sup>38</sup> 'Mission has been understood as a movement taking place from the center to periphery, and from the privileged to the marginalized of society. Now people at the margins are claiming their key role as agents of mission and affirming mission as a transformation': World Council of Churches, *Resource Book*, 52.

<sup>39</sup> 'The initial hope of many African migrant pastors and evangelists in a divine program of "reverse mission" did not materialize due to a widespread inability to overcome cross-cultural communication barriers. The attempt to evangelize among indigenous Germans by migrant preachers from West Africa of the first generation has turned out to be a "mission impossible": Kahl, 'Migrants as Instruments of Evangelization', 83-84.

<sup>40</sup> Kahl, 'Migrants as Instruments of Evangelization', 84.

lack of a thorough knowledge of the culture of the host countries, all hinder the exercise of the migrant churches' full potential in integrating themselves into the host culture.<sup>41</sup> Anne Kubai, who conducted one of the first studies of African migrant churches and Christian communities in Sweden and the Nordic region, has pointed to a similar problem where integration is not a priority for many migrant communities:

When it comes to the role of the churches in segregation and integration, African Churches provide social, spiritual and spatial spaces for both segregation and integration of African communities in Sweden – identity communities are built around the churches where they speak their native languages and recreate their customs and traditions, rather than integrate themselves, regardless of length of residence in Sweden. Thus, on the one hand, it is integration into the immigrant communities, and on the other, segregation from wider Swedish society.<sup>42</sup>

The new challenge that migrant congregations, parents and leaders face today includes how to pass on their faith to the second and third generations that are well adapted to the culture and ideology of the host country and are exposed to the influence of western secularization. The majority of migrant parents and church leaders have often failed to understand and adapt to the new context, language and communication of faith relevant to this group. In addition, their attempt to implement an authoritative approach to impose their views without involving their children and youth in the decision-making process, has resulted in creating a negative attitude to and impression of their parents' faith. In many cases, this has driven youth and children away from the church and the faith.<sup>43</sup> This demands a well contextualized approach for establishing an open and loving relationship through which they can communicate the gospel afresh

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<sup>41</sup> M.S. Mogensen, 'Migration and Conversion – The conversion of migrants to Christianity in a Danish Context', in Tormod Engelsviken and Thor Strandenæs (eds), *Mission to the World: Communicating the Gospel in the 21st Century: Essays in Honour of Knud Jørgensen* (Oxford: Regnum, 2008), 70 and 80-83; R.G. Fotland, 'The Southern Phase of Christianity: The Contribution of the Global South to the Church in the Global North', in Engelsviken and Strandenæs (eds), *Mission to the World*, 215-29. Similar problems of integration have been identified in relation to the failure of Black migrant churches to understand British culture – see A.B. Adedibu, 'Reverse Mission or Migrant Sanctuaries', 405-06.

<sup>42</sup> Anne Kubai, 'Singing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land: African Churches in Sweden': <http://anslag.rj.se/en/fund/36814>, 2007 (accessed 16th March 2015).

<sup>43</sup> Notes from the Consultation during the Annual Conference of the Nordic Ethiopian Evangelical Church Fellowship (NEFCF) in Sweden 2nd-5th July 2015, The NEFCF, 30th conference, special print (Amharic magazine), 2015: [www.ybcnorway.com](http://www.ybcnorway.com), [www.j-e-c.org](http://www.j-e-c.org), [www.eecfin.org](http://www.eecfin.org), [www.ebenzer-church.com](http://www.ebenzer-church.com) for more information about some of these evangelicals. Daniel Larsson (Pastor of the Ethiopian congregation called the Jerusalem Church in Denmark) and Efreem Demelash (Leader of the Ethiopian congregation called the Jerusalem Church in Stockholm). Interview, Kumla, Sweden, 3rd July 2015).

in a relevant and attractive way to their children without forcing their faith on them.<sup>44</sup>

From the standpoint of local people and the churches, the fact that migrant Christians and theologians are still suffering from the absence of a genuine, humble and full recognition of who they are and of their contribution, plays a significant role in slowing or hindering integration and contextualization.<sup>45</sup> In addition to the absence of an understanding of a cultural diversity that enables different communities to co-exist whilst remaining diverse and interdependent, as observed by Halliday,<sup>46</sup> migrant-related discussion often seems limited to ethical and theological responses to the hardships and difficulties that migrants face. Hospitality to migrants should include a willingness and commitment to accept their contribution, but they are often seen only as objects of the compassion and care that European churches can provide, instead of fully recognizing their role as contributors.<sup>47</sup>

A deep challenge for European churches is that they have been accustomed to being 'in control' of the Christian message and its expression in church life. The opportunity to go into learning mode and discover from the experience of others new ways of understanding, experiencing and communicating the gospel is not easily grasped.<sup>48</sup>

Opening ourselves up to people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds is often more challenging and difficult than anticipated. Without disregarding the efforts and networks that exist to give space and recognition to migrants,<sup>49</sup> one can say that there is mistrust and prejudice

<sup>44</sup> M. Fibbi, 'A witness from workers in a particularly difficult situation of challenge – Youth and social communication: How is the Gospel preached and spread, the liturgy celebrated, The Creed Confessed today?' in *Mission and Postmodernities* (Oxford: Regnum, 2011), 112. Det bästa du har: Om att förmedla tron till sina barn, SALT – barn och unga i EFS ['The best thing you have: communicating faith to your children, SALT – children and youth in the Swedish Evangelical Mission' – my translation.] (Uppsala: EFS, 2011), 4-28.

<sup>45</sup> R.K. Ross, 'Non-Western Christians in Scotland', 80-86.

<sup>46</sup> A. Halliday, 'Migration and Multi-cultural ministries as Mission', 412.

<sup>47</sup> Dietrich Werner, 'Oslo: The Future of Theology in the Changing Landscapes of Universities in Europe and Beyond', in *Ecumenical Review*, 64:3 (Geneva: WCC, 2012), 394; Adele D. Ngomedje, 'Christian Communities in Contemporary Contexts: A Cross-cultural Church and Mission Experience', in B. Fagerli, K. Jørgensen, R. Olsen, K. Storstein Haug and K. Tveitereid (eds), *A learning missional Church* (Oxford: Regnum, 2012), 124.

<sup>48</sup> R.K. Ross, *Edinburgh 2010: Springboard for Mission* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey International University Press, 2010), 59.

<sup>49</sup> 'The relationship between the African congregations and their host churches are characterized by both accommodation and tension. On the one hand, a number of native churches in Sweden have acknowledged the need for African churches in their midst; and at the same time they are faced with the dilemma of accommodating some of the African forms of worship that they see as different

against them, their theology and the practice of their faith.<sup>50</sup> Often this is due to their conservative views on homosexuality, the subordination of women, an emphasis on conversion, and problems related to the focus on spiritual experiences of healing, exorcisms and prophecies. The biographical and narrative theologies of many migrant Christians are by and large viewed as pre-enlightenment and old-fashioned.<sup>51</sup>

Roar Fotland argues that western countries can promote integration in a better way if they recognize and encourage migrant churches to use their own culture and language, and give them the chance to be part of the leadership as equal contributing partners, and not just as objects of help. He bases his argument on his study of how the Methodist Church in America succeeded in evangelism and mission among migrants in America during the nineteenth century by recognizing and making room for the migrants' culture and language, and welcoming their contribution.<sup>52</sup>

### Conclusion

The new and ever-changing landscapes of Europe today demand a renewed, contextualized and holistic view and practice of mission and evangelism. Migrant Christians come from a context where evangelism is intrinsically interrelated to discipleship and the formation of disciple-makers. With mission and evangelism as the central identity and essence of a Christian/church, they introduce inspiring trends and experiences of holistic communication of the Gospel to their new context. Contrary to a growing western tendency of feeling uncomfortable about sharing one's faith and discussing religion in the public (due to the process of secularization that is

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from their own. On the other hand, relating to Swedish social values is a major challenge for members of African churches/congregations': Anne Kubai, 'Singing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land': <http://anslag.rj.se/en/fund/36814>, 2007. See also Anne Kubai, "'Living by the Spirit": African Christian communities in Sweden', in Afe Adogame (ed) *The Public Face of African New Religious Movements in Diaspora: Imagining the Religious 'Other'*. University of Edinburgh: Ashgate Inform Series on Minority Religions and Spiritual Movements, 2014), 163-90.

<sup>50</sup> 'Many of these believers represent versions of Christianity that had not been common in Europe since they belong predominantly to Pentecostal or charismatic churches rooted in African traditions and cultures. Yet, it is these latter churches that have moved from the margins to the center of global power': Kahl, 'Migrants as Instruments of Evangelization', 72.

<sup>51</sup> Gerrit Noort 'Emerging Migrant Churches', in *International Review of Mission*, 100:1 (Geneva: WCC, 2011), 14; Dietrich Werner, 'Oslo: The Future of Theology in the Changing Landscapes of Universities in Europe and Beyond', (*Ecumenical Review*, 64.3, 2010), 396.

<sup>52</sup> G.R. Fotland, 'Migrasjon og den misjonale kikre: Kan dagens kirke hente inspirasjon fra amerikansk metodisme på 1800 tallet?', (*Norsk Tidsskrift for Misjonsvitenskap*, Oslo: Egede Institute, 2014), 39-61.

believed to have privatized religion), migrants share their faith regularly and naturally through daily contacts. They bring a new dimension from their rich experience of evangelism among people of diverse backgrounds. But the success of their ministry is generally limited to their own people. For success elsewhere, migrants need to integrate better into European society and culture, and develop relationships that can build trust and provide opportunities for sharing the Gospel.<sup>53</sup> They need to develop a positive openness and humility free from spiritual superiority and prejudice to try to understand European culture and spirituality in order to be able to contextualize their message and approach.<sup>54</sup> In the same way, Europeans that are used to being in control of church life, theology and mission, and find it difficult to take the position of being 'receivers', need to abandon their cultural, racial and historical pride, to avoid division and prejudice. This can help to promote a positive attitude and culture of closeness and to welcome models and practices of evangelism that are relevant to the diverse contexts of Europe.<sup>55</sup>

In general, a mutual recognition and learning based on genuine openness between the local church and migrant churches can promote a proper contextualization of Christian ministry and approach in both directions to find and use effective ways that apply to the new context. As observed by Ngomedje, 'Mutual acceptance, recognition and equality are vital for any constructive assessment of the prevailing culture.'<sup>56</sup> Therefore, 'we need to develop further mutuality and partnership and affirm interdependence within mission and ecumenical movement'.<sup>57</sup> A two-way process of integration and contextualization, the development of positive openness, interaction, dialogue and multicultural networks built on interdependence, mutual recognition and learning are important for overcoming the

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<sup>53</sup> 'To witness to Christ here and now in an effective and credible way would require migrant ecclesial communities to seriously engage with the local context wherever they find themselves. This may involve learning about the people in a context and to immerse oneself into the realities of the host country and the local setting... critical analysis of some of the topical issues in a particular context including secularisation, relativity and youth culture': Ngomedje, 'Christian Communities in Contemporary Contexts', 117-18.

<sup>54</sup> Øyvind Økland, 'Intercultural Communication in Mission: A Tool or a Goal', in T. Engelsviken, E. Harbakk, R. Olsen and T. Strandenaes (eds), *Mission to the World: Communicating the Gospel in the 21st century* (Oxford: Regnum, 2008), 163-77.

<sup>55</sup> Dietrich Werner, 'Theological education with migrant Christians': [www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/education-and-ecumenical-formation/ete/wcc-programme-on-ecumenical-theological-education/theological-education-with-migrant-christians-in-the-changing-landscape-of-world-christianity](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/education-and-ecumenical-formation/ete/wcc-programme-on-ecumenical-theological-education/theological-education-with-migrant-christians-in-the-changing-landscape-of-world-christianity), 2010 (accessed 10th February 2015).

<sup>56</sup> Ngomedje, 'Christian Communities in Contemporary Contexts', 117-18.

<sup>57</sup> World Council of Churches. *Resource Book*, 74.

challenges and providing relevant holistic ministry.<sup>58</sup> Establishing common forums, designing innovative models of theological education and bridge programmes<sup>59</sup> and the formation of functional networks between migrant and local congregations, can significantly contribute to developing effective models of evangelism and diaconal ministry for the multicultural and multi-religious context of Europe.<sup>60</sup> Such a model can only be developed through mutual learning between migrant and local churches.

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<sup>58</sup> World Council of Churches. *Resource Book*, 115. See also Jørgensen, 'Mission in Post-modern Society', 117-19. Ngomedje, 'Christian Communities in Contemporary Contexts', 129ff.; B. Olivia and Doris Peschke (eds), *MIRACLE*, 6ff

<sup>59</sup> Werner, 'Theological education with migrant Christians' (accessed 10th February 2015).

<sup>60</sup> Noort, 'Emerging Migrant Churches', 7-15.

# EVANGELISM AND DIAKONIA IN NORTH AMERICA CASE STUDY

Richard L. Haney

## Introduction

During my seminary days, I wrote a paper on the theology of southern Presbyterians during the 1860s – the time of America’s Civil War. I wondered how Christians who took the Bible seriously could also support institutional slavery. My professor commented on my paper by offering an analogy. ‘The church’s mission,’ he said, ‘is like a tuning fork with two tines that represent word and deed, or spiritual mission and social mission. Unless both tines ring together in harmony, the church is out of balance.’ Evangelism, the ministry of proclaiming the word of good news, aims at spiritual transformation. *Diakonia*, the ministry of good deeds that meets human needs and upholds justice, aims at transforming lives and communities. The following case study describes an urban ministry and charts one woman’s faith story in a North American setting. The stories of CHAT and Essence Brown highlight the value of balancing evangelism and *diakonia*.

Churches in North American cities have great opportunities and big challenges to offer ministries that are holistic and balanced in this regard. The city of Richmond is the capital city of the state<sup>1</sup> of Virginia in the USA. Its history dates to colonial times. During the Civil War (1861-1865), it served as the capital of the Confederacy, a confederation of southern states of the USA that separated from the Union over slavery and the state’s rights issues. Many of the city’s buildings were destroyed near the war’s end when retreating Confederate troops burned them to prevent supplies falling into enemy hands.

In Richmond’s East End, several neighbourhoods are situated in an area on a hill called Church Hill. True to the name of the area, churches and church communities flourished in the early and middle years of the twentieth century. The Church Hill community slowly grew up near St John’s Episcopal Church, where Patrick Henry gave his famous ‘Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death’ speech at the 1775 Virginia Convention. While the designation of Church Hill originally referred to the area immediately

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<sup>1</sup> Although Virginia is counted as one of the fifty states, it is technically one of four ‘commonwealths’ in the USA.

surrounding St John's Church Hill, now it has come to encompass a much larger area with less definitive boundaries.<sup>2</sup>

In 2016, the Church Hill neighbourhoods are home to four large housing projects whose families struggle to live above the poverty line. Church Hill Activities and Tutoring, known as CHAT, serves families in this target area and describes itself as 'a system of integrated programmes that empower aspiring youth to break cycles of poverty and reach their goals'. CHAT began in 2003 in the Church Hill home of Percy and Angie Strickland when they met their neighbours and spent time with the neighbourhood children. CHAT's mission statement is: 'We equip and serve the youth of Church Hill, to make transformative decisions about who they are and aspire to be.'<sup>3</sup>

### **Background**

In 2010, Richmond's greater metropolitan population numbered approximately 1.2 million. The 2010 census reported a Richmond population of 204,214 urban residents. The remaining population belongs to three suburban counties surrounding the city: Hanover, Henrico and Chesterfield.

The city's urban population is primarily Afro-American (51%), while the surrounding suburbs are predominantly white. In 2015, the mayor, city manager, police chief and Richmond School Board chair were all Afro-Americans.<sup>4</sup> Two large urban clusters of neighbourhoods in Richmond are both poor and mostly Afro-American. Together they represent one of the highest concentrations of urban poverty in the USA. The largest of these is Church Hill in the East End. Of the six largest public housing projects in Richmond, four are located in the East End that envelopes Church Hill. These four are Creighton Court, Fairfield Court, Whitcomb Court and Mosby Court.

The Peter Paul Development Center (PPDC) is the oldest continually operating community centre in Richmond's East End. Its stated purpose is 'Educate the Child, Engage the Family, Empower the Community'. Damon Jiggetts, Executive Director of PPDC, reports that the average annual income level for inhabitants of these four public housing communities is

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<sup>2</sup> Jessica Evans, 'What is Church Hill and how has it changed over time?': <http://arts.vcu.edu/madeinchurchhill/2015/01/09/what-is-church-hill-and-how-has-it-changed-over-time>

<sup>3</sup> CHAT booklet. The CHAT booklet is an undated public relations publication used by CHAT staff to tell the CHAT story and to raise funds.

<sup>4</sup> Lawrence Douglas Wilder served as the second African American to be elected as governor of Virginia (1990-1994) and first African American governor of any state since Reconstruction. When earlier elected as Lieutenant Governor, he was the first African American elected to state-wide office in Virginia. He served as Mayor of Richmond, Virginia, 2005-2009.

less than \$9,000. In the greater East End area, the average household income is approximately \$15,500 and the poverty threshold for a family of four is calculated at \$22,314. More than 55% of residents living in the East End neighbourhoods are living below the poverty line. In addition, almost half (46%) of adults over age 25 have not completed high school or its equivalent.<sup>5</sup>

Church Hill poverty is reflected further by the following statistics:<sup>6</sup>

- 83% of families are headed by single females.
- 76% of children live below the poverty line.
- Twice as many children under 14 live in this area than in the entire city.
- Life expectancy is nine years shorter than in Richmond city.
- 41% lack access to public transport, and 76% have no access to a vehicle.
- Over half (53%) of working-age adults are unemployed.

Both PPDC and CHAT serve children whose families live in the neighbourhoods of Church Hill and the greater East End. Most of these families live in the four housing projects. The PPDC works in two of the area's five elementary schools and touches 200 kids and their parents. Jiggetts reports that PPDC works out of three locations and offers an array of services to help children and their parents. The Center seeks to grow the number of children assisted to 300.<sup>7</sup>

### CHAT's History<sup>8</sup>

Percy Strickland was serving as a campus minister with Intersarsity Christian Fellowship at the University of Richmond (2002) when he organized the non-profit agency called CHAT to tutor young people in Church Hill. Percy and his wife Angie had moved to Richmond so he could take the Intersarsity position. Subsequently, Angie began her studies at the Medical College of Virginia (MCV). MCV, now known as the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine, is located about a mile from Church Hill. Percy concluded his campus ministry in 2003 and enrolled at Union Presbyterian Seminary. Although they are white, when they relocated to Richmond they moved into a predominantly Afro-American neighbourhood.

Percy's background as a campus ministry worker equipped him to recruit college students as volunteer tutors. Many of the first and second

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<sup>5</sup> Telephone interview with Damon Jiggetts (17th December 2015). See also: [www.peterpauldevcenter.org/about-us](http://www.peterpauldevcenter.org/about-us)

<sup>6</sup> CHAT booklet.

<sup>7</sup> Telephone interview with Damon Jiggetts (Mission in Post: 17th December 2015)

<sup>8</sup> The history section is derived from the CHAT Booklet.

waves of tutors came from students at the University of Richmond. Angie now serves as medical director of the Emergency Department at Bon Secours' Richmond Community Hospital that is the only hospital in Church Hill proper. Percy received his Master of Divinity degree from Union Seminary in 2006.<sup>9</sup>

Over time, the Church Hill neighbourhood children showed up increasingly for conversation and to seek help with homework. The Stricklands and founding board members, Alexandra Spitzer, David and Tammy Lemon, Janice Stewart, Ti-Ying Lee and Jen Tucker, all assisted with organizing and mobilizing tutoring resources. What began as casual homework sessions grew into CHAT, and the concept of opening neighbourhood homes became the centrepiece for helping children gain learning skills. Students from local universities and medical schools, business executives and employees, retirees, teachers, neighbours and many more volunteer to help at-risk children develop skills and values for a lifetime. Age-appropriate and skill-directed programmes now number a dozen.<sup>10</sup>

In February 2007, CHAT acquired a Church Hill property to accommodate its growth. This house, referred to as The Lighthouse, has become CHAT's home base of activity. The four-storey house provides administrative and meeting space, rooms for tutoring and activities, meals and fellowship, and housing for interns and volunteers.

CHAT programmes include the core activity of tutoring that is offered on Mondays and Tuesdays in six different Church Hill locations. These two-hour study sessions are led by Site Leaders with help from interns and volunteers. Leaders and helpers assist with K-12 homework, reading lessons, and recreation. Youth programmes also teach life skills where students can learn cooking, dance, sewing, carpentry and other disciplines. A six-week summer camp provides students additional tutoring, recreation, field trips, Bible study and life skills classes. A five-day pre-school programme called Tiny Tykes serves 49 children ages 2-5. This programme meets in the Bethlehem Afro-American Baptist Church. Half of the children receive scholarship aid. In 2014, CHAT was awarded the inaugural Lora M. and E. Claiborne Robins, Sr. Community Innovation Grant, totalling \$500,000. The monies will be used to fund the Work Leadership Institute that teaches students work skills which they will need for future vocational opportunities.<sup>11</sup>

In 2007, CHAT launched the Church Hill Academy as an 'intervention high school for under-performing youth'.<sup>12</sup> The Academy had a 2015 enrolment of thirty students and has graduated 29 young people since 2007. Classes meet at Carlisle Avenue Baptist Church. The school is a private

<sup>9</sup> [www.chatrichmond.org/percy-strickland](http://www.chatrichmond.org/percy-strickland)

<sup>10</sup> CHAT booklet.

<sup>11</sup> CHAT booklet. Cf. also [www.chatrichmond.org](http://www.chatrichmond.org)

<sup>12</sup> CHAT booklet.

faith-based institution that belongs to the Street School Network and receives no federal or state funding. The Academy offers weekly chapel services each Friday plus voluntary Bible classes.<sup>13</sup>

CHAT's published mission statement articulates the ministry's purpose: *We equip and serve the youth of the East End to make transformative decisions about who they are and aspire to be.*<sup>14</sup> This mission to serve children and youth includes *evangelism* as the sharing of one's faith and inviting young people to discipleship. CHAT's activities also reflect service or *diakonia* through ministries of compassion and loving one's neighbour.

Percy Strickland, CHAT's founder, reports that 3,700 children and youth (aged 2-18) live in Church Hill neighbourhoods. 'Over the past 13 years, we have served over 400 youth.' CHAT's ministry, according to Strickland, currently touches 220 of them but aspires to interact with 500 children. Strickland says, 'We want to change the culture of these neighbourhoods so young people make good choices. We want to see them want to go to school and aspire to get a job.'<sup>15</sup>

Strickland says that CHAT 'is a faith-based ministry. The community has rejected church culture but remains open to gospel life and transformation. Service is a window to raise gospel credibility. Evangelism does happen among staff, volunteers, youth and families'.<sup>16</sup>

### Interview with Essence Brown<sup>17</sup>

Essence Brown, 23 years old, is an Afro-American woman who lives and works in Mechanicsville, a suburban area north of Richmond. She was born and raised, however, in Church Hill in one of the four large housing projects situated in Richmond's East End.

She lived on 33<sup>rd</sup> Street with her mother and older siblings until aged seven when her mom was arrested and imprisoned for robbery. When her mother went to jail, Essence, her two older sisters, and one older brother went to live with their grandmother.

Essence reports that her grandmother was an abusive care-giver, inflicting both verbal and physical abuse. Essence gave birth to a baby when she was 11 years old. The baby died two months later. The grandmother gave up custody of her grandchildren necessitating a move to a group home via a ruling by a judge. Essence went to live in the group

<sup>13</sup> Telephone interview with Caitlin Barnes on 176th December 2015. Ms. Barnes oversees development and communications for CHAT.

<sup>14</sup> CHAT booklet: [www.chatrichmond.org](http://www.chatrichmond.org)

<sup>15</sup> Face-to-face interview with Percy Strickland (21st October 2015). Mr. Strickland continues to serve CHAT as CEO but in 2015 turned the executive director duties over to Steven Weir.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Percy Strickland (21st October 2015).

<sup>17</sup> Face-to-face interview with Essence Brown at Presbytery of the James office on 30th October 2015.

home and began a course of counselling. Essence lived for three years in the home, whilst aged between 12 and 15.

While living in the group home, she accompanied her brother Tamon to a CHAT after-school tutoring session where she met Percy and Angie Strickland. At the same time, she became involved in a number of CHAT programmes. When she had finished her counselling, the Stricklands invited Essence and Tamon to move in with them. So she and her brother began living with the Stricklands who eventually adopted Tamon in 2005 and Essence in 2007. Essence participated fully and freely with CHAT where she received regular tutoring. Later she began to tutor younger school kids in the after-school programme.

Essence became one of the first students to enrol in the Church Hill Academy and later became the first Academy graduate. After graduation, she served during the summer as a CHAT intern. In the fall of 2011, she enrolled part-time at the J. Sergeant Reynolds Community College while working at Kroger, a local grocery store. She aspires to become a children's social worker and has served as an intern with Social Services of Richmond.

Essence saved her money, bought a car and moved from the Strickland home into a CHAT house with other young women. The house is known affectionately as the Chimbo Palace – it is located off Chimborazo Boulevard. It also happens to be the house where CHAT began. The ladies shared expenses, participated in CHAT activities and hosted after-school programmes. Essence lived there with her room-mates whilst aged 18-22. She recently moved to a suburb north of Richmond where she shares a house with two cousins. She now works for Bon Secours Hospital as a customer service agent in accounting. She had previously worked in a Bon Secours hospital in the Emergency Room department.

Part of Essence's transformation was fostered by her involvement in East End Fellowship. In 2007, the East End Fellowship church began worship and ministry in Church Hill and Essence attended worship services with her adoptive parents. East End Fellowship describes itself as 'a multi-ethnic, economically diverse Christian church in the east end of Richmond, seeking God's joy and justice for our neighbourhoods out of love for Christ'.<sup>18</sup>

Before East End began holding services, Essence attended church with the Strickland family at Third Presbyterian, a predominantly Caucasian congregation in Richmond's west end suburbs. Third's original building, however, was located in Church Hill. Third Presbyterian Church provided financial assistance to East End Fellowship for eight years and a number of individuals and families have migrated from Third to East End. Many young families have moved to Church Hill and populate CHAT as volunteers and worship at East End Fellowship.

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<sup>18</sup> [www.eastendfellowship.org/about-us](http://www.eastendfellowship.org/about-us)

When I asked her about her faith, she responded by saying she knew her adoptive parents were Christian. ‘But I went to church as a kid. My grandma took us to church. She did not attend herself but regularly drove us to a church on Nine Mile Road. I was open to going to church with the Stricklands but I didn’t know much about the faith.

‘I started thinking about personal faith during a particular sermon. My father Percy preached; maybe it was at Third Presbyterian. On the car ride home, he asked me if I was a Christian. I didn’t know! He explained about sin, faith and repentance. I was uncertain what I believed.’

When she was 15, Essence attended a week-long summer Christian Sports Camp connected with CHAT. This was four years after meeting Percy and Angie Strickland. On the last day, a speaker talked about Jesus and gave the students an opportunity to pray and trust in Jesus. Essence responded to this invitation and dates her coming to faith and her Christian life from this camp experience. ‘It felt different. I did feel pressure to avoid sin. I continued with Bible study although I did have questions about God’s love and acceptance. Does God punish you? God wants you to be honest and seek help and learn from it.’

Essence points to three turning-points in her faith journey. First, there was her relationship with the Strickland family. Secondly, she notes her experience of going to church and attending Bible study sessions. Thirdly, she attended the sports camp and responded to the invitation. She credits her church home, East End Fellowship, and her time living with Christian room-mates as key influences on her ongoing spiritual life.

Essence has had little contact with her biological parents after her mom’s imprisonment. The only memory of her dad she could recall was that of him beating her mom. Her mom was released in 2014 after serving fifteen years in prison. When asked if she was interested in reconnecting with her parents, Essence said, ‘No, it is a toxic relationship and I’m not pursuing it.’

Although she does not see her biological parents, Essence does try to maintain relationships with her three sisters, Ebony, aged 30, Unicka, aged 27, and Seleta, aged 25. ‘They are not believers. They test me all the time and tease me about being perfect. They say, “You’re supposed to be a Christian but you won’t help me.”’ She says it can be hard to love the sinner but hate the sin. She is trying to help her sisters but it can be messy. On one occasion, her sister’s boyfriend punched her. Her brother Tamon is serving time in a regional jail outside Richmond.

Essence reported that the experience of being black with white parents is hard at times. ‘People use you to try to get money. People say things like, “You think you are better than us.”’ She imagines it is hard for her biological parents to see her live as someone adopted by a white couple. She thinks she is treated differently by some of her Afro-American family and friends because she now is in a different situation.

## Conclusion

The story of Essence Brown's escape from an abusive family and Church Hill poverty reflects a life touched by a number of Christian influences. These include the Strickland family, CHAT's programmes for young people, and the Church Hill Academy. Hearing the good news of Jesus Christ, she responded in faith, and began living as a disciple with like-minded friends and among the congregation of East End Fellowship.

East End Fellowship was started by Afro-American pastor Don Coleman and Third's associate pastor, Corey Widmer, a Caucasian. Coleman, a Church Hill resident, began advising and encouraging the Stricklands from CHAT's earliest days in 2002. Although he worked in a west end suburban church, Corey Widmer and his family lived in the East End in community with three other Caucasian couples who all became involved in Richmond's East End.<sup>19</sup> Hoping to live in proximity in the same community after their college days, they discerned a call to Richmond after one of their number, Danny Avula, first went there to study at MCV's medical school.<sup>20</sup>

Both the ministries of CHAT and East End Fellowship drew young white families from the suburbs to relocate in Church Hill. The opportunities for evangelism and *diakonia* flourished within the convergence of young Christian adults living in the Church Hill community, the vision of the Stricklands and the guiding hand of the Rev. Don Coleman. Corey Widmer explains: 'At East End, we taught our people that there are three doorways to Christ and into the church. First, there is public worship – the Robinson door (Robinson Theatre where the church meets for worship). Secondly, there is the experience of Christian community – doors into peoples' homes. Thirdly, there is the practice of serving – the doors to the tutoring sites.'<sup>21</sup>

Widmer pointed out that, on a number of occasions, the tutoring volunteers followed the path of practising *diakonia* to receiving evangelism and to pursuing discipleship. Students from Virginia Commonwealth University would volunteer to help inner-city kids with their lessons. They would observe that the people leading the effort were Christians and then they would visit East End Fellowship. These young volunteers were drawn into faith by the good experience of getting to know caring CHAT staff, being welcomed at multicultural worship services, plus the opportunity to

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<sup>19</sup> All four couples took in strangers, fostered neighbourhood children, tutored young people and became active in serving their poorer neighbors in Church Hill.

<sup>20</sup> Dr Danny Avula currently serves Richmond City as its Assistant Health Director and is actively involved in delivering health care to Richmond's poor..

<sup>21</sup> Face-to-face interview with Corey Widmer on 12th January 2016 at Third Church.

make a difference in children's lives. Widmer explained that the total experience 'disarmed their stereotypes of Christians and Christianity'.<sup>22</sup>

Evangelism and *diakonia* belong together in the perspective of the biblical admonitions to make disciples and to love one's neighbour. Evangelism is telling good news, bearing witness to Jesus Christ; it is sharing one's faith and convictions with other people and inviting them to discipleship. *Diakonia* is the Gospel in action and is expressed through compassion, service, seeking justice and loving your neighbour.<sup>23</sup>

Evangelism and *diakonia* combine readily in CHAT's outreach to young people as staff and volunteers offer tutoring, mentoring and encouraging through a matrix of caring relationships. Percy Strickland indicates that CHAT does have both a service and an evangelism vision: 'We clearly are a faith-based ministry so we are delighted to share the gospel and our lives.'<sup>24</sup> Caitlin Barnes adds, 'All our activities are faith-based. We want to touch kids and see transformation happen, and this includes the spiritual dimension.'<sup>25</sup>

Barnes goes on to describe CHAT's understanding of evangelism as flowing out of relationships: 'We are intentional in equipping students through mentoring relationships. Mentors talk about discipleship and evangelism. Our Academy and programs teach Christian values. Our mentors include staff, interns and volunteers.' Barnes emphasizes, however, that there is not a requirement for students to be or to become Christian believers. 'We welcome all but we are up-front that we will talk about spiritual things. We seek gospel transformation in the lives of our youth through programmes that equip them with skills related to their education, vocation, relationships and more.'<sup>26</sup>

CHAT's workers offer young people opportunities to study the Bible, pray and hear Gospel messages. Some of these offerings are organized meetings but most arise out of relationships and informal conversations. This relational emphasis may be the key factor in CHAT's ministry, including evangelistic outcomes alongside educational progress. Richmond's Church Hill Activities and Tutoring is finding success in helping young people choose an education path that leads to decisions that truly transform their life, health and welfare. One young adult, Essence Brown, is travelling a path where her courageous decision-making and

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<sup>22</sup> Interview with Corey Widmer on 12th January 2016.

<sup>23</sup> See the Edinburgh 2010 Common Call that emerged from the Edinburgh 2010 study process and conference to mark the centenary of the World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh, 1910. The Common Call was affirmed in the Church of Scotland Assembly Hall in Edinburgh on 6th June 2010 by representatives of world Christianity, including Catholic, Evangelical, Orthodox, Pentecostal and Protestant churches: [www.edinburgh2010.org](http://www.edinburgh2010.org)

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Percy Strickland on 21st October 2015.

<sup>25</sup> Telephone interview with Caitlin Barnes on 16th December 2015.

<sup>26</sup> Telephone interview with Caitlin Barnes on 16th December 2015.

perseverance became a transforming occasion to receive compassion and spiritual mentorship.

Luke's Gospel tells the story of Jesus reading the Isaiah scroll one Sabbath day in the local synagogue. Luke 4:18-19 records what Jesus read and then claimed was fulfilled in him:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.’<sup>27</sup>

This Luke 4 mission statement includes both evangelism and *diakonia* in its emphasis on bringing good news and healing ministry to the poor, the captives, the blind and the oppressed. Jesus seemed to move naturally from preaching and teaching to healing and delivering people from illnesses and evil spirits. The balance in his ministry appears to have been intuitive and instructive as he moved to meet peoples' needs, both manifest and hidden. He ministered first to Jews but hinted that a day would come for Gentile inclusion.<sup>28</sup> He served a Samaritan woman, crossing ministry barriers of gender and ethnicity.<sup>29</sup>

Post-modern societies in the global North may tend to dichotomize types of ministries and missional emphases. Such places need ministry examples where barriers of race, class and culture are broken down and boundaries crossed. The *Missio Dei* invites the church to proclaim God's reign across cultures by reflecting God's kindness in both evangelism and *diakonia*. Like two tines of a tuning fork, together they work in complementary fashion to create harmony in holistic mission.

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<sup>27</sup> Luke 4:18-19 (NRSV).

<sup>28</sup> Matt. 4:15-16.

<sup>29</sup> John 4:4-26.

# THE ROLE OF HOST FAMILIES IN THE MISSIONAL STRUCTURE OF A HOUSE CHURCH MOVEMENT

Yalin Xin

This chapter investigates the role of Host Families in the missional structure of the Word of Life (WOL) movement. It illustrates the three constituent parts of the movement and their relationship with each other in the perspective of the movement's missional cycle, within which it zooms in on the details of a couple of cases of Host Families, their formation, functionalities, dynamic and impact. These are contextual structures that have basically functioned throughout the development of the WOL movement. It is the hope of this chapter to uncover some of their dynamics that relate to evangelism, *diakonia* and renewal.

## A Historical Note

The WOL movement originated in Henan Province in central China. It had a humble beginning as a rural house church in one of the poorest areas of China, but it rose up to become one of the most dynamic of recent Chinese Christian movements. Starting with the evangelistic zeal of a handful of faithful believers four decades ago, this house church multiplied and spread all over Henan and into other provinces. Farmers, as those on the margins of Chinese society, were empowered by the Spirit to be dynamic leaders of the movement that impacted a significant part of China's rural population with the gospel.<sup>1</sup>

Characterized by its indigenous theology and structure, the WOL sees itself as a significant house church movement from the mid-1980s onwards. Not only does it bear witness to the power of the Spirit of God in China, believers also structure themselves in response to the Spirit's leading in such a way that contributed to the movement's sustained growth and dynamic.

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the data used in this essay, especially pertaining to historical and structural analysis, are also available in some of my earlier publications on the house church movement, e.g. 'Inner Dynamics of the Chinese House Church Movement', *Mission Studies* 25, No. 2 (2008), 157-84; *Inside China's House Church Network: The Word of Life Movement and Its Renewing Dynamic* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2009); 'Contemporary Expressions of a Spirit-led Christian Movement', in *Global Renewing Christianity* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2016), 107-26.

The 1990s saw the expansion of the WOL movement to the various regions of the country as the result of the evangelistic efforts of the ‘Messengers of the Gospel’ (itinerant evangelists). More house churches were established during this time as evangelists were sent to various parts of the country for frontier evangelism, and the WOL network extended to every province in China. Statistics show that, by the end of the twentieth century, the WOL movement had established approximately fifty thousand house churches throughout China.<sup>2</sup> The movement has continued to cross national boundaries and has established churches, training centres, and fellowships overseas, contributing its part in following the biblical mandate of spreading the gospel to the ends of the earth.

### The Focus on Evangelism

The coming of the Holy Spirit as it is recorded in Acts 2 demonstrates its power and ministry in convicting people of their sins and converting them to Christ. ‘Tongues’ are given to the ‘Jesus followers’ so that they can preach the truth about God in the vernacular of the people, while the Spirit illuminates the truth and convicts the heart, because the Word of God is ‘the sword of the Spirit’ (Eph. 6:17) and ‘cuts to the heart (Acts 2:37). This is closely mirrored in the ministry of the WOL movement. On the one hand, the movement stresses the human aspect of partnership with God for evangelism – that is, selecting and training believers as messengers of the Gospel, through the missional cycle that involves the interaction of the three constituent parts of the movement – namely, 1. The Established Churches, 2. Theological Education (TE), and 3. The Gospel Band. Clearly identifiable is a dynamic motion that undergirds the continuous expansion of the faith community (see Diagram 1: the WOL Missional Cycle with the three constituents highlighted). On the other hand, in its theology and ministry, WOL Christians acknowledge the power of the Spirit to convert and grant new life: ‘In God’s eternal plan, the ministry of the Holy Spirit at this age is to convict and cause to repent in order to receive life... In order that a person receives salvation through obedience to the Holy Spirit, he will need to hear the Word of God, when the Holy Spirit illuminates his heart by means of the word of truth (which is the gospel of salvation).’<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Patrick Johnstone, Robyn Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, *Operation World* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Lifestyle, 2001), 160.

<sup>3</sup> *Truth Practice Curriculum I* (WOL Editorial Office, 2003), 91.



Diagram 1: The WOL Missional Cycle

How each constituent part relates to and interacts with the other parts causes change and produces growth. First, established churches support the ministry of the Gospel Band and theological education, through prayer and financial resources, and select and supply trainees for theological education. The churches also work with the Gospel Band to provide care, discipleship and training for their members. Second, some graduates from TE become pastors of local house churches; others join the Gospel Band and become itinerant evangelists. Third, the Gospel Band enjoys a continuous supply of graduates from theological education, whom it commissions for frontier evangelism. The three constituent parts of the movement work closely together, spinning the cycle outward, in national and even global evangelization.

### Evangelism as Social Witness

The sense of being a distinct people called to be witnesses for God has been with the WOL movement from the beginning as new forms of community surface in the rural villages in central China – the ‘furnaces of revival’<sup>4</sup> – which link Christians for fellowship and attract non-believers. These grow into regular meetings in various places, where the organic nature of the messianic community is embodied: believers and seekers coming together in close fellowship, reading from the Word of God, practising *koinonia*, engaging in evangelism and witnessing in worship and service, thus transcending the traditional Chinese family-centred solidarity. The presence of this new community of faith alone bears powerful witness in its surroundings, and the heat of the furnaces keeps spreading outwards, welcoming new members to the family of faith.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Furnaces of revival’ refer to house churches in rural areas in central China that were experiencing small-scale revivals initially that gradually spread out geographically.

One of these ‘furnaces of revival’ was found in a village in Henan during the height of the so-called Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), when rural people were traumatized physically and mentally as a consequence of power struggles in the central government, anarchist political movements, and unrealistic economic policies. A Christian family started meetings in their house, inviting neighbours and fellow villagers. People responded enthusiastically to this new form of gathering where the ‘good news’ was shared. Prayers and testimonies played an important part in the gathering, as people could see, hear and experience for themselves the power and love of God. Despite the dire socio-economic situation these villagers found themselves in, their hope was rekindled by the gospel of Jesus Christ who came in incarnation, suffered and died for their sins, and many people embraced the Christian faith that would later sustain them through this turbulent period in Chinese history. Children were among the most devoted participants of these meetings, who would joyfully learn hymns and dances as they also fed on the Word of God. Many of them went on to become leaders of house churches.

Female evangelists are agents of witness to the power of God. As the majority of WOL evangelistic teams, these women, who are often in their early twenties, are filled with the Spirit in preaching the Word of God to believers and non-believers alike. After the initial preparatory evangelistic work in a new area, these young women would then lead evangelistic meetings, ‘life meetings’, and ‘truth meetings’<sup>5</sup> in which they faced intimidating crowds of men and women they did not know well, but entrusted their preaching to the power of the Spirit to bring about change in the hearers; the results have often been unbelievable. Amazed (and moved) by the power of the Spirit dwelling in these young evangelists, people were convicted and repented of their sin. Others dedicated themselves for Christian service.

Here we see some interesting cases of how the gospel is ministered among the rural poor, and how it spread so quickly among them. ‘The gospel for the poor is the test that shows whether the church is apostolic.’<sup>6</sup> When WOL Christians incarnate the gospel among the rural poor, the ‘furnaces of revival’ produce authentic heat and attract people. What is more, wonders and miracles often accompany the evangelistic ministry of the house churches, such as healing of the sick, driving out demons,

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<sup>5</sup> ‘Life meetings’ are intensive teaching and fellowship sessions that run up to seven days, especially designed for seekers and new believers with a focus on the fundamentals of the Christian faith. This is the first level of training in the WOL movement, which is often followed by a ‘truth meeting’, a 7-15 day training session for selected new believers who are considering Christian service. The teaching for the ‘truth meeting’ is more systematically focused on the seven principles of the *Truth Practice Curriculum*.

<sup>6</sup> Howard Snyder, *Decoding the Church: Mapping the DNA of Christ’s Body* (Baker, 2002), 26.

manifestations of God's justice, positive change in individuals and community, and the demonstration of God's love in various forms.

### The Role of Host Families in the WOL Missional Structure

As a house church movement in China, rooted in the rural environment in the new historical context of a post-revolutionary China, WOL Christians have had to face the challenges and opportunities squarely and find opportunities for development. Guided by biblical principles and examples, Christians make use of the opportunities available, creating structures to meet the need of this growing faith community. One of the essential parts of the structure is that of the Host Families.<sup>7</sup> The concept of the Host Family is not a WOL creation. The WOL training manual readily identifies biblical teaching on hospitality and the precedent of the church being in the house.<sup>8</sup> It is further contextually developed in scope and diversified through the experience of the WOL community.

We have seen from the previous section how the WOL structure contributes to the sustained dynamic of this movement. Intimately interwoven with the structure are various kinds of Host Families. They exist in every aspect of the structure, i.e. established churches, theological education, and the Gospel Band, hosting house church meetings, training, networking and fellowship meetings, retreats, etc.

The *Truth Practice Curriculum*, a training manual developed through the study of the Bible and reflection of ministry experience, which has become the rubric for theological education and discipleship in the movement, specifies, under Part IV, Building Up the Church, the responsibilities of believers in the church, and how believers should provide hospitality (as host families):

It, first of all, identifies the motivation for hospitality as for the name of the Lord, motivated by His love, and it's the responsibility of believers. Secondly, it lists the kinds of people being shown hospitality: sojourners, strangers (Heb. 13:2), preachers and evangelists, participants of house church meetings. Thirdly, it describes biblical attitudes (of a host family): warmly (Acts 21:17), with fear and trembling (2 Cor. 7:15), willingly (1 Tim. 5:10), with faith (Heb. 11:31), with love (Heb. 13:2), with earnest (Gen. 18:1-8), and faithfully (3 John 5-6). Fourthly, it affirms the reward of being hospitable: receiving blessings (1 Kgs 17:15-16), receiving a son (2 Kgs 4:11-17), receiving angels (Heb. 13:2), receiving the Lord (Luke 9:48), receiving salvation for the household (Heb. 11:31; Songs 2:25; Jos. 2:18-19), receiving award from God (Matt. 10:42; 25:34-35).<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> It is 接待家庭 (*jie dai jia ting*) in Chinese, and has also been referred to as 'Hospitality Families' in other publications.

<sup>8</sup> *Truth Practice Curriculum II* (WOL Editorial Office, 2003), 71-72.

<sup>9</sup> *Truth Practice Curriculum II*.

These provide the basis for the encouragement of those who have the calling to dedicate themselves to the ministry of a Host Family. In the practical operation of the Host Family for various practical functions in the movement, rules and regulations are developed from both biblical guidance and practical experience, especially as regards the contexts believers find themselves in. Mutual support from the local community of faith is at the top of the list as the Host Family co-ordinates such tasks as gathering supplies and providing security. Regular prayers and petitions for the ‘three families’ (Host Families, Dedicated Families, Imprisoned Families)<sup>10</sup> are highlighted ministries of house churches.

Host Families among the WOL movement could often be identified, depending on their purpose and the services they provide, as hosting one of the following: general purposes, house church meetings, and Theological Education. They often overlap in the services they provide, a fairly common cultural phenomenon, as is evident in the following two cases.

### **A Host Family for General Purposes**

As a long-standing member of the WOL movement, Brother T has been actively involved in ministry since the 1980s. He is self-employed, running some family-owned businesses alongside his ministry involvement. He dedicates his properties to Christian service and host house church and leadership meetings, receiving visitors and providing services to the community.

#### *The House Church*

Earlier in the morning on Sunday, Brother T is already on his knees with fellow co-workers in the church in his house, a room large enough to hold 50-60 people. The worship service starts at 8 am, but people start to come in from about 6 am. They come in, kneel down and join in prayer with others. Then about half an hour is devoted to learning a new hymn. All this takes place before the worship starts. The doors to the church are open, as they are next to the yard, a natural place to seat the overflow from the church. The church operates openly, but is not registered with the local religious affairs bureau. Here is an example of one of the basic constituents of the WOL community – a house church where believers and seekers come together worshipping God, praying, singing, reading the Word of God, having fellowship with one another, witnessing and having communion.

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<sup>10</sup> ‘Dedicated Families’ are families that have dedicated one or more of their members for Christian service; ‘Imprisoned Families’ are families that have one or more of their members imprisoned due to their involvement with the WOL movement.

### *The Retreat Centre*

The WOL movement identifies two kinds of travellers that the Host Families may host: First, *Zou lu cheng* (the ones travelling for physical purposes): those – believers and non-believers alike – who have physical needs, such as sickness or loss of hope, those who come (or are recommended by local Christians to come) for prayer and encouragement, as well as having their physical needs met. Second, *Zou ling cheng* (the ones travelling for spiritual purposes): trainers and evangelists who bring the Word of God to people in an itinerant manner, and participants of area co-workers' meetings. While trainers and evangelists are hosted as they are able to come, the area co-workers' meeting is a regular monthly event when representatives from house churches travel from various places in the region and gather for several days of fellowship and prayer. Here arrangements are made for food and lodging, usually between the several properties Brother T owns. Depending on the number of people and seasonal needs, Brother T would co-ordinate with local believers for supplies and resources, such as food, extra blankets and quilts, and transport as necessary.

### *The 'Spiritual Centre'*

Brother T is much involved in serving the community through the businesses he operates. He develops a western musical band to serve both the church and the community, performing for weddings, birthdays, anniversary celebrations, funerals and other special events. Christian music and dance as well as the Gospel message are presented on all these occasions, witnessing to the community.

As a service to the community, especially the poor, Brother T, with his influence and location in the region, is able to link charitable work with co-workers from other areas, collecting and distributing food, clothing and medicine, and providing care for the elderly and disabled in the community.

Brother T's charitable work becomes well known to the local community and even gains the support of the local authorities. Seeing the needs associated with the number of people participating in the Sunday service at the house church, the local government voluntarily builds public toilet facilities near the church. In the midst of the tension between registered and unregistered churches under China's religious policy, Brother T's Host Family continues to enjoy the opportunities gained for kingdom purposes.

### **Host Families for Theological Education (TE)**

Host Families for training purposes typically emerge out of a neighbourhood or village where there is already a significant presence of Christians. Some training locations are found right in the middle of a

Christian village and have maximum support from the community, and so tend to be more stable than others which are less well situated. For TE training, because of the length of time (3-6 months) needed for each session, it is common for organizers to change training locations between sessions as needs arise, primarily for security reasons. Although training locations are preferably chosen in remote areas of the country, some are established in small towns, depending on contextual needs and the communal decisions of the movement's leaders and the elders responsible for the specific region concerned.

### *The Location of TE*

One of these is found in a residential complex in Y town in the early 1990s. The Host Family runs their own businesses: a convenience store and a nursery in one of the houses, while devoting another house for TE use. They have developed a good relationship with the neighbours, some of them being Christians. Their businesses are located right at the entrance to the residential complex, a perfect place for keeping watch for the TE training that is taking place in a house further inside.

TE training is conducted in the two-storeyed house, with an unmarked entrance to the basement where the training is conducted. There are often 20–30 students in each session of training that runs about three months. Most students do not ever leave the house before the entire training session is over. Trainers are co-ordinated by the Gospel Band, with some being experienced senior leaders, while others are more recently trained in Grade Three TE or are graduates from overseas Bible Colleges or seminaries. Occasionally, overseas trainers are involved in the TE training for a limited time during the training session.

### *The Role of TE in the WOL Missional Cycle*

At the completion of the TE training, students were laid hands on and sent to various locations by the Gospel Band. Here we see the significant role that the TE, as one of the three constituent parts, plays in the movement structure and how it interacts with the other parts: in recruitment, TE works with the Established Churches for selection and recommendation of dedicated Christians; during training, the TE co-ordinates trainers and Host Families, partnering with local house churches for prayer and support; at graduation, the TE supplies graduates to the Gospel Band that sends them (now as Messengers of the Gospel) out for frontier evangelism (refer to Diagram 1 of the WOL Missional Cycle).

### *Spiritual Reward*

Local house churches are greatly encouraged by the presence of the TE, and take it as an honour. There is continuous prayer for these students and trainers. In prayer and petition to God on behalf of the TE, local Christians align themselves with God's purposes, identifying the need of the church, dedicating themselves in support of the ministry, and exercising their gifts in participation. 'To host thirty people for 2-3 months was a challenging task: needs, safety, supplies, co-ordination... these Host Family co-workers were indeed the co-workers of the truth (ref. 3 John 5-8). God was pleased with their sacrifice for the sake of the church, and blessed them abundantly.'<sup>11</sup> In partnership with and supporting the TE ministry, local Christians experience God in a more intimate way and at a deeper level. Many house churches are revitalized in the process, and believers experience individual and corporate revival.

Some Host Families become centres of witness for the community. Charitable ministry such as kindergartens, nursing homes and food/clothing banks play a significant and noticeable role in the local community. The low crime rate is often related to the greater Christian presence, and Christian citizens are regarded as more law-abiding and ready to help those in need in the community. These services to the community go hand-in-hand with the Gospel message, through which a radical transformation eventually takes place in individuals and the community.

### **Conclusion and Learning**

We have seen how Christians develop local structures, in this case Host Families, to meet the contextual needs of ministry, and how intimately these are interwoven in the structure of the WOL movement. Evidently, Host Families have played an essential role in the phenomenal growth of the WOL community in the course of a few decades. The following are some of the key lessons gleaned from this study:

1. Host Families illustrate the organic nature of the church as the body of Christ, which has the potential for growth and fruit-bearing. How Christians in different localities respond faithfully to the Spirit in building contextual structures to fulfil God's purposes for their communities tends to have a great bearing on their well-being.
2. Host Families are often centres of revival. They provide opportunities for participation for local Christians to exercise their gifts in support of the ministry being hosted. Along with the working of the Spirit and the participation of believers, local house churches often experience a continued process of 'being renewed day by day' (2 Cor. 4:16).

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<sup>11</sup> Jonathan Chao, *Purified by Fire: The Secrets of House Church Revivals in Mainland China* (Taipei: CMI, 1993), 86.

3. As Host Families are often model families that are looked up to in the neighbourhood, they affect the community positively and are agents of change. They serve as examples of the messianic community, pointing people to Jesus who saves and transforms lives, and meets physical and emotional needs.
4. Ministry to the poor, including evangelism and *diakonia*, is considered to be in the very DNA of the body of Christ.<sup>12</sup> It is also one of the key elements in historical renewal movements.<sup>13</sup> This is partly embodied in the role of Host Families in the WOL movement that makes good use of the environment ministering to the rural poor. Consequently, the WOL community has become one of the largest rural Christian communities in China.
5. The WOL community could be viewed as a contextual 'firstfruit', edible, but not fully grown, pointing to the possibility of the fuller manifestation of what God intends for Israel – to be a showcase to the nations and an embodiment of what the Kingdom of God is supposed to be, where faith, worship, love and justice are lived out in the community of the people of God. When Christian communities in every locality live faithfully and respond contextually to the leading of the Holy Spirit, we will witness small- and large-scale instances of transformation as Kingdom influence permeates every corner of society.

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<sup>12</sup> Howard Snyder, *Decoding the Church: Mapping the DNA of Christ's Body* (Baker, 2002), 26-27.

<sup>13</sup> Howard Snyder, *Signs of the Spirit: How God Reshapes the Church* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997), 25.

# SERVING THE WHOLE PERSON: THE THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE EECMY ON THE INTERRELATION BETWEEN PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT<sup>1</sup>

Megersa Guta

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) paper of 1972 entitled 'On the Interrelation between Proclamation of the Gospel and Human Development' (mission document) was based on the real concerns of the EECMY and reflected a genuine need. In this paper, the church tried to ask itself how it understood holistic ministry and how others ought to understand it and co-operate with it to fulfil the mission entrusted to her by the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Introductory Notes from the Bible

The Bible asserts that human beings have been created in the *image* and *likeness of God* (Gen. 1:26-27). The so-called 'Second Creation Story' sheds further light on the creation of human beings: 'The LORD God formed the man from the *dust* of the *ground* and *breathed into his nostrils the breath of life*, and the man became a living being' (Gen. 2:7 NIV). Thus, a person is both body and soul, a whole living being. Regarding the livelihood of a society, the Hebrew concept of *shalom* refers to its well-being in its totality, including provision of food, water, shelter, health and family, and good governance.

The New Testament also looks at human beings in their whole setting. The ministry of the Jesus Christ bears direct witness to this fact: 'Jesus went through all the towns and villages, *teaching* in their synagogues, *preaching* the good news of the kingdom, and *healing* every disease and sickness' (Matt. 9:35 NIV). In Mark we read: 'I have compassion for these

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<sup>1</sup> This paper has in parts been based on the paper I presented to the Global Consultation on Diakonia prepared by the Lutheran World Federation Department for Mission and Development, Addis Ababa, October 2008. See 'A Reflection Paper on the 1972 EECMY Letter: "On the Interrelation Between Proclamation of the Gospel and Human Development"', in Kjell Nordstokke and Frederick Schlaghaft (eds), *Serving the Whole Person: The Practice and Understanding of Diakonia Within the Lutheran Communion* (Minneapolis, MN: Lutheran University Press), 183-206.

people; they have already been with me three days and have *nothing to eat*. If I send them home *hungry*, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance' (Mark 8:2-3 NIV). Thus, the ministry of Jesus focused on the here and now as well as on the hereafter.

James strongly admonishes believers to keep a balance between faith and good works by saying: 'As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead' (Jas 2:26).

### **The Concept of Holistic Service Rendered by the Mission Organizations in the Twentieth Century**

At the turn of the twentieth century, Lutheran and Presbyterian mission organizations from Europe and North America began to proclaim the gospel in the northern, central, southern, south-western and western parts of Ethiopia. As an integral part of the proclamation of the gospel, the mission organizations rendered development and social service to the people by building schools and clinics. Thus, the proclamation of the word, education and health services have been referred to as 'the three-legged ministry'.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the legacy of the mission organizations was proclamation and service. In this way the EECMY grew out of the labour of the mission organizations and the tireless effort of the indigenous evangelists and members who committed themselves to the expansion of the gospel in Ethiopia. The EECMY was constituted as a National Church on 21st January 1959. It inherited the legacy of the mission organizations on the one hand; and based on her understanding of the biblical concept of man and his needs on the other, worked out her own interpretation of ministry of the gospel as holistic. However, as time went on, some of the mission organizations and their back-donors began to undermine this holistic concept and tilted toward development and social services, as if a human person is made up of flesh and bone only. So the church had to send a strong reminder to these bodies in order to request them to re-think their criteria for assisting her in her work.

### **The Historical Background: Why the Mission Document?**

There is a legendary story about a tractor that was donated in the late 1960s by a back-donor through one of the mission partners of the EECMY for agricultural work. There was a notice on the tractor which read: NOT FOR EVANGELISM WORK. In those days, there were similar donations that carried the same message, implicitly or explicitly.

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<sup>2</sup> The 'three-legged' ministry concept has been borrowed from a locally made chair in rural areas of Ethiopia that has three legs. If one of the legs is missing, the chair cannot stand on its own.

The Agreement on Integration Policy signed between the EECMY and its co-operating partners in 1969 stipulates that the partners are willing to help the church both in evangelism and development activities at the request of the church or its synods. In the course of time, the EECMY leadership came to realize that there was a *serious imbalance* in the assistance given by the partners for evangelism and development work. More funding was being secured for development work, which was the trend at the time, while a bare minimum was being given for evangelism work.

The EECMY 7th General Assembly in January 1971 set a policy addressing this serious matter:

‘7-GA-71: Because most of the aid from Organizations overseas is given for development and not for the work of the Gospel, it was decided that a request for help be presented through the LWF to Donor Agencies in West Germany and other countries to make it possible in the future to prepare capable workers for the task of teaching the Gospel and to construct many Church buildings.’<sup>3</sup>

This policy directive set by the Assembly was communicated to the LWF secretariat in Geneva by the EECMY Central Office. Following this, the Assembly’s concerns had to be defined and explained by the church leadership. A position paper explaining these concerns was needed. Hence, the mission document of May 1972 had to be prepared.

### **Presenting the Past: The Core Issues of the Mission Document**

The introductory part of the paper states the EECMY’s primary concern and why the document was prepared:

This action was prompted, on the one hand, by the fact that the church realized her own inability to cope with the fast-growing congregational work and the opportunities for evangelistic outreach in this country. On the other hand, the church had become more and more concerned about the prevailing imbalance in the assistance given to the church by its overseas partners.<sup>4</sup>

The EECMY leadership’s intent was not to convey to the partners that the EECMY was not interested in funds for development and social services, but that the imbalance in assistance should be corrected so that the financially weak arm of her ministry (evangelism work) should get equal attention in order for the church to render balanced holistic service to people in Ethiopia.

The paper reminded partners and donor agencies of the biblical dimension of assistance. The Bible does not divide a person into body and

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<sup>3</sup> From the Minutes of the 7th General Assembly (7-GA-71).

<sup>4</sup> The Church Officers of the EECMY, ‘On the Interrelation Between Proclamation of the Gospel and Human Development’, 9th May 1972, 1.

soul. Rather, the person constitutes a whole, requiring both physical and spiritual food in order to lead a healthy life. The ministry of Jesus Christ was holistic. He fed the hungry, healed the sick and preached the gospel. Thus, the message to the partners and donor agencies was that they rethink their criteria for assistance, which they had set *unilaterally*, and also to respond to the requests of the church in a responsible manner.

In one of her papers, prepared to clarify the document of May 1972, the church clearly expressed the concern ‘whether it was responsible of the church to let her ministry be governed by earmarked funds and by aid criteria which in effect arbitrarily determined what was needed and what was not needed’.<sup>5</sup> What is needed and what is not needed should be determined by the internal policy of the church or by an agreed policy. Hence,

... the church drew the conclusion that the time had come when this whole issue should be discussed on the international level. The main purpose of the paper submitted by the EECMY was to initiate such a discussion which eventually and hopefully would bring about a new and more healthy aid relationship between the rich and poor churches.<sup>6</sup>

### Revisiting the Core Issues of the Paper

Forty-four years have passed since this document was officially approved, signed by the church officers and communicated to the LWF, partners and agencies. Therefore, it is worth the effort to remind ourselves of the salient issues addressed in the document. The main body contains three basic issues which are presented and explained at length, in order to get the message across. The three issues are:

1. Our understanding of people and their needs.
2. The old and new imbalance in assistance from the West.
3. The present situation in Ethiopia and its challenge to the church.<sup>7</sup>

#### Issue 1: Our Understanding of People and their Needs

The paper points out that the criteria of western societies for judging the worth of human beings has been that of economic advancement of a certain country: ‘The standard of human life and that of society is normally evaluated in terms of economic growth and material wealth or in technology and production.’<sup>8</sup> The paper notes that at least two things seem to have been largely overlooked.<sup>9</sup> These are:

<sup>5</sup> The Church Offices of the EECMY, ‘Serving the Whole Man: A Responsible Church Ministry and a Flexible International Aid Relationship’, November 1974, 2.

<sup>6</sup> EECMY Officers, ‘On the Interrelation’, 2.

<sup>7</sup> EECMY Officers, ‘On the Interrelation’, 2.

<sup>8</sup> EECMY Officers, ‘On the Interrelation’, 3.

<sup>9</sup> EECMY Officers, ‘On the Interrelation’, 3.

1. That there are values in life beyond those of modern technology and economic betterment without which man's development will never be meaningful or lasting.
2. That man is not only the suffering creature that needs help but that he is also the most important development agent.<sup>10</sup>

The officers emphasized that 'the development of the inner man is a prerequisite for a healthy and lasting development of our society... We believe that integral human development, where the spiritual and material needs are seen together, is the only right approach to the development question in our society'.<sup>11</sup>

The clear message is that the gospel has to change the lives of individuals for them to say, like the tax collector Zacchaeus to Jesus, 'Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much' (Luke 19:1-10). Therefore, the officers said, 'It is only when man is changed inwardly that he responds in a faithful stewardship to promote human development. Hence, man's primary need is to be set free from egoism and self-centredness.'<sup>12</sup> Here is where the gospel of Jesus Christ comes in as the liberating power.<sup>13</sup>

## Issue 2: The Old and New Imbalance in Assistance from the West

The paper points out that the various mission organizations from the West emphasized only verbal proclamation while the other spheres of human development such as education, medical work and technical work 'were regarded as being of secondary importance or even as "a means to an end" – namely, avenues by which the message would reach people'.<sup>14</sup> This has been termed 'the old emphasis in mission of the church'.

The paper further states that the 'new emphasis is the opposite of the old one. It emphasizes the material well-being of a person by making the Gospel a side-issue only. These two extreme positions are equally harmful to follow'.<sup>15</sup> The document points out that 'the background for the old imbalance in assistance is "false piety" and a "sense of guilt" is responsible for the new imbalance in the assistance to the work of the church'.<sup>16</sup> What then, is the way forward? What is the right approach to human development?

To answer these questions, the officers said:

<sup>10</sup> EECMY Officers, 'On the Interrelation', 3.

<sup>11</sup> EECMY Officers, 'On the Interrelation', 3.

<sup>12</sup> EECMY Officers, 'On the Interrelation', 3.

<sup>13</sup> Megersa Guta, 'The Church in Society: Retrospective and Prospective Dimensions', BTh Senior Essay, Mekane Yesus Seminary, June 1975, 55.

<sup>14</sup> EECMY Officers, 'On the Interrelation', 5.

<sup>15</sup> EECMY Officers, 'On the Interrelation', 9.

<sup>16</sup> Guta, 'The Church in Society', 56.

It is our firm belief that Christian service is neither ‘a means to an end’, nor ‘an end in itself’, but an integral part of the total responsibility of the church. The division between witness and service, or between proclamation and development, which has been imposed on us is, in our view, harmful to the church and will ultimately result in a distorted Christianity.<sup>17</sup>

These are quite powerful statements which cannot be read hastily but are to be read with caution and concern.

### **Issue 3: The Present Situation in Ethiopia and its Challenge to the Church**

In this part of the paper, the officers explained the situation of the ministry of the church vis-à-vis the situation in the country and its challenges for the church. Rapid numerical growth was referred to as both a sign of a living church and, at the same time, as a frightening sign, since there were not enough pastors and evangelists to take care of the members in the congregations. The officers rightly argued that ‘the members need to be given spiritual nourishment and guidance in order to grow and mature in the Christian faith. To do this, the church is met with shortcomings both in personnel and funds’.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the following strong message was conveyed to mission partners and partner agencies:

Among the many remarkable things that happen in Africa today, the rapid growth of the Christian Church is probably one of the most surprising. The phenomenal expansion of Christianity across Africa in the last few decades is simply frightening for responsible Church leaders. Dr David Barrett, in his thorough analysis of the situation has, on the basis of available statistics, suggested that within the next thirty years the center of gravity of Christianity will have shifted southwards from Europe and North America to the developing continents of Africa and South America. He points out that while the Western Church will have doubled their membership in the twentieth century, the younger churches will have multiplied seventeen times.<sup>19</sup>

This prediction is certainly true for African and South American churches, and is certainly true for the EECMY. EECMY membership has grown 5.67 % on average. In 1972, membership of the EECMY was approximately 140,000. At the end of 2014, membership was 7.3 million. The figure for 2014 indicates that the membership multiplied more than seventeen times which is an indicator that the call of the EECMY for more trained manpower is still a burning issue.

To make their argument more focused, the officers quoted from the report of EECMY general secretary, the Rev. Gudina Tumsa, to the LWF/CCC Meeting in Tokyo in 1971. It reads:

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<sup>17</sup> Guta, ‘The Church in Society’, 57.

<sup>18</sup> Guta, ‘The Church in Society’, 59.

<sup>19</sup> The EECMY Officers, ‘On the Interrelation’, 10.

Alarmed by the high growth rate, the General Assembly decided in 1969 that a plan whereby the Church would be able to know where she stands be worked out... In the process of working out a plan, it became clear that in the three years 1968-1970 its average growth was calculated to be 15%. Membership growth in 1970 alone was 27%.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, urgent measures had to be taken to cope with the high growth rate. This required training more pastors, evangelists, catechists and lay leaders in the congregations. The officers made this clear by referring to the report of the Rev. Gudina Tumsa again:

To meet this expansion, about 137 pastors must be trained during this period as well as about 1,000 evangelists. Realizing the urgency of making use of the present opportunities in Ethiopia, our 7th General Assembly passed a resolution requesting the LWF to approach the donor agencies in Europe and the USA with a view to reconsidering their criteria for aid, and to include direct support for congregational work and leadership training so that the EECMY would be able to cope with the rapid growth taking place at present.<sup>21</sup>

The officers concluded by saying:

We trust that in this document we have made the reasons for our concern clear and that the current theological and missiological trends in the West will not be the sole determining factors for aid, but that African views will be taken more seriously and considered against the background of the present situation.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, with this well-written, well-argued and well-presented document, the EECMY made it clear to all concerned that it was its responsibility to defend and to clarify that she could not let her ministry be governed by earmarked funds and by aid criteria which in effect arbitrarily determined what was needed and what was not. The main purpose of the document was, therefore, to initiate such a discussion which eventually and hopefully would bring about a new and more healthy aid relationship between the rich and the poor churches.<sup>23</sup>

How was this document received by the LWF, its member churches and donor agencies? What was their reaction to it? Has it achieved the desired goal?

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<sup>20</sup> The EECMY Officers, 'On the Interrelation', 10.

<sup>21</sup> The EECMY Officers, 'On the Interrelation', 10.

<sup>22</sup> The EECMY Officers, 'On the Interrelation', 12.

<sup>23</sup> The EECMY Officers, 'Serving the Whole Man', 2.

**The Reception of the Paper by the LWF Secretariat and by  
Member Churches, Mission Organizations and Partner Agencies,  
and its Impact on International Communities**

The document was sent to Dr Andre Appel, the general secretary of the LWF, with a covering letter signed in May 1972 by His Excellency Emmanuel Abraham, president of the EECMY. Dr Andre Appel, in his letter of 29th June 1972, addressed to Emmanuel Abraham, acknowledged with thanks the receipt of the document. He indicated that the 'document has already been discussed by the Commission on Church Co-operation and has arisen a great deal of interest wherever it became known'.<sup>24</sup> The general secretary promised that the document would be brought to the attention of the Executive Committee which was to meet in Indonesia, and that the Committee was expected to authorize him to share the document 'officially with a number of agencies in the hope that we shall arrive at a wide consensus on the matter'.<sup>25</sup>

The general secretary presented the document to the LWF Executive Committee. Thus, the document became an international agenda within two months of its official release by the EECMY. The resolution of the Executive Committee was officially shared with mission societies and development agencies in Europe and the USA by the general secretary, with a covering letter dated 16th October 1972.<sup>26</sup>

The general secretary quoted the decision in detail, which indicates that the Executive Committee has given full attention to the concern of the EECMY. The following were the decisions as quoted by the general secretary in his letter.

It was VOTED:

- a. That the Executive Committee express its deep concern about the question of how proclamation and development relate to each other.
- b. That the Executive Committee share the letter of the EECMY with the member churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America to discover if they have similar concerns, asking them to respond to the General Secretary's Office, LWF Geneva, about these problems.
- c. That the Executive Committee share the letter also with member churches, national committees, mission societies and development agencies in Europe and North America. Where possible, a response be asked informing the LWF as to how monetary gifts were divided between evangelistic work, service and development aid.
- d. That the Officers of the LWF be asked to determine further steps.

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<sup>24</sup> Letter of 29th June 1972 to H.E. Emmanuel Abraham by Dr Andre Appel.

<sup>25</sup> Andre Appel, letter of 29th June 1972.

<sup>26</sup> Letter of 16th October 1972 to mission societies and development agencies by Dr Andre Appel.

e. That the Commissions on Church Co-operation, World Service and Studies plan a consultation on criteria of projects, if possible before the next Executive Committee meeting... It is hoped that the consultation could produce concrete proposals to the effect that present criteria be reviewed in such a way that a balance between proclamation of the Gospel and human development be achieved in a two-way traffic.<sup>27</sup>

As a concluding point of his letter, the general secretary emphasized the urgency of the issue:

In our present work, this issue receives high priority and our Departments are considering plans for a world-wide consultation on it. With this letter I would like to ask you to give the enclosed document your special attention and inform us your reactions and suggestions, possibly as to the way in which monetary support provided by your society or agency is divided between evangelistic work, service and development aid.<sup>28</sup>

Thus, the EECMY document initiated an ecumenical discussion at an Ethiopian consultation called by the LWF Commission on Church Co-operation at Villach in Austria on 4th November 1972, and also at a jointly sponsored WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism and a LWF Commission of Church Co-operation consultation on 'Education in Mission' at Hothorpe Hall in England, 17th-20th November 1972.<sup>29</sup>

Another consultation was organized by the LWF in Nairobi in October 1974 to further discuss the issues raised in the document of the EECMY. A series of five papers which 'had been prepared by the church officers of the EECMY... Gudina having had a decisive part in it'<sup>30</sup> were presented at the consultation. The papers were prepared to clarify the issues stated in the EECMY document of 1972. At the consultation, 'the policy of the donor agencies was characterized as "a neo-paternalistic tendency reflected in both aid criteria and procedures for screening requests and controlling implementation"'.<sup>31</sup> At the consultation, the document 'made great impact' as it 'served as a sharp comment both on the sensitive question of western churches engaging in a kind of neo-colonialism, as well as the ongoing debate on salvation...'<sup>32</sup>

The outcome of the various consultations and reflections on this vital mission document was that the LWF, mission organizations and development agencies began to rethink their theology of biblical

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<sup>27</sup> Minutes of the meeting of LWF Executive Committee, 10th-20th July 1972, 7.

<sup>28</sup> Letter of 16th October 1972 to mission societies and development agencies by Dr Andre Appel.

<sup>29</sup> Gudina Tumsa Foundation, *Witness and Discipleship: Leadership of the Church in Multi-Ethnic Ethiopia in a Time of Revolution: The Essential Writings of Gudina Tumsa* (Hamburg, Germany: WHL Publishers, 2008), 85.

<sup>30</sup> *Witness and Discipleship*, 115.

<sup>31</sup> Øyvind H. Eide, *Revolution and Religion in Ethiopia* (Oxford: James Currey, 2000), 68-69.

<sup>32</sup> Eide, *Revolution and Religion in Ethiopia*, 69.

anthropology and to reconsider their criteria for assistance. They had, at least in the initial stage, to develop new strategies to 'balance proclamation of the gospel and development'.<sup>33</sup>

The responses received by the Lutheran World Federation from mission societies and donor agencies were timely and very encouraging. Responses/reactions were received from two churches in Africa, two churches in Europe, four missionary societies and five donor agencies in Europe and North America. The following are brief quotations from the responses given.

From the Evangelical Lutheran Ovambokavango Church in South West Africa (now the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia):

We have read with interest about the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus statement with regard to giving and receiving. We strongly support these thoughts... Projects purely for church activities are also badly needed – otherwise churches in the Third World could easily turn out to be only development organizations.<sup>34</sup>

From the Norwegian Missionary Society:

The Norwegian Missionary Society has received the statement of the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus in Ethiopia 'On the Interrelation between the Proclamation of the Gospel and Human Development.' The board finds that this document deals with a question of vital importance to church and mission. We are happy to see that the gospel's answer to human needs is so strongly emphasized...

We ask the Lutheran World Federation to use its influence to make the missions consider thoroughly theology and practice in order that the imbalance which has been pointed out may be straightened out.<sup>35</sup>

From the German National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation:

The German National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation gratefully welcomes the EECMY memorandum as an important statement of a Lutheran partner church... The questions raised by the memorandum require from us a renewed theological reflection on the principles, objectives, methods and procedures of church action. This is a procedure which can only be favoured by an intensive and ongoing exchange of views among all the participating churches...<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Rommel Alemayehu, 'The Holistic Ministry of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus up to 1979' (Addis Ababa: College of Social Sciences, July 2006), 36 (unpublished research paper).

<sup>34</sup> *Proclamation and Development, Ethiopia*, Future of the Missionary Enterprise Series, No. 8 (Rome: IDOC International, 1974), 69.

<sup>35</sup> *Proclamation and Development*, 70.

<sup>36</sup> *Proclamation and Development*, 76-77.

### **What Impact has the Mission Document Brought about Internally within the EECMY?**

The EECMY, encouraged by the timely and positive affirmation of issues stated in the mission document both by the LWF, member churches, missionary societies and donor agencies, tried to further develop the understanding and practice of holistic ministry in Ethiopian society. Projects for evangelistic outreach and development and social services were prepared on the basis of the sound theological arguments stated in the mission document.

Since the mission document explicitly stated the concern of the EECMY for holistic ministry, mission organizations and various development agencies became more conscious of the requests presented to them by the EECMY. This can be deduced from the response of churches, missionary societies and donor agencies.

Its theological assertions about people and their needs were based on sound biblical understanding and teaching. Such an understanding of mission in context has added to its good image as a young church that can challenge its partners on such vital issues as this one. Thus, her voice was heard loud and clear among the intended audience.

The document has also strengthened the church's credibility among partners. The idea of self-evaluation of ministry and setting future directions was not a mere assertion, but a formal commitment, as partners have witnessed in their respective responses to the LWF and to the EECMY office.

The EECMY's motto of service as stated in the Constitution is 'Serving the Whole Person'. This article defines both the evangelistic and development goals of the church and is a sound mission declaration.

Following the wide acceptance of the paper by most partners, the church intensified holistic ministry in the country. Initially, projects were prepared in a balanced way by the evangelism and development departments of the church. Funds were made available for the training of pastors, evangelists, for construction of church buildings as well as multifaceted development activities. Both departments were gradually developed to facilitate the holistic mission of the church.

### **Brief Overview of the Oresent: EECMY Holistic Ministry Today**

The EECMY has continued with its motto of 'Serving the Whole Person'. In its Constitution, the church has defined the whole essence of its service

as 'serving a person's material and spiritual needs'.<sup>37</sup> This definition takes into consideration evangelistic and development activities.

The diaconal ministry of the EECMY has been strengthened through the restructuring of both the Department of Mission and Theology (DMT) and the Development and Social Services Commission (DASSC) offices.

### Diakonia Defined

The LWF Mission Document, *Mission in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment* gives a broad definition of diakonia:

In Lutheran churches, diakonia is expressed in various forms: international relief and development work, diaconal institutions, advocacy for peace, justice, and integrity of creation, congregational diaconal work and social ministries. When carrying out these ministries, the church is mindful of two theological issues. First, diakonia is more than mere charity. The church understands diakonia to be interrelated deeply with kerygma (proclamation) and koinonia (sharing at the table) and thus as inevitably prophetic.<sup>38</sup>

The second theological issue as defined by the LWF mission document is that the church, being rooted in the theology of the cross, is spiritually led to identify itself with the suffering and the excluded. The purpose of its diaconal work is not to proselytize (to attract other Christians to one's own denomination). In emergencies especially, the church does not use people's vulnerability as an occasion to impose its Christian beliefs.<sup>39</sup>

### Diaconal Ministry by the EECMY-DASSC

The EECMY-DASSC has undergone a critical self-examination in the 1990s. It has restructured its working system, worked out strategic plans and has entered into practical implementations. It is carrying out multifaceted diaconal work. I cite the following according to the programme priorities of DASSC:<sup>40</sup>

- food security, natural resources management and conservation
- education, child and youth development
- gender and development
- community health and HIV/AIDS prevention and control
- water and sanitation
- advocacy for peace, justice and human rights

<sup>37</sup> The EECMY, Constitution and Bylaws, as amended by the 17th General Assembly, January 2005, 17.

<sup>38</sup> *Mission in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment* (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 2004), 37.

<sup>39</sup> *Mission in Context*, 38.

<sup>40</sup> Policy Document, prepared by the EECMY DASSC, 2008.

Each of these programme priorities includes programmes/projects , costing millions of Ethiopian birr every year.

The particular attention DASSC is giving to socially marginalized people, groups and communities, emphasizing the empowerment of neglected peoples and providing services for remote and poorly accessible areas, is very encouraging and a living witness of the church to modern ‘Samaritans’.

### **Congregation-Based EECMY Diaconal Ministry Today**

Over the years, the motto of ‘Serving the Whole Person’ has led the EECMY to strengthen congregation-based diaconal ministry alongside the institutionalized development programmes operated by DASSC. Following policy directives given by the EECMY General Assembly in January 2001, the church formally established a National Diaconal Ministry in April 2004 under the Department for Mission and Theology (DMT). The vision of this ministry is ‘to optimize practical diaconal service in society by church members, via the organized and united resources of the congregations’.<sup>41</sup> Its mission is ‘to raise awareness and empower the congregations through teaching, training, production of literature, demonstration of some practical congregational diaconal work for the attainment of the vision, etc.’.<sup>42</sup> The more than 8,000 congregations in 25 synods of the EECMY are engaged in various diaconal activities within themselves and in society at large. *Diakonia* and proclamation of the gospel are integral parts of EECMY ministry.

### **Conclusion**

The EECMY mission document of 1972 was written to define the EECMY’s understanding of the right approach to God’s mission for his people. Integral human development, where both spiritual and material needs are seen together, is the only right approach to the development question in society. The old emphasis in the mission of western churches on verbal communication of the gospel and the new emphases, which focus on the material well-being of a person by making the gospel a side-issue only, should be brought into balance. Christian service is neither ‘a means to an end’ nor ‘an end in itself’, as stated in the mission document.

The rapid growth of the EECMY has been another major factor that compelled the EECMY to ask missionary societies and donor agencies to include direct support for congregational work and leadership training, so that EECMY would be able to cope with rapid growth.

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<sup>41</sup> Report by the EECMY-National Diaconal Ministry, Addis Ababa, January 2008, 2.

<sup>42</sup> Report, 2.

Today's EECMY ministry, proclamation and development are being guided by its motto of 'Serving the Whole Person', developed as the result of the 1972 mission document. The EECMY-DASSC and DMT have undergone restructuring to make them better able to render effective holistic service in the church and in society. Diaconal ministry in the EECMY congregations is aimed at serving the poor and needy in society.

The EECMY has continued with its holistic ministry to Ethiopian society. It also shares the national vision to reduce poverty, to work towards rendering better health, education and social services to the Ethiopian people, leading to the 'renaissance of the nation'. The church can do that with the help of the Triune God and the tireless efforts of its members and partners across the globe.

*List of abbreviations:*

CCC	–	Commission on Church Co-operation (LWF)
EECMY	–	The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus
DASSC	–	Development and Social Services Commission (EECMY)
DMT	–	Department for Mission and Theology (EECMY)
GA	–	General Assembly (EECMY)
NIV	–	New International Version (of the Bible)

# CHRIST-CENTRED RESPONSIBILITY IN PHILIPPINE CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS

Aldrin M. Peñamora

## Introduction

‘To speak of Christ means to keep silent; to keep silent about Christ means to speak. When the Church speaks rightly out of a proper silence, then Christ is proclaimed.’<sup>1</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer reminds us that silence is vital in proclaiming the gospel and serving others genuinely, that every proclamation and service must be done in and through reverent silence. Because evangelism and *diakonia* are rooted in God’s word, the church needs first to listen and be silent before the word in order to properly speak and act. While one may certainly ask questions beginning with *what*, *how* – or in more difficult times, *why* – in relation to the word, it is Bonhoeffer’s keen insight that any question about the Logos must have *Who* as the starting-point, for it is only through knowing and participating in the life of Christ that the church can know the content of its proclamation and understand its mission. Indeed, we are offered in Christ the possibility of partaking in the reality of God and in the reality of the world.<sup>2</sup>

So the question *Who is Christ?* lies at the very centre of evangelism and *diakonia*. How the church appropriates its understanding of the person and nature of Christ determines in a very significant way the shape of its proclamation and service. In the Philippine context, providing an adequate answer to this question has become urgent in view of the still ongoing centuries-old Christian-Muslim conflict in the southern Philippines, which had its beginnings when Christian colonizers from the West reinforced their proclamation of the gospel to the native followers of Islam, whom they derogatorily called *Moros*,<sup>3</sup> with swords, guns and cannons.

In this essay, I will draw out key implications of Bonhoeffer’s idea of Christ as the ‘man for others’ for healing Christian-Muslim relations in the Philippines. I argue that, as Christianity means participating in Christ, such

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<sup>1</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Christ the Center*, trans. Edwin H. Robertson (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 27.

<sup>2</sup> Larry L. Rasmussen, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Reality and Resistance* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 23.

<sup>3</sup> The Spanish colonizers used the term ‘Moro’ that referred to their savage nature, capable of being reformed only through Christianization: Cesar A. Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 3rd edition (Quezon City, Philippines: University of the Philippines, 2009), 10.

participation is defined by being responsible for others. I will thus frame evangelism and *diakonia* in terms of a Christ-centred ethic of responsibility, which is God's calling for Christians to participate in healing all forms of brokenness such as the Christian-Moro conflict in the southern Philippines.

### **'Burdens' Affecting Christian-Muslim Relations in South-east Asia**

The Christian-Muslim conflict in the southern Philippines did not occur in isolation. It is linked with the South-east Asian expansion of Islam through multi-ethnic traders, and of Christianity through western colonizers.<sup>4</sup> Inevitably, the long history of conflict among Christians and Muslims influenced their encounters in this region. The burden of their violent history certainly haunts Christian-Muslim relations in South-east Asia to this very day.

In the case of the Philippines,<sup>5</sup> the Spanish colonizers who landed on the shores of Manila in the sixteenth century remembered clearly the *Reconquista*, as the Spanish author, Victor Concas y Palau, says:

When they landed in Manila... it was there that for the first time since the conquest of Granada that the Spaniards once more stood face-to-face with the standards of the Prophet... As was inevitable, they met at the walls under artillery fire.<sup>6</sup>

Spreading Catholicism was certainly a key motivation in Spain's colonization of the Philippines, but other factors were also important. Indeed, Christian-Muslim conflicts are often multi-causal so that when conflicts break down along religious lines, generally the cause is not attributable merely to religion.<sup>7</sup> The religious, economic and political factors intertwined in the fifteenth century when European powers decided to break the Muslim monopoly of the spice trade and begin 'anew a "Crusade of faith and commerce" with papal blessing'.<sup>8</sup> Of course, their decision was a reaction to the Ottoman Empire's aggressive expansion in Europe, Africa and Asia, that included Mehmet the Conqueror's capture of

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Day McAmis, *Malay Muslims: The History and Challenge of Resurgent Islam in Southeast Asia* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 28-29.

<sup>5</sup> The name 'Philippines' was used for the first time when the commander of a ship under the Villalobos Expedition (1542-1546) named what is now Leyte as *Las Filipinas* in honour of King Philip II of Spain: Manuel R. Tawagon, 'The Moros and Filipino Nationalism: An Historiographical Upstreaming', in *Mindanao Journal*, 19, Nos. 1-2 (July-December 1992), 143.

<sup>6</sup> Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 83, quoting Victor M. Concas y Palau in Wenceslao Retana's edition of Antonio de Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* (Madrid: n.p., 1910), 379.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Michel, 'Social and Religious Factors Affecting Muslim-Christian-Relations', in *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 8, No. 1 (1997), 54.

<sup>8</sup> McAmis, *Malay Muslims*, 30.

Constantinople in 1453. To counter this European threat to their trade dominance in South-east Asia, the Ottoman Empire mounted multiple offensives and aided local rulers in India and the Moluccas who were fighting the Portuguese.<sup>9</sup> But by 1511, the Portuguese had wrested Moluccas, the centre of spice trade, from Muslim control, and by 1545 had begun a fervent Christianization in Ambon.<sup>10</sup> Such intrusions were made even worse when the Portuguese treated Indonesian Muslims – just as the Spaniards did to the Moros – with a cruelty which painted an enduringly negative image of Christianity in the region.<sup>11</sup>

Ethnicity is another burden that impinges on South-east Asian Christian-Muslim relations. In other regions, such as the Middle East, relations operate mainly along religious or theological lines,<sup>12</sup> but in South-east Asia ethnicity exerts a strong influence even in the construction of self-identity such that faith and ethnicity are viewed as linked intrinsically. For instance, the Malay people of Malaysia generally see Islam as part of their very identity.<sup>13</sup> At times, ethnic conflicts are shaped by foreign intrusion. For example, the animosity exacerbated relations between the Chinese and the Malays of Malaya when, after World War II, the British empowered the Chinese, who had sided with the British during the war, and disempowered the Malay sultanates because they had sided with the Japanese. This led to the formation of the United Malay National Organization (UMNO) that fought to retain the powers of the sultanates.<sup>14</sup>

But what often leads to ethnic conflict is the politicization of ethnicity.<sup>15</sup> Conflicts usually emerge when ethnic differences significantly affect a group's rights to politically related factors such as the distribution of, and access to, power, wealth and influence, and the attribution of privileged or

<sup>9</sup> Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), 21-24.

<sup>10</sup> J.J. van Klaveren, *The Dutch Colonial System in the East Indies* (The Hague: J.J. van Klaveren, 1953), 30-31.

<sup>11</sup> D.G.E. Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1981), 206; McAmis, *Malay Muslims*, 32.

<sup>12</sup> Imtiyaz Yusuf, 'The Middle East and Muslim Southeast Asia: Implications of the Arab Spring': [www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/Public/focus/essay1009\\_southeast\\_asia.html](http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/Public/focus/essay1009_southeast_asia.html) (accessed 27th September 2016).

<sup>13</sup> Tom Michel, 'Implications of the Islamic Revival for Christian-Muslim Dialogue in Asia', in *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 3, No. 2 (2003), 59. Self-identity is not static and is often negotiated. See Kamaludeen Mohammed Nasir, Alexius A. Pereira and Bryan S. Turner, *Muslims in Singapore: Piety, Politics and Policies* (London: Routledge, 2010), 34.

<sup>14</sup> Max L. Gross, *A Muslim Archipelago: Islam and Politics in Southeast Asia* (Washington: National Defense Intelligence College, 2007), 14-15.

<sup>15</sup> Mohd Azizuddin Mohd Sani, Rie Nakamura and Shamsuddin L. Taya, *Dynamic of Ethnic Relations in Southeast Asia* (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 4.

underprivileged status.<sup>16</sup> In this political sphere, the state plays a key role. The Singaporean state's implementation of the policy of multiracialism is a fine example.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, as David Brown remarks, 'no states are able to fully control the ethnic consciousness and behavior of those they purport to govern... The limitations on the state's ability to control ethnicity relate in part to the intrinsic character of ethnic consciousness, which makes it inherently resilient to attempts by state elites to transform or control it'.<sup>18</sup> Thus, even when the Buddhist Thai government imposed a policy of assimilation in the 1920s in the Muslim provinces of Yala, Narathiwat and Pattani, an armed Malay-Muslim separatist movement still emerged in the 1960s, and in 2004 during separatist violence in South Thailand.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, when the bond between ethnicity and religion is weak, Christians and Muslims tend to have better relations when they belong to the same ethnic group. This can be seen in the *Subanon* tribe of the Philippines, and the *Melanau* people of Malaysia.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, the burden of Islamic religious radicalization affects present South-east Asian Christian-Muslim relations. Generally, Islam in South-east Asia is known to be pietistic and tolerant of other religions as a result of Sufism.<sup>21</sup> This perception changed after the September 11th 2001 terror attacks on the United States, and the violence that followed. In the wake of terror attacks often described as Islamic, such as the Bali bombings on 12th October 2002 (202 civilians killed), the perception grew worldwide that Islam in South-east Asia has become more radicalized.<sup>22</sup> Radicalization is of course not exclusive to Islam. In the Philippines, the Christian group *Ilaga* (rats) sowed terror among the Muslim communities in the 1970s. But because of terror networks like *ISIS*, and within South-east Asia *Jemaah Islamiyah* (Arabic for 'Muslim Group'), the *Abu Sayyaf* (Arabic for 'Bearer of the Sword'), global attention has focused on Muslim radicals.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Michel, 'Social and Religious Factors Affecting Muslim-Christian Relations', 53-55.

<sup>17</sup> Nasir et al, *Muslims in Singapore*, 4-12.

<sup>18</sup> David Brown, *The State and Ethnic Politics in Southeast Asia* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 2.

<sup>19</sup> Ian Storey, 'Ethnic Separatism in Southern Thailand: Kingdom Fraying at the Edge?': <http://apcss.org/Publications/APSSS/Ethnic%20Separatism%20in%20Southern%20Thailand.Storey.pdf> (accessed 3rd December 2015). See Anthony L. Smith, 'Trouble in Thailand's Muslim South: Separatism, Not Global Terrorism', in *Asia Pacific Security Studies* 3, No. 10 (December 2004), 3.

<sup>20</sup> Michel, 'Implications of the Islamic Revival', 60.

<sup>21</sup> Michel, 'Implications of the Islamic Revival', 63.

<sup>22</sup> Azyumardi Azra, 'Islam in Southeast: Tolerance and Radicalism'. Paper presented at Miegunyah Public Lecture, University of Melbourne, 6th April 2005.

<sup>23</sup> Kumar Ramakrishna, 'The State of Muslim Radicalization of Muslim Communities in Southeast Asia', in *Radicalization of Muslim Communities in Southeast Asia* (Proceedings of the International Conference in Makati City, Philippines, 30th November-2nd December 2005), 38.

A significant element in creating a radical Islamic perspective was the spread of Wahabism in Asia. Wahabism's first objective was the overthrow of colonial regimes through violent *jihad* to create Islamic states that would facilitate society's purification through Islamisation.<sup>24</sup> *Jemaah Islamiyah* thus adapted the goal of establishing *Daulah Islamiyah Nusantara*, or an Islamic state consisting of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the southern Philippines and Brunei.<sup>25</sup> Often, the fusion of religion and violence is effected by what Mark Juergensmeyer described as the 'coalescence of a peculiar set of circumstances'<sup>26</sup> that can be summed up by the word 'injustice'.

### The 'Moro Problem'

The 'Moro Problem' refers to the 'historical and systematic marginalization and minoritization of the... Moros in their own homeland in the Mindanao islands, first by colonial powers from Spain... then the US... and more recently by successive Philippine governments dominated by an elite with a Christian-Western orientation'.<sup>27</sup> While the Moro situation has many aspects, at its root it is about *injustice*<sup>28</sup> – unjust economic development for the Moros; unjust loss of Moro political sovereignty; and unjust depiction of Moro identity.<sup>29</sup>

After centuries of violent conflict and exploitation, the majority of the Moros had become paupers in their own land. The economic destitution of the *Bangsa Moro* (the Moro nation) is largely concerned with their *ancestral land*, from the best parts of which they were driven out as colonial governments handed over land ownership to Christian Filipinos and foreign-owned corporations. The loss of ancestral domain was debilitating for the Moros because their social existence for centuries had revolved round those lands.<sup>30</sup> What aggravated Moro poverty were development efforts by the Philippine government that have been directed

<sup>24</sup> Michel, 'Implications of the Islamic Revival', 67.

<sup>25</sup> Ahmad F. Yousif, 'Contemporary Islamic Movements in Southeast Asia: Challenges and Opportunities', in Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi (ed), *The Blackwell Companion to Contemporary Islamic Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 459.

<sup>26</sup> Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 3rd edition (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 10.

<sup>27</sup> Soliman Santos, Jr., 'Evolution of the Armed Conflict on the Moro Front'. Background paper submitted for the Philippine Human Development Report 2005: [http://hdn.org.ph/wp-content/uploads/2005\\_PHDR/2005%20Evolution\\_Moro\\_Conflict.pdf](http://hdn.org.ph/wp-content/uploads/2005_PHDR/2005%20Evolution_Moro_Conflict.pdf) (accessed 11th January 2014).

<sup>28</sup> Salah Jubair, *The Long Road to Peace* (Cotabato, Philippines: PIBS, 2007)5-6.

<sup>29</sup> Jubair, *Long Road to Peace*, 6. See Macapado A. Muslim, *The Moro Armed Struggle in the Philippines* (Marawi City, Philippines: MSU, 1994), 117-33.

<sup>30</sup> Lualhati Abreu, 'Ancestral Domain – the Core Issue', in Bobby M. Tuazon (ed), *The Moro Reader: History and the Contemporary Struggles of the Bangsamoro People* (Quezon City, Philippines: CenPEG, 2008), 51.

to improving primarily the conditions of Christian settlers. Studies done in the 1970s, in 2006 and 2009, report invariably that Moro regions are among those with the highest infant mortality and unemployment rates, and the highest poverty incidence, and which have lagged far behind in terms of necessities.<sup>31</sup> Currently, the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front are trying to achieve peace through negotiation. But, as Salah Jubair points out, 'Peace requires not only the absence of violence, but also the presence of justice... If there is going to be a healing process, it must begin and end in justice.'<sup>32</sup>

Dismal conditions and injustice led to the Moro armed struggle. From the time the contemporary Moro struggle broke out in the 1970s until the 1996 Jakarta Peace Agreement was signed, more than 150,000 persons had died in armed clashes, 300,000 buildings and houses had been burned, 535 mosques razed, 35 towns completely wiped out; and half the entire Moro population had been uprooted.<sup>33</sup> The 1996 Agreement failed to put an end to the conflict. In the year 2000, the Philippine government launched an offensive that led to the displacement of 439,000 persons and the death of 2,000 people.<sup>34</sup> Between August and September 2008, a battle ensued that claimed more than 100 lives and led to the displacement of an estimated 600,000 people.<sup>35</sup>

Moro displacement from their ancestral lands, however, was not merely caused by violence. As Jorge V. Tigno remarks insightfully:

While migration can result from violent conflict situations, the former can also create the conditions for the eruption of the latter. The systematic placement of humanity in an area that creates the conditions for the marginalisation and minoritisation of the indigenous collective population can also provide the trigger for the onset as well as the continuation of violent conflicts.<sup>36</sup>

Government-sponsored migration to Mindanao of mostly Christian Filipinos commenced during the American period and proceeded relentlessly once the Philippines had gained its independence. Confiscatory laws were implemented that led to enormous harvests for Christian

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<sup>31</sup> Muslim, *The Moro Armed Struggle*, 89-90; Institute of Autonomy and Governance, 'ARMM Helps: Synergy in Action', in *Autonomy and Peace Review* (April-June 2012), 77-79.

<sup>32</sup> Jubair, *Long Road to Peace*, 7, 9.

<sup>33</sup> Amina Rasul, *Broken Peace?: Assessing the 1996 GRP-MNLF Final Peace Agreement* (Makati City, Philippines: 2007) 5.

<sup>34</sup> Eddie Quitariano and Theofeliz Marie Francisco, *Their War, Our Struggle: Stories of Children in Mindanao* (Quezon City, Philippines: Save the Children, UK, 2004), 15.

<sup>35</sup> PCID and KAS, *Voices of Dissent: A Postscript to the MOA-AD Decision* (Mandaluyong City, Philippines: PCID and KAS, 2009), iii.

<sup>36</sup> Jorge V. Tigno, 'Migration and Violent Conflict in Mindanao', in *Population Review*, 45, No. 1 (2006), 24.

Filipinos and foreign investors.<sup>37</sup> ‘The Land of Promise’ certainly became a land of fulfilment for many Christianized Filipinos and foreign investors.<sup>38</sup> Sadly, though the Moros owned most of the land in Mindanao on the eve of American colonization, by 1981 they owned less than 17% which was located mostly in barren areas.<sup>39</sup> In 1913, Muslim Filipinos formed 98% of Mindanao’s population, but by 1990, they only formed 19%. In fact, as early as the 1960s, the Moro population had disappeared from many of their long-established areas.<sup>40</sup>

Understandably, for the Moros ‘their rights to their ancestral lands became the core of the expression of their right to self-determination’.<sup>41</sup> On a deeper level, the Moro historian, Alunan Glang, poses these questions for Christians: ‘Where is the moral force of Christianity, the force of love and goodwill to make the Muslim Filipinos feel that they also belong to this nation? Is Christianity good only for converting people and denying... the love of Christ? These are questions our Christian brothers must answer. These answers will determine whether national cohesiveness is possible.’<sup>42</sup>

### The ‘Victim Christ’ of the Philippines

Such questions can be answered based on an adequate understanding of the person and teachings of Christ. Sadly, many Christian Filipinos fail not only to give adequate answers but to engage in social realities, such as the Mindanao conflict, based on an explicit or implicit understanding that Jesus is irrelevant to socio-political realities. In poverty-stricken Philippines, there are numerous conceptions of Jesus.<sup>43</sup> To suffering Filipinos, Aristotle’s ‘Unmoved Mover’, who is eternally immovable, immutable,

<sup>37</sup> Muslim, *The Moro Armed Struggle*, 59ff.

<sup>38</sup> Muslim, *The Moro Armed Struggle*, 117-19. A detailed treatment of this subject can be found in Macapado A. Muslim, ‘The Bangsa Moro: the Highly Neglected People in the Neglected But Rich Mindanao’, *Dansalan Quarterly* 12:1-4 (January-December 1992), 59ff.

<sup>39</sup> Aijaz Ahmad, ‘Class and Colony in Mindanao’, in Eric Gutiérrez et al (eds), *Rebels, Warlords and Ulama* (Quezon City, Philippines: Institute for Popular Democracy, 1999), 13.

<sup>40</sup> Cesar Adib Majul, *The Contemporary Muslim Movement in the Philippines* (Berkeley, CA: Mizan, 1985), 30.

<sup>41</sup> Myrthena L. Fianza, ‘Indigenous Patterns of Land Ownership’, in *Mindanao Focus*, quoted in Abreu, ‘Ancestral Domain’, 48. What aggravates Moro consternation is that Christian Filipinos generally do not share the view that they took Moro lands unjustly. Having the Torrens titles is enough for many Filipinos to justify that they are the lawful landowners. Chito R. Gavino, *Struggle for Autonomy in Mindanao* (Davao City, Philippines: Kaluwasan Foundation, 1998), 88.

<sup>42</sup> Alunan C. Glang, *Muslim Secession or Integration?* (Quezon City, Philippines: Garcia, 1969), 13 – quoted in McAmis, ‘Muslim Filipinos’, 54.

<sup>43</sup> One of the informative works on this topic can be found in Leonardo N. Mercado, *Christ in the Philippines* (Tacloban City, Philippines: Divine Word, 1982).

indivisible, self-absorbed and apathetic<sup>44</sup> is a dispiriting idea. Why would God choose self-exile from all creation, especially from people who have been created in the divine image? But whereas God-in-exile is a confounding idea, for many Filipinos a suffering or dead God is worthy of veneration, as evidenced by a great number of Filipinos who are devotees of the dead or entombed Christ (*Santo Bangkay* or *Santo Entierro*).<sup>45</sup> Indeed, many Filipinos attach a ‘disproportionate significance to the suffering and death of Christ over that of his life and teaching’.<sup>46</sup> For them, Jesus is the scourged, defeated and dead Saviour – the ‘Victim Christ’.<sup>47</sup>

This view of Christ is often expressed in the cult of images, which is a prominent expression of Philippine folk Catholicism. According to Benigno Beltran, too much emphasis on the Victim Christ, in the face of oppression and injustice, can be used ‘to legitimize oppression and passivity in the face of injustice’.<sup>48</sup> It might foster ‘numbness in the face of brokenness and the acceptance of alienation as an irrevocable decree of fate... Jesus would then be relegated completely to the realm of the eternal and become historically inoperative’.<sup>49</sup> Speaking about the plight of oppressed women in the Philippines, Virginia Fabella makes a similar point: how most women who are oppressed are unaware of Christ’s image as liberator, and know of Jesus only as one who understands passively the sufferings they endure. They are thus oblivious of their class and gender oppression, and ‘live a status quo Christology’.<sup>50</sup>

### Jesus: The Responsible ‘Man for Others’

Bonhoeffer’s idea that Jesus is the ‘man for others’ offers a much-needed corrective to the notion of the Victim Christ. For Bonhoeffer, Jesus Christ takes form among people in discipleship through his ontological *pro me* structure that unifies Christ’s act (*actio Dei*) and being (*praesentia Dei*). ‘Christ is Christ, not just for himself, but in relation to me. His being Christ is his being for me, *pro me*... Christ can never be thought of as being for

<sup>44</sup> *Metaphysics*, 12. 7, 9.

<sup>45</sup> See Fenella Cannell, ‘The Imitation of Christ in Bicol, Philippines’, in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 1:2 (1995).

<sup>46</sup> Douglas J. Elwood and Patricia I. Magdamo, *Christ in Philippine Context: Course Textbook in Theology and Religious Studies* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day, 1971), 7.

<sup>47</sup> Elwood and Magdamo, *Christ in Philippine Context*, 7.

<sup>48</sup> Benigno P. Beltran, *The Christology of the Inarticulate: An Inquiry Into the Filipino Understanding of Jesus the Christ* (Manila: Divine Word, 1987), 135ff.

<sup>49</sup> Beltran, *Christology of the Inarticulate*, 138.

<sup>50</sup> Virginia Fabella, ‘Christology from an Asian Woman’s Perspective’, in Virginia Fabella and Sun Ai Lee Park (eds), *We Dare to Dream: Doing Theology as Asian Women* (Kowloon, Hong Kong: AWCCT, 1989) 10.

himself, but only in relation to me.’<sup>51</sup> The *pro me* structure is Christ’s nature as ‘being-for-others’.<sup>52</sup> This denotes an ethic of responsibility for the Other that is demonstrated by Jesus’ vicarious representative action (in German: *Stellvertretung*). As Bonhoeffer remarks, ‘Jesus was not the individual who sought to achieve some personal perfection, but only lived as the one who in himself has taken on and bears the selves of all human beings. His entire living, acting and suffering was vicarious representative action... he is the responsible human being *par excellence*. Since he is life, all of life through him is destined to be vicarious representative action.’<sup>53</sup>

Following Jesus in discipleship, then, is about being for others, and being for others is what constitutes essentially a Christ-centred ethic of responsibility. In this sense, we can speak of what is required of the individual and the church along the same lines – that is, in discipleship the individual Christian and the church are called to exist ‘for others’. Being *in* the world, they are called in Christ to be *for* the world. As Bonhoeffer emphasizes, ‘The church is the church only when it exists for others... It must tell men of every calling what it means to live in Christ, to exist for others.’<sup>54</sup>

In existing for others, the starting-point can only be Christ, who is the origin of all responsible action. As the sinless one, Jesus entered into the community of guilty human beings to take the burden of guilt upon himself. Being responsible, then, means participating in Jesus’ messianic sufferings for others; this means taking seriously not just our own sufferings but the sufferings of God for those who suffer in the world.<sup>55</sup> As Christ became ‘guilty’, the individual believer and the church must also become guilty. Indeed, those who act responsibly become guilty themselves, for responsible persons ‘take on guilt... and place this guilt on themselves, not on someone else... they stand up for it and take responsibility for it’.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Christ the Center*, 47.<sup>righted Material</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, Eberhard Bethge (ed), (New York: Collier, 1972), 381-82.

<sup>53</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, Wayne W. Floyd, Jr. (ed), Vol. VI, *Ethics* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005), 258-59.

<sup>54</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 381-82.

<sup>55</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 361-62.

<sup>56</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 275, 282. See also Larry Rasmussen, *Reality and Resistance*, 171-173; Christine C. Schliesser, ‘Accepting Guilt for the Sake of Germany: An Analysis of Bonhoeffer’s Concept of Accepting Guilt and its Implications for Bonhoeffer’s Political Resistance’, in *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, 60, Nos. 1-2 (2006), 66-68.

### Christ-Centred Responsibility for Christian-Moro Relations

In past centuries up to this day, Filipino Christians and Moros have inflicted much violence upon each other. As a Filipino Christian, I ask whether Filipino Christians have any moral obligation to rectify not just present abuses toward the Moros, but even those committed in the past. It seems much easier for both Christians and Muslims to simply forget the past.

But Christianity is a religion that stands or falls on the veracity of the faith community's memory.<sup>57</sup> It does not value the destruction or denial even of deplorable memories; rather, it cultivates the act of *remembering responsibly* that points to one's readiness to accept memories of oppression and responsibility for any role one might have played in those unpleasantly remembered situations. Bonhoeffer exemplified this when he decided to go back to Nazi Germany so he could be in solidarity with his people.<sup>58</sup> By participating in the conspiracy to end Nazi atrocities against the Jews, Bonhoeffer clarified what 'being for others' means. It means responsibility is acting concretely within time and history.<sup>59</sup>

If Filipino Christians are to be powerful witnesses of Christ to the Moros, it is necessary for them to confront humbly the burden of history and its consequences by bearing vicariously the guilt of past Christian oppressors, and forgiving also the past offences of the Moro people. In other words, it is vital to heal the past in order to heal the present. Transforming Christian-Moro relations can only occur by accepting the past, understanding the roots of the conflict and fostering just and peaceful relations.<sup>60</sup> Bearing guilt vicariously and forgiving one another need also to be exemplified socially. In following Christ, Christian Filipinos are called to struggle, defend and even fight for the rights of oppressed Moros, who are among the poorest in the nation.<sup>61</sup> Christian Filipinos must be willing to suffer *for* and *with* the Moros, as Christ entered into the sufferings of our broken world. Christian discipleship is certainly being bound to the

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<sup>57</sup> Eduardo Hoornaert, *The Memory of the Christian People* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 3-4.

<sup>58</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, Vol. XVI, *Theological Education Underground* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012), 210.

<sup>59</sup> John de Gruchy, 'Confessing Guilt in South Africa Today in Dialogue with Dietrich Bonhoeffer', in *Journal of Theology for South Africa*, No. 67 (June 1989), 43. See Eberhard Bethge, 'Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Jews', in *Ethical Responsibility: Bonhoeffer's Legacy to the Churches*, J.D. Godsey and G.B. Kelly (eds), (Toronto, Canada: Edwin Mellen, 1981), 76.

<sup>60</sup> Antonio Ledesma, *Healing the Past, Building the Future: Soundings from Mindanao* (Quezon City, Philippines: Jesuit Communications, 2005), 42.

<sup>61</sup> See Rufa Cagoco-Guiam, 'The ARMM and the Peace Process: Imperatives, Challenges, and Prospects', in *Notre Dame Journal* 32:5 (June 2006), 123ff.

sufferings of Christ.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, by participating in struggles against Moro oppression, Filipino Christians help to liberate the church itself from colonizing tendencies inherited from the past. In struggling against Moro oppression, the church embodies the Reformation principle that the church is always in need of reform (*ecclesia semper reformanda est*).

Hence, responsible Christians must aim at creating new narratives with the Moro people. Healing traumatic memories created by conflict can only be achieved by establishing new narratives that creates a new pattern of meaning in contrast with the old which has been the death of meaning.<sup>63</sup> In view of the past, creating new narratives with the Moro people requires respecting their socio-cultural environment. It requires discarding what Michael Oakeshott calls *superbia* or an exclusive concern with one's own utterance.<sup>64</sup>

It is therefore crucial for Christian Filipinos as they carry out the intertwined Christian social responsibilities of evangelism and *diakonia* to radiate toward the Moros the love of Christ for all human beings. One of the ways the gospel can be proclaimed is through authentic dialogue, which necessitates the truthful opening up of oneself to 'the Moro Other'. According to the late bishop Bienvenido Tuddud, sharing oneself in dialogue is rooted in the knowledge that Christians and Moros have something valuable to share. Dialogues are therefore characterized by *kenosis* or self-emptying, which demands displacing oneself to make way for others. Through authentic dialogues, Christians will be able to participate in the anxiety and joys of the Moro people.<sup>65</sup> As such, dialogue must be marked by powerlessness and vulnerability, for from a position of vulnerability one can be open to genuine self-communication that builds trust.<sup>66</sup> Most importantly, love must define dialogue. 'Dialogue must not only be a dialogue of life. It must be a fruit of the life of dialogue. One must move from fear of dialogue, to dialogue out of fear, to love of dialogue, and above all, to dialogue out of love.'<sup>67</sup>

As evangelism through dialogue is marked by *kenosis*, so should it characterize the church's *diakonia* to the world. In serving others, the church must not be viewed as a physician or a benefactor that provides for the healing of the physical and social ills of people. For *diakonia* is borne

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<sup>62</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, Vol. IV, *Discipleship* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 89.

<sup>63</sup> Robert Schreiter, 'Sharing Memories of the Past: The Healing of Memories and Interreligious Encounter', in *Currents in Theology and Mission*, 35, No. 2 (April 2008), 113.

<sup>64</sup> Michael Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics* (London: Methuen, 1962), 261.

<sup>65</sup> Georg Ziselsberger, 'Bishop Bienvenido S. Tuddud's Spirituality of the Muslim-Christian Dialogue', in *The Vision of Dialogue of Bishop Bienvenido S. Tuddud* (Zamboanga City, Philippines: Silsilah, 1990), 111-12.

<sup>66</sup> Ziselsberger, *Dialogue*, 108.

<sup>67</sup> Quoted in Sebastiano D'Ambra, 'Presentation', in Ziselsberger, *Dialogue*, x.

out of the church's participation in the life of Christ, the true *diakonos*, who emptied himself to take upon him all humanity's weaknesses and sins, and thus provided in his very person the ground and source of all diaconal actions.<sup>68</sup> *Diakonia* and evangelism are therefore Christocentric. They unitarily proclaim Christ. As Ray S. Anderson points out, 'the gospel is not simply clothed with physical and material dress to make it credible to man; *diakonia* is the gospel... The service of the Word brings to man a transcendent power of liberation from bondage and participation in the life of God'.<sup>69</sup> *Diakonia* is thus concerned with justice and peace for all human beings that encompass actions of care and relief, and addresses the root causes of injustice that are often embedded in oppressive social structures.<sup>70</sup> Through *diakonia*, the church is called to exist for others by giving material and physical content to the spirituality of God's grace for the world.<sup>71</sup>

The importance of *diakonia* for the Moro people was realized by Sebastiano d'Ambra, founder of Silsilah Dialogue Movement, when in 1985 more than 500 houses were gutted by fire in a depressed area in Zamboanga City in Mindanao. Silsilah took part in rebuilding the houses and encouraged the people to start all over again. It was the first time that the organization took the initiative to be in solidarity with Muslims who were victims of the fire.<sup>72</sup> Such initiatives for D'Ambra reflect the meaning of the fourth beatitude of the Sermon on the Mount, which concerns hungering and seeking ways to express uprightness and justice. This can be demonstrated towards the Moros by viewing 'the past and the present with the spirit of responsibility, asking and giving forgiveness and recognizing the sins and mistakes of the past and the present'.<sup>73</sup>

## Conclusion

To be responsible, one must be able to give account to someone for something.<sup>74</sup> In other words, a person's responsibility for something or

<sup>68</sup> Ray S. Anderson, 'Living in the World', in *Theological Foundations for Ministry*, Ray S. Anderson (ed), (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2000), 593.

<sup>69</sup> Anderson, 'Living in the World', 594.

<sup>70</sup> Isabel Apawo Phiri and Kim Dongsung, 'Called to Be a Diaconal Community Through a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace', in *Ecumenical Review*, 66, No. 2 (October 2014), 255.

<sup>71</sup> Anderson, 'Living in the World', 593.

<sup>72</sup> Sebastiano D'Ambra, *Life in Dialogue: Pathways to Inter-Religious Dialogue and the Vision of the Islamo-Christian Silsilah Dialogue Movement* (Zamboanga City, Philippines: Silsilah, 1991), 104-05.

<sup>73</sup> Sebastiano D'Ambra, *Rediscovering the Mission of Dialogue and Peace in the Church in the Light of the Beatitudes* (Zamboanga City, Philippines: Silsilah, 2010), 9.

<sup>74</sup> H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Responsibility of the Church for Society and Other Essays*, Kristine A. Culp (ed), (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 64.

someone depends on to *whom* one is accountable.<sup>75</sup> Christian responsibility towards others is based primarily on being bound to Christ. In this sense, Filipino Christians are called to be in solidarity with the Moros of Mindanao, through which they will be able to exemplify what being for others means. In the Philippine context, being for others is symbolized by the notion of *kapwa*.

Being a *kapwa* to others means recognizing one's shared identity with them. It is this value that leads the Filipino to treat others as another 'I'.<sup>76</sup> As a corollary, denying to others the notion of shared identity leads to the construction of the notion of 'enemy'. While certain similarities exist between Filipino Christians and Moros, mainly because they are both of the *imago Dei*, the vital differences between them in terms of history, ethnicity and religion should not be a hindrance to them for treating each other as *kapwa*. Indeed, for us Christians, it is when we embrace 'the Moro Other' for his/her *otherness* that we are able to follow Jesus' command to 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Matt. 22:39; Mark 12:31).

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<sup>75</sup> Niebuhr, *The Responsibility of the Church*, 65.

<sup>76</sup> Virgilio Enriquez, 'Kapwa: A Core Concept in Filipino Social Psychology', in *Philippine World View*, Virgilio Enriquez (ed), (Singapore: ISEAS, 1986), 11.

# EASTERN EUROPE: EVANGELISM AND PROSELYTISM

Valentin Kozhuharov

Discussing the issues of evangelism and proselytism in Eastern Europe is a difficult task. It is not an easy and straightforward discussion for any other of the world's regions either, but for Eastern Europe the relationship between evangelism and proselytism, and its practical application in the lives of the different societies seem specially challenging. One of the reasons is that both the two notions and the practice behind them have generally been unknown to the peoples of this part of Europe: neither the word 'evangelism' nor 'proselytism' were used in the public sphere until very recently; they were not used in church language or church documents either. This is specially true of the Eastern Orthodox churches to which the majority of the population of Eastern Europe belongs.<sup>1</sup> To some extent, this is also true for the Roman Catholic churches in Eastern Europe.

It is obvious that evangelism and proselytism could not be an issue for Eastern Europe in the decades of Communism and in the condition of the closed social system in which the peoples of the different European countries lived; the concepts became an issue for Eastern Europe after the political changes of 1989 and 1990 when movements of evangelism and proselytism spread across the region. These new Christian movements almost took the local Christians by surprise; in fact, both the state and the Christians were not prepared to meet the new challenges, and conflicts surfaced in almost all Eastern European countries – conflicts both between the new movements and the state, and the movements and the national churches. What is more important is the fact that the tensions between the Evangelical and the proselytising religious groups, on the one hand, and the national churches and the societies in general, on the other, continue even today, more than 25 years after the changes of the 1990s. Why such a persistent opposition to evangelism? While many local churches in Western

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<sup>1</sup> The Center for the Study of Global Christianity affirms that 'Orthodoxy is the largest major tradition in Eastern Europe, and its trajectory of change over the 40-year period [1970-2010] is indicative of its persecution and subsequent revival... Thus, while Orthodox were only 33.6% of Eastern Europe's population in 1970, by 2010 this had nearly doubled to 60.7%': Center for the Study of Global Christianity, *Christianity in its Global Context, 1970–2020: Society, Religion, and Mission* (South Hamilton, MA: Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, 2013), 46. The Center also affirms that Orthodoxy is on the rise, unlike Protestantism and Anglicanism whose membership is in decline (p 44). Now in 2016, the percentage of Orthodox believers in Eastern Europe may be even higher.

Europe have not had problems (generally speaking) with the activities of Evangelical Christian movements, almost all Eastern European (especially the Eastern Orthodox) churches continue to oppose evangelism, and they oppose even more strongly instances of proselytism.

There are several reasons for this, and here we can focus on only a few of them. The most notable of them are reasons of history, politics, culture and religion (religious doctrines). These four aspects of life of the peoples of Eastern Europe have defined the attitude of both state and people towards evangelism and proselytism. Let us briefly describe each of the reasons for opposition (the arguments) against the two Christian movements.

### Historical Arguments

It is well known that, after the Great Schism of 1054, the then Christian world generally divided into Western Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodoxy; the sixteenth-century Reformation brought into history one more division which occurred within western Christianity. In general, Eastern Orthodoxy was not affected too much by this latest division, and its churches (especially those in Europe) continued to live their life in a centuries-old fashion. The big missionary movements of the eighteenth through to the twentieth century did not concern the Orthodox churches either:<sup>2</sup> they remained secluded and somewhat isolated from the western Christian world, even in the decades after the two world wars.<sup>3</sup>

It is also well known that most of the Eastern Orthodox churches were under the Ottomans for four or even five centuries, and this is also one of the reasons why Orthodoxy was not affected by western Christianity and the cultural influences of the West. It was only towards the end of the

<sup>2</sup> It is a point of discussion whether the Orthodox churches of that period did mission and if so, what type of mission it was. More about this can be found in Valentin Kozuharov, *Orthodox and Inter-Christian Perspectives in Mission* (Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria: Vesta Publishing, 2015), 145-47.

<sup>3</sup> While reflecting on ecumenism and the role of Eastern Orthodoxy in it, Fr Schmemmann wrote: 'The ecumenical movement is by its very nature an encounter, a conversation, an accepted partnership in the search for Christian unity and wholeness. The encounter, however, is fruitful and meaningful only when it is founded on some degree of mutual understanding, on a common language, even if this language serves as a means of a sharp controversy. The tragedy of Orthodoxy is that, from the very beginning of its ecumenical participation, no such common language, no theological 'continuity', existed between her and her Western partners, within, at least, the organized and institutionally structured Ecumenical Movement.' And he concludes: '*There was no real encounter*', in Alexander Schmemmann, 'Moment of Truth for Orthodoxy', in Daniel B. Clendenin (ed), *Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective* (2nd edition, USA/UK: Baker Academic and Paternoster, 2003), 203-10 (the citation here, on 203-04); italicized text in the original.

nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth that these churches regained their autocephalous status, and the life of the parishes became more or less settled. The Russian Orthodox Church is an exception as it did not suffer Ottoman oppression but it too was isolated from the West, notwithstanding the reforms of Peter the Great and some cultural influence of Western Europe on Russian culture, mostly in the cities of the European part of the Empire. The decades of Communism continued this separation between East and West.

Historically, there were some movements in Eastern Europe which resembled the activities of evangelism but in fact they were not genuine Evangelical movements with the aim of converting people to Jesus Christ. In the eighteenth and especially in the second half of the nineteenth century, in most of the Eastern European countries with Orthodox Christians in majority, new missionary movements from the West appeared (both Catholic<sup>4</sup> and Protestant and Anglican). Their activities and goals, however, were not so much to convert to Jesus but to help strengthen Christianity in these long-oppressed lands (though some Catholic and Protestant communities were established). This is one of the reasons why Protestant and Catholic Christians amount to less than 1% of the total population of a country; Ukraine is an exception due to the long historical connections of its western territories with the Catholic world.

In this way, the historical argument maintains that evangelism and proselytism could not, and did not, play any substantial role in Eastern Europe (at least, not in most of it) due to the specific historical development of this region. It is history, oppression and totalitarianism that 'blinded' the Orthodox believers to the movements of evangelism and proselytism occurring in Europe and in the rest of the world.

### **Political Arguments**

As in many countries of the world, in Eastern Europe too it is politics that often decides the direction of social development of the people. But there is one specific trait in Eastern European politics – it is its close connection with the local Orthodox Church. Past reminiscences of a symphony between church and state have always dominated life in the lands of the former Byzantine Empire. Such a 'symphony' has always been sought by both the state and the church, although it has never been achieved in real life.

And yet, national political powers in Eastern Europe have always influenced the lives of Orthodox believers and, more importantly, the lives of non-Orthodox Christians if and when they happen to come and reside in these countries. In the decades of Communism, the Communist party endeavoured to suppress any religious activity, both of Orthodox and non-

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<sup>4</sup> By 'Catholic' in this article, we mean Roman Catholic.

Orthodox churches. The problem with the non-Orthodox Christian communities and movements became obvious and increasingly challenging after the political changes of the 1990s in Eastern Europe when people almost by surprise got their freedom and were not prepared to use this freedom in the best way for the benefit of citizens. It was in the first few years after 1990 when many non-Orthodox missionaries and other types of Evangelical preachers flooded the Eastern European region. The Orthodox churches at that time were busy with restoring their ecclesiastical life – reclaiming from the governments their property while building and restoring churches, monasteries and other places of worship. In their busyness, they almost missed the influx of evangelists and realised the ‘threat’ coming from them only after the foreign missionaries (most of them from the USA) started mass evangelisation work through gathering many thousands of people at stadiums and squares.

The first thing for the Orthodox churches to do was to appeal to the government and the security services, and here again old memories of close co-operation between church and state played their role. In almost all Eastern European countries between the 1990s and 2000, new laws regulating religion were adopted. The political powers stepped in and took matters into their own hands. In this, Russia is a typical example: what has happened there also happened in the other Eastern European countries. The widely debated law entitled ‘On the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations’ (1997) seems to have put the debate ‘in order’: all religious organisations that were not considered ‘traditional’<sup>5</sup> for this country (i.e. that had not been on Russia’s territory for at least fifteen years) needed to pass a series of ‘tests’ before they were legally recognised as such and get state approval. In practice, the law placed serious restrictions on the registration of religious organisations and also on the activities of religious groups of foreign origin.

Political parties and governments easily adopted ‘Orthodox’ terminology and defined which religions and religious groups posed a threat to national security and to the culture of the people (who are Orthodox by birth, the governments insist). The anti-extremism law of 2002 and the so-called Zorin Report<sup>6</sup> on religious extremism provoked further restrictions on

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<sup>5</sup> In formulating the terminology of the law, the political power was careful and did not use ‘traditional’ and ‘historical’ in the text of the document at all; cf. Geraldine Fagan pointing out that ‘the 1997 law’s preamble does not in fact mention the word “traditional”’; it also lists Christianity (curiously implying Orthodoxy to be something different) and unspecified ‘other’ religions’, in Geraldine Fagan, *Believing in Russia – Religious Policy after Communism* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge 2013), 122.

<sup>6</sup> A report prepared under the supervision of Vladimir Zorin, minister of Russia’s nationalities between 2001 and 2004 where almost all religions (except Buddhism and Judaism) were declared ‘extremist’; cf.: <http://jesuschrist.ru/news/2002/12/10/2635#.Vp7i2svSmHs> (only in Russian).

religion; the Report ‘deemed Catholics to be Russia’s greatest security threat. Western Protestants and new religious movements, including Jehovah’s Witnesses, Scientologists and Satanists, posed the next greatest threat’. ‘Islamic extremists were further down the list,’ affirms Zoe Knox.<sup>7</sup> Relationships between church and state continue to be mutual and interdependent, and this means that the Church – to the exclusion of all other religious groups – can press its views on the secular government ‘in the most varied spheres’, even to the point of urging policies contrary to Russia’s Constitution. At the same time, the state cannot interfere with the church’s dealings but is urged to interfere with or restrict the freedom of other religious groups.<sup>8</sup> Some would even insist that the Russian Orthodox Church ‘has been actively participating in shaping and executing Russia’s foreign policy, not only in the “near abroad” specifically, but more generally across the European continent and beyond’.<sup>9</sup>

We provide these details for Russia while affirming that similar processes took (and are taking) place in all the other Eastern European countries with Orthodox believers in the majority. Even today, in the second decade of the 21st century, many non-Orthodox Christian communities struggle with local authorities, laws and central powers to achieve justice and equality. Numerous instances of cases in the European Court of Human Rights could be quoted where religious groups and individuals seek justice for their religious rights which have been violated by governments and local authorities.

In such conditions, it would be difficult for Christian organisations and churches to organise Evangelical activities, not to speak of proselytising, activities. In fact, such activities are carried out but they are very insignificant in number and influence, and are closely observed by the governments and the Orthodox churches.

### Cultural Arguments

All instances of evangelism and proselytism in an Eastern European (as well as any other) country would inevitably face the challenge of the cultural self-understanding of the local people. Certainly this is true for any people and any culture, and one of the goals of evangelism is to overcome

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<sup>7</sup> Zoë Knox, *Russian Society and the Orthodox Church: Religion in Russia after Communism* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 171.

<sup>8</sup> Robert C. Blitt, ‘One New President, One New Patriarch, and a Generous Disregard for the Constitution: A Recipe for the Continuing Decline of Secular Russia’, in *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*, Vol. XLIII (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Law School, 2010), 1368.

<sup>9</sup> Robert C. Blitt, ‘Whither Secular Bear? The Russian Orthodox Church’s Strengthening Influence on Russia’s Domestic and Foreign Policy’, in *Fides Et Libertas: The Journal of the International Religious Liberty Association* (Silver Spring, MD, 2011), 89.

local pagan cultural habits and proclaim the new Christian ‘culture’ – Jesus’ good news and the New Covenant God has established with humanity; without active evangelisation and mission, there wouldn’t be a global Christianity in our day. And yet it seems that it is one thing when you evangelise among pagan people and quite another when you carry on evangelistic activities and proselytise in a culture which is already Christian. This is the case with Eastern Europe.

The problem for the newly arrived missionaries and evangelists in the early 1990s was that they did not count local cultures as Christian. Quite the opposite was the opinion of the local people: they insisted that they had been Christian for centuries and didn’t need foreign Christian intrusion. The problem for the local people was that, even if they were not baptised and had not been members of the local church, they would continue to insist that they were Orthodox. And here comes the so-called identity issue. Speaking of Russia again (thus including all other Eastern European countries with an Orthodox majority), we can affirm: ‘Traditionally, in Russia there has been a correlation between religion and ethnicity, and the cultural dimension of religion has been very meaningful for ethnic identity.’<sup>10</sup> And the author continues: ‘This, in turn, created a situation in which religion was widely considered not just as a private affair but rather as a force of cultural tradition. Hence, proselytism was viewed as an attack on national identity.’<sup>11</sup>

Considering the culture of a people to be Orthodox made many governments introduce religious education at state schools under the title ‘Orthodox culture’, instead of the long-debated old catechetical school subject called ‘God’s law’ or ‘Faith Instruction’. The notion of ‘Orthodox culture’ would almost automatically imply that any other religious activity was proselytism and harmful for local people. The same would apply to evangelism as the people, by culture, were already Christian and didn’t need to hear the good news from somebody else.

Linking ethnicity with faith is characteristic of almost all Orthodox churches, especially those in Eastern Europe. Some of them call it ‘mission’ when they plant new churches in other (non-Orthodox) lands where newly established parishes and church buildings ‘serve’ almost exclusively the nationals of the corresponding country. In Western Europe one can find many Orthodox temples built (or maintained) by Romanians, Serbs, Russians, Greeks, etc. Orthodox churches where the services are performed in the language of the corresponding nation – that is, in Romanian, Serbian, Russian, Greek, etc. The ‘Orthodox culture’ of the nation is ‘brought’ to the foreign country where nationals have come to live

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<sup>10</sup> Olga Kazmina, ‘Negotiating Proselytism in 21st Century Russia’, in Rosalind I.J. Hackett (ed), *Proselytization Revisited: Rights Talk, Free Markets and Culture Wars* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2014), 346.

<sup>11</sup> Kazmina, ‘Negotiating Proselytism’, 347.

and work and where they see in the local Orthodox parish and church their own 'Orthodox cultural spot'.

The 'cultural argument' against instances of evangelism and proselytism also includes some social elements of opposition: in almost all Eastern European countries with Orthodox believers in the majority, society in general is suspicious of any 'foreign' influence which is not Orthodox and which carries its own 'culture'. For the Bulgarians, what is not Bulgarian is not good, for the Russians what is not Russian is not good, and so on. Even the enormous influence of the English language and the numerous schools, courses and initiatives for learning the language (as well as the initiatives of the local media) could not diminish the distrust in anything which was not national.<sup>12</sup>

### Religious (Doctrinal) Arguments

Orthodoxy is known for its sophisticated and deeply patristic understanding of the faith. When Orthodox and western theologians meet and discuss issues of the faith, it is often very difficult for them to find the same linguistic equivalents of the theological terms in question. The use of Christian Greek terminology complicates the dialogue even further. Orthodoxy also affirms that it keeps the truths of the faith intact, in the form and the expression as intended by the early church. From this perspective, any evangelisation and proselytism is a violation of the 'true' Christian doctrine (its dogmas, canons, decisions, edicts, etc.) and a diversion from it. On the other hand, every other main Christian community (more notably, the Roman Catholic, Protestant, Anglican, etc.) maintains that the truth is contained only in *their* doctrine and ecclesiastical practice.

But speaking of evangelisation and proselytism done by non-Orthodox Christians among Orthodox believers in Eastern Europe points to some specific theological and doctrinal issues which divide the Orthodox from the rest of Christianity. The division is even greater when it comes to Protestant and Evangelical doctrines and practices, and it was mostly Protestants who in the early 1990s flooded Eastern Europe and tried to gather many thousands of people in stadiums and squares.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> When Protestant missionaries and evangelists came to Eastern Europe in the early 1990s, they were not successful in their activities, not only because of the opposition of the Orthodox Church and the local secular authorities but also because of the 'traditional' local Protestant communities (which had been here for the previous one and a half centuries): they opposed the newcomers, mostly because they saw in them something 'foreign' and – consequently – something harmful for the local people.

<sup>13</sup> Certainly, there was some Catholic movement in Eastern Europe but it was not missionary in its character, and the Catholic influence was almost covert but systematic and persistent, which ultimately led to the creation of so-called Uniate

The first and the most notable difference of the Protestant newcomers into Eastern Europe from Orthodox ecclesiastical practice concerned the hierarchy: the Orthodox could not believe that a service could be conducted by an 'ordinary' believer and not by a priest. The term 'pastor' came to denote something completely different from their 'usual' term *pastir* (shepherd), and the pastoral activity of the church as a hierarchical structure. The ancient 'blessed order' of bishops, priests and deacons has always been a most vivid 'reality' for the church. In the eyes of Orthodox Christians, the 'new' believers seemed so strange that they were ready to call them either non-Christian or Christian sectarians. The same was true from the point of view of the Protestant evangelists: they also tended to see the Orthodox as non-Christians or at least as non-true-believers in Jesus.

Then there was the sacramental life of the church: it was very difficult for the Orthodox to accept that there were Christians who recognised only two sacraments of the church and not others, such as Ordination, Matrimony, Anointing of the sick, Confession, Chrismation. The meaning of the liturgy for the Orthodox is completely different from that of Protestants, especially when it comes to fasting and confession of sins, and only then the taking the Holy Communion.

The notion of 'faith alone' (as well as the other 'alones' of Protestantism: *sola Scriptura, sola gratia, solus Christus, soli Deo gloria*) was also very strange for the Orthodox: for them, there cannot be any faith without deeds of faith, no true knowledge of the faith and of God without the Holy Tradition (in addition to the Holy Scripture), no true path of salvation (*theosis*) without personal efforts (martyrdom, meaning spiritual struggle and witnessing to Christ) in attaining higher levels of perfection in Jesus Christ. Here the Orthodox found many doctrinal beliefs in common with Catholic missionaries, and it may be that it was this mutual understanding of the faith between the Catholic and the Orthodox that made some affirm that Catholic proselytism was (and is) much more dangerous than the Protestant one.<sup>14</sup>

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churches (church communities that are governed by Rome but kept their Orthodox type of worship and customs, including icons). Russia is an exception: Catholic mission, evangelisation and proselytism were well spread in the country, especially on its western territories; cf. Kazmina, 'Negotiating Proselytism', 350.

<sup>14</sup> Kazmina affirmed: 'In the social discourse reflecting interdenominational relations, since the late 1990s the term 'proselytism' has been the most widespread in the debates between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church over the activities of Catholics in Russia. The Roman Catholics became the core challenger to the Russian Orthodox Church, not the newer sects, as we might be led to believe... A nominal Orthodox person can convert to Catholicism more easily than to a denomination whose views are more theologically distinct': Kazmina, 'Negotiating Proselytism', 350.

There are many other doctrinal and theological differences<sup>15</sup> and we cannot mention all of them; but the main point is that these differences were so obvious and striking that when the Protestant missionaries came to Eastern Europe they were perceived as something very unusual and strange and, consequently, their evangelising and proselytising activities were, to a great extent, carried out with little success. This is one of the reasons why the number of Protestants in Eastern Europe had not increased substantially in the first years of freedom. The number of Protestant Christians started increasing much later and not as a result of evangelism or proselytising activity, but mostly through friendship and fellowship with local Protestant believers.

### Evangelism, Proselytism and the Issue of Conversion

Unlike other authors, who use the word ‘proselytism’ as a synonym for evangelism, mission and the making of religious converts,<sup>16</sup> it is used in this article to denote any activity which aims at converting other people to one’s own faith, including conversions between different Christian communities. It is also well known that evangelism is most closely connected with the activity of the Evangelical Christians and the different Evangelical churches, organisations, agencies, etc. And it is also clear that one of the main goals of evangelism is the religious conversion of someone who then enters into a personal relationship with Jesus by accepting him as their own Saviour and Redeemer. This understanding of evangelism makes it legitimate for an Evangelical missionary to try to proselytise among any group of people, be they Christian, atheist or belonging to another faith. As far as Christians are concerned, ‘Evangelicals insist that anyone who is just a nominal Christian is a legitimate object of evangelism, no matter whether another Christian church exists or not – such places are considered a legitimate “missionary field”’.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Apart from the historical doctrinal differences between Christian denominations, new ones appeared in the struggle of the Orthodox to oppose the evangelising and proselytizing activities of non-Orthodox missionaries and movements. Such notions as ‘canonical territory’, ‘totalitarian sect’, ‘spiritual security’, etc. were ‘invented’ and then theologically grounded in order to defend the ‘Orthodox land’ from any foreign religious invasion; more about this in Fagan, *Believing in Russia*, 120-21; Kazmina, ‘Negotiating Proselytism’, 351.

<sup>16</sup> Cf., for example, Elmer Thiessen’s *The Ethics of Evangelism* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2011), 8, where he uses the word in this sense. A somewhat different view on proselytism is expressed in Stalnaker’s article: cf. Cecil Stalnaker, ‘Proselytism or Evangelism?’, in *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 26(4) (2002), 337-53 – his view is closer to our own.

<sup>17</sup> John Witte, Jr. and Michael Bourdeaux (eds), *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: The New War for Souls* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 21.

All Christians accept that conversion to the Christian faith means a complete change of belief: – from belief in ‘untrue’ realities to a belief in Jesus Christ as Redeemer, Saviour and ultimate source of eternal life. Thiessen points to another three aspects of conversion: a change of behaviour, a change of identity and a change of belonging.<sup>18</sup> This is well accepted also by Orthodoxy: any Orthodox believer ‘changes’ his/her behaviour, identity and belonging as a result of faith in Jesus Christ and belonging to the Church. However, there are some substantial differences between the two theologies. Conversion has not been known by the Orthodox as a doctrinal or theological imperative to be followed. Yes, the gospel is clear that one must convert and follow Jesus but this ‘conversion’ may have different forms and be understood in different ways. For the Orthodox, ‘conversion’ is to believe in Christ and follow him – that is, in the actions of faith, which include participation in the sacramental life of the Church, in the worship and the pastoral activity of a local parish, in the spiritual struggle of the believer, which includes regular prayer, active participation in the liturgy, fasting, confession of sins, the regular taking of Holy Communion, and obedience to the hierarchy in the way a believer is obedient to Jesus. If a believer does these, he is converted.

Obviously, the Evangelical view is completely different: it is not a matter of belonging to the church (as is the case for Orthodox believers) but belonging to Christ as the believer’s personal Saviour and Lord; it is the personal relationship with Christ and absolute obedience to his gospel and unreserved faith in Jesus that makes a person a converted person. The notion of a ‘personal relationship’ with Jesus sounds very strange for the Orthodox. They surely relate to Jesus but this is done through the Church and its sacramental life as it is the Church which is Jesus’ Body and of which all believers are members. You cannot be a member of the Body and not be obedient to its Head and to the other members (cf. Paul’s exhortation in 1 Corinthians 12), the Orthodox would insist.

It is this fundamental difference that makes evangelism and proselytism legitimate for Evangelicals but an ‘arrogance and ignorance’ for the Orthodox who are being evangelised.<sup>19</sup> Evangelical affirmations about who is converted and who is not,<sup>20</sup> and Orthodox affirmations about who truly

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<sup>18</sup> Thiessen, *The Ethics of Evangelism*, 9.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Luke Veronis’ analysis in his ‘The Danger of Arrogance and Ignorance: A Case Study from Albania’, in Mark Oxbrow and Tim Grass (eds), *The Mission of God: Studies in Orthodox and Evangelical Mission* (Oxford: Regnum, 2015), 85–89.

<sup>20</sup> Cf., for example, such an observation: ‘How often have we Protestants participated in the (Orthodox) baptismal service, where the godparents know nothing about Jesus Christ or his salvation? The godparents were not converted, the child was not converted, and on rare occasions the priest was not converted either’ (George Hancock-Stefan, ‘Response to Bradley Nassif’, in James J. Stamoolis (ed), *Three Views on Eastern Orthodoxy and Evangelicalism* (Zondervan 2004), 103).

believes in Jesus and who does not, can easily be overthrown by the opposite party: the first would insist that it is the faith that saves, while the second would insist that it is the faith through the Church that saves. There are also many other differences in the understanding of the faith but the main conclusion remains: evangelism and proselytism may be moral and immoral;<sup>21</sup> the same applies to proselytism, especially when it is done among other Christians.

### Concluding Remarks

It is my personal conviction that the future of evangelism and proselytism lies in the closer relationships between the different Christian communities: Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Anglican, Charismatic, etc. Ultimately, the mission of God, *missio Dei*, is God's, not ours, and we are participants in the missionary movement within the Persons of the Holy Trinity; we have received the invitation of God and try to evangelise the world he created. Unless all Christians come together and in all honesty and wholeheartedness discuss the issues of evangelism in today's complicated 21st-century world, we will not be able to fulfil Jesus' command that we are one in him and that we proclaim his good news to the ends of the world. Any evangelism done in separation, isolation and even in opposition, is doomed to failure and will ultimately lead to weakening Christianity instead of making it stronger: Christians in separation and in opposition to each other will always be vulnerable and weak in the eyes of the world, especially when we take into account the increasing influence of other religions on the nations of Europe and in the world in general. The Lord has sent us as sheep in the midst of wolves, and we must be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves (cf. Matt. 10:16) in our mission and in our efforts to evangelise the world.

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The Orthodox would affirm that in many Evangelical baptisms those being baptised have not been converted either, especially when it comes to small children and to adults who have not yet come to full faith in Jesus; 'full' faith can only be attained, they would insist, in the Church, .

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Thiessen's analysis on pp 37-43, and also on the various objections to proselytizing, such as issues of persuasion, arrogance, religious pluralism, physical and psychological coercion, intolerance, 'missionary colonialism', etc. on pp 53-155.

## CONCLUDING CHAPTER

# EVANGELISM AND DIAKONIA IN CONTEXT: OBEYING THE GREAT COMMISSION AND THE GREAT COMMANDMENT NOW AND TOMORROW

Knud Jørgensen

### Introduction

Some of us remember the Kairos document<sup>1</sup> from 1985 and some of the related statements from South African leaders. I particularly recall a statement from South African evangelicals which states the following:

We believe that salvation and social change cannot be separated from one another. We believe that God loved the world as a whole when he gave his only begotten son, Jesus Christ. We believe that the saving act of God is directed not only at individuals but at the whole creation. If the sin of Adam is responsible for corruption and evil in the world, if this original sin is responsible for the chaos in the world, for the wars and rumours of wars, for injustices and oppressive systems, for economic exploitation, then the saving act of Jesus must deal with this whole spectrum of the consequences of the original sin. It must deal with both the spiritual and the political socio-economic realities of the world in which we live. There is no way therefore in which evangelism can be restricted to the so-called 'spiritual' needs of the society. The opposite also applies: that there is no way in which evangelism can be reduced to social involvement without the need for a radical change of the heart of humanity... We believe that these two dimensions of the ministry of the church should always be put in balance. In fact, they should be collapsed into one... This is a general concern of God to save the whole creation in its totality.<sup>2</sup>

This, in my mind, summarises what this volume has tried to express. Note in particular the suggestion that evangelism and *diakonia* should be 'collapsed into one'. These may be strong words, but the intention has a solid biblical basis.

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<sup>1</sup> *The South Africa Kairos Document*: <https://kairossouthernafrica.wordpress.com/2011/05/08/the-south-africa-kairos-document-1985>

<sup>2</sup> Concerned Evangelicals, *Evangelical Witness in South Africa: South African Evangelicals Critique their Own Theology and Practice* (1986): [http://ujamaa.ukzn.ac.za/Libraries/manuals/The\\_Kairos\\_Documents.sflb.ashx](http://ujamaa.ukzn.ac.za/Libraries/manuals/The_Kairos_Documents.sflb.ashx)

Let me add some perspectives and insights which work on this volume has left in my mind.

### Accompaniment

For many years I have kept and cherished a quote from Principal Buana at the Theological Seminary in Mansimou in Congo. I do not recall where I got the quote; it deals with a most essential matter in relation to *diakonia* and evangelism: how do we substitute an attitude of sharing for a donor-recipient attitude?<sup>3</sup>

For you in the West, mission is too much characterized by what you give and we receive. You are happy to be able to give, and we Congolese should be happy to receive. Could we instead view Christ as the lord and sustainer of mission? He has in front of him a large basket. All the churches in the world come and place their gifts to Christ in this basket. They are gifts to Christ! Some come with money and others bring their praises; some place their prayers and others come with their artwork or their music. Then Christ invites us to come and take what we need from the basket. It may look as though we take *your* money, but it is actually Christ's money which you have given to him. What puzzles us is that you do not seem to need anything from Christ's basket. We cannot see that you take anything. Do you take some of the intercessions or the praises? Do you not need anything? Or are you satisfied as long as you can give and then continue living for yourselves?

I remember Kwame Bediako talking about the *western possessiveness* of Christianity and how the emergence of a post-western Christianity has finally liberated Christianity from being possessed by the West.<sup>4</sup> This is essential in relation to evangelism and *diakonia*: the 'lower-side' perspective of Christians and churches in the global South – a perspective of poverty, vulnerability and powerlessness – has eventually helped us overcome the dualism of the Enlightenment and of soul and body. I am sure that many of us old-timers who entered the global South with what Timothy Tennent<sup>5</sup> calls an 'upper-side' perspective of privilege and power – and a belief in 'the dual mandate' or the priority of evangelism – have had our perspectives changed upside-down through fellowship with Africans, Asians and Latin Americans. Some of my former colleagues in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) have used the term 'accompaniment'.<sup>6</sup> The mission encounter begins as Jesus walks with the disciples on the Emmaus road, sharing their pain by listening to them as

<sup>3</sup> See also Mogens Mogensen's chapter in this volume.

<sup>4</sup> Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 122.

<sup>5</sup> Timothy C. Tennent, *World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2010), 406.

<sup>6</sup> See *Mission in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment* (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 2004), 8 and 45.

they tell their story. We are on the Emmaus road together across all sorts of boundaries – and along the way, on the road, the Master reveals himself in a shared meal, a testimony, a wounded heart. I learned it the hard way from sisters and brothers in Ethiopia and East Africa: we must be broken bread and poured out wine before the Master can use us. Maybe the word ‘transformation’ is what I experienced: a process of reorientation – of values, aspirations, direction; a process of rejection of a worldview that tears life apart; a conversion to a new belief in the sanctity of life and gifts. ‘Let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind’ (Rom. 12:2), ‘Be transformed into his (Christ’s) likeness,’ says Paul (2 Cor. 3:18).

Transformation is central to both evangelism and *diakonia*;<sup>7</sup> it is part of the message in word and deed. But it will not take place unless we as church and community witness by our lifestyle that we have been transformed. Andrew Kirk calls it ‘mission in the way of Jesus Christ’.<sup>8</sup>

Following in the way of Christ quite simply... requires communicating the good news of Jesus and the kingdom (evangelism) (Acts 28:30), insisting on the full participation of all people in God’s gifts of life and well-being (justice), providing the resources to meet people’s needs (compassion), and never using lethal violence as a means of doing God’s will (the practice of non-violence as a means of change).<sup>9</sup>

But let us remember: we on the upper side have had to learn it from those on the lower side. Unless we hear the good news from the poor and the marginalized, I wonder whether we really have heard the good news. The meaning of the good news in the Bible for the poor defines the meaning of ‘good news for all’:

As the poor are called; as the multitudes rejoice and experience the gospel, the real nature of the gospel becomes evident to others. This in no way means that the gospel is not for other groups. It does mean that it has to be mediated through what it means to the poor. Its fullness could only be appreciated when its nature was revealed through this marginalised group.<sup>10</sup>

I would hope that this volume has opened doors and windows for readers to this essential insight – Julie Ma’s illustrations of Pentecostal evangelism and *diakonia*, Julius Gathogo’s case study on the East African Revival, Dawit Olika Terfassa’s challenge on behalf of migrant churches, Carlos Ham’s story about Unity in Mission. Evangelism and Diakonia, Yalin Xin’s illustrations from the Chinese house churches, Megersa Guta’s

<sup>7</sup> Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden (eds), *Mission as Transformation: A Theology of the Whole Gospel* (Oxford: Regnum, 1999).

<sup>8</sup> J. Andrew Kirk, *What Is Mission? Theological Explorations* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1999), 52-53.

<sup>9</sup> Kirk, *What Is Mission?*, 53.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted from Hwa Yung, *Mangoes or bananas? The quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology*, second edition (Oxford: Regnum, 2014), 156.

review of ‘Serving the Whole Person’ in Ethiopia, and Adrian Penamora’s story about Philippine Christian-Muslim relations.

### Evangelism and Diakonia in Context

Contextualization has become a key concern in contemporary missiology. Here also the inspiration has largely come from scholars and practitioners in the global South – John Mbiti, Kwame Bediako, Hwa Yung, Kosuke Koyama and many others. One of several reasons for this concern among scholars in the global South has been that numerical growth has not always been matched by a matching understanding of discipleship. Church leaders have described the growth of Christianity as being ‘a mile broad, but only an inch deep’. In addition, the emphasis on Christian values in society, culture and politics has often been lacking behind the growth in numbers. Sometimes churches have been compromised when they have taken part in corrupt politics and supported military coups which promoted ethnic separation (e.g. Rwanda, Burundi and DR Congo). This has challenged the credibility of the witness of the churches and encouraged them to uphold basic Christian values in their struggle for justice and peace. And challenged all of us to ask whether the gospel really has taken roots in our context?

Contextualization and its focus on context and society have taken us a major step further than indigenization and enculturation. Contextualization is not just a question of relevance in terms of culture, but also of being salt and light in a broken world.

That is why this book is entitled ‘Evangelism and Diakonia in Context’. For the same reason, we have revisited contextualization in an interview with Stephen Bevans who authored the book *Models of Contextual Theology*.<sup>11</sup> And a fair number of case studies are part of our treatment of the topic – case studies from Britain, USA, Ethiopia, East Africa, India and China – to highlight the *contextual nature of evangelism and diakonia*.

David Bosch calls contextual theology ‘a theology “from below”’, from the underside of history; its main source (apart from Scripture and tradition) is the social sciences, and its main interlocutor the poor or the culturally marginalized.<sup>12</sup> The strong focus on contextual theology marks a decisive difference between 1910 and 2010. In the course of the century, mission has increasingly struggled with how, on the one hand, to be relevant to and involved in the world and how, on the other, to maintain its identity in Christ. An essential part of this has involved the construction of a variety of ‘local theologies’. Edinburgh 1910 still believed that western theology was

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<sup>11</sup> Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003).

<sup>12</sup> David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 423.

universally valid and based on the ecclesiastical confessions. Contextualization implies an experimental nature of all theology and an ongoing dialogue between text and context, and therefore a theology always which will be provisional, at the same time as it is part of a universal dimension of theology.<sup>13</sup>

‘Reading the signs of the times’ (Matt. 16:2-3) has become an essential task of the theology of mission. It recognizes the reciprocal influence of culture and socio-economic life, and calls for combining theological reflection with concrete praxis. Both *diakonia* and mission need the *epistemological axis of theological reflection and insight from empirical sociological studies*.<sup>14</sup> This may, Nordstokke says, be combined with another axis of *seeing* (diaconal or evangelism praxis), *judging* (the theory of *diakonia* and evangelism), and *acting* (new praxis). What I am suggesting is the ongoing interaction between praxis and theory – an interaction that should have its basis in a hermeneutical dialogue with Scripture. The missionary message is not contextual because it grows out of the context, but only when it lives in a hermeneutical dialogue between text and context.

### The Great Commission and the Great Commandment<sup>15</sup>

The ministry of the church in society includes the Great Commission and the Great Commandment – a commission to make disciples and a commandment to love your neighbour as yourself. Together these two form a holistic or integral ministry.

*The Great Commission* has only one imperative: ‘Make disciples’. The other verbs in Matthew 28:18-20 describe what we do as we make disciples – go, baptise, teach. All three are accompanying methods for making disciples. The task is not primarily to go or to baptise or to teach, but to make disciples. At the same time, the accompanying methods underline that making disciples is more than conversion and evangelistic campaigns. Rather, making disciples is a *process* – making disciples includes moving people from a situation where they have no effective knowledge of the Gospel to a situation where they are ready to make a decision to act, and further on to grow and reproduce (reproducing themselves in others by making new disciples through witness and service). Our evangelistic and teaching methods are often geared to moving people just one step further on. For our task of making disciples, it is therefore important to know where people are – i.e. which step they are at in the process.

<sup>13</sup> Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 427.

<sup>14</sup> Kjell Nordstokke, *Liberating Diakonia* (Trondheim, Norway: Tapir akademisk forlag, 2011), 36.

<sup>15</sup> See for this section, Knud Jørgensen, *Equipping for Service: Christian Leadership in Church and Society* (Oxford: Regnum, 2012), 45-48.

Making disciples further implies incorporating people into the church. Being a disciple without being part of God's people is impossible for a number of reasons. Incorporation takes place in baptism when we are baptised into Christ's body (Rom. 6; 1 Cor. 12:13). This emphasises that the task of making disciples is the task of the church. Evangelism or disciple-making that does not bring people into the church is unbiblical. In addition, it is ineffective and dangerous – people who are converted through big campaigns, but not incorporated into God's family, will easily slide back from faith. Therefore, *follow-up and the nurture/teaching of new converts* is more important than creating a multitude of initial 'decisions for Christ'. Keeping this in mind (process, discipling, incorporating) is a *leadership task*.

In this connection, we should be aware of the *structural dimension* – making disciples requires that the church has two structures: the congregation as a local 'come-structure' and the mobile 'missionary band' as a mission-specific 'go-structure'. The events in Antioch (Acts 11:19-30; 13:1-3) in connection with the sending out of Paul and Barnabas illustrate the coming into being of these two structures. The local congregation is an example of a structure which invites people to come. An evangelistic team or mission organisation is an example of a structure which helps Christians to go. The congregation in Antioch is an example of the come-structure. It had, however, a challenge in crossing the border to reach non-Christians with the good news. As a come-structure/local congregation, it could not easily do that. So its members came together in prayer and fasting to seek a solution. The solution given by the Holy Spirit was to form a team which could move out into the Roman world and cross borders to other peoples and other cultures. This team consisted of Paul and Barnabas. Together these two structures constituted and formed the church. If one were missing, the church would be crippled and unable to carry out its task. Examples from church history of the go-structure include the monks and the monastery movement, the Pietistic revival (e.g. the Moravian brethren), the East African Revival, and the emergence of mission societies.<sup>16</sup>

*The Great Commandment*: The Gospel combines and includes the good news and the good deeds. Evangelism and service (*diakonia*) are therefore like the two blades of a pair of scissors. 'Loving your neighbour as yourself', as the Great Commandment calls us to do, calls for a Christian service or *diakonia* which encompasses:

- Carrying out the tasks given to us in terms of communicating an important message, acting as a 'go-between', and being a 'pathfinder' in implementing the call of the church in the world.

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<sup>16</sup> Ralph D. Winter, 'The Two Structures of God's Redemptive mission', in Arthur F. Glasser (ed), *Crucial Dimensions of World Evangelization* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1976).

This will often include working for reconciliation and for the marginalised in society.

- Care for and help to individuals and the community: health, care and counselling.
- Preventive work to avoid or reduce human need. This is called ‘advocacy’, i.e. speaking out on behalf of the voiceless.
- Social action in terms of getting involved in important social issues in the community.

Christian service expresses the encounter of the congregation and the individual Christian with the needs in the life of individuals and of the local community. It is an integral part of our missionary task, and not something we may ‘choose’ to do for strategic reasons. *Diakonia* is a natural and necessary way of expressing the Gospel. It is one of the basic marks of the church – together with the Word, baptism and Holy Communion. Just as Jesus came to serve, so must his church. The Great Commission focuses not only on conversion, but on disciples who hear what Jesus says, act according to his word, and follow his example.

The *diakonia* of the church includes:

- Service as an integral part of the communication of the Gospel.
- A prophetic voice which points to God’s will.
- A general social involvement in accordance with God’s will, in regard to human beings, society and creation in our community, in our nation and globally.

Service and evangelism belong together. But service does not replace evangelism – reconciliation among humans is not the same as reconciliation with God, social service is not the same as evangelism, and political liberation is not salvation.<sup>17</sup> Together these constitute the basic task of the church.

*Diakonia* has the following characteristics:

- It brings together individual responsibility and the responsibility of the fellowship.
- It relates to the local congregation – in principle, the local congregation is responsible for *diakonia*.
- It may co-operate with all good efforts as long as there is room for the Christian to work to the glory of God.
- It is both a part and a consequence of proclamation, and is an expression of discipleship. However, Christian service need not necessarily be followed by proclamation in order to be meaningful.
- It contributes to reconciliation, justice, liberation and renewal.

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<sup>17</sup> *Lausanne Covenant*, §5, [https://www.lausanne.org/docs/didasko/Didasko\\_FTLWL.pdf](https://www.lausanne.org/docs/didasko/Didasko_FTLWL.pdf). One could wish that the Lausanne Movement included *diakonia* in its vocabulary, in addition to ‘integral mission’. The use of *diakonia* would serve to strengthen the dialogue with the ecumenical movement. *Diakonia* is a biblical concept with a much better basis than ‘holistic’ or ‘integral mission’.

- Its focus is on the voiceless and the marginalised of society.
- It presupposes that I have contact with my own pain and acknowledge my own role in the needs of others.
- It is rooted in the needs and situation of the people to be served.
- It shows respect for the integrity of other human beings.
- It emphasises mutuality and participation, and helps people discover and maximise their potential.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Church at Work through Evangelism and Diakonia<sup>19</sup>**

The chapters in this volume have directly and indirectly told stories about the missional church in action. The church at work is a *witnessing* church – *martyria* may be used to encompass proclamation (*kerygma*), service (*diakonia*), communion (*koinonia*) and worship (*leitourgia*). The authors have looked at the church at work from historical perspectives, confessional perspectives, geographical perspectives of the church in various parts of the world, and from missiological and theological perspectives. There are many ‘churches’ in this book, but in all of them we find the marks of a *worshipping, serving, proclaiming, and healing community*. Some talk about the ‘liturgy after the liturgy’, others about ‘Serving the Whole Person’, and yet others about sharing and witnessing to our migrant neighbours. The spiritual gifts that particularly Paul talks about, are part of this canvas – they are gifts for the strengthening of the communion (*koinonia*), for the proclamation of the Gospel (*kerygma*), and for service and healing (*diakonia*).

As a *worshipping* community, the church is empowered for transforming and reconciling mission locally and globally. Nurture and teaching belong to this understanding of the worshipping community, including prayer as the centre of our daily walk with the Lord. The *proclaiming* community communicates God’s reconciliation and salvation in Jesus Christ through verbal witness, by being a good neighbour, through diaconal service, and by advocacy for justice and peace. Evangelism is here central as part of a holistic mission. Let us not forget that ‘one-to-one’ sharing and ‘house churches’ throughout history have been key tools in spreading the good news. The *serving* community has as a primary aim the sharing in concrete ways of the abundant life promised by the Lord. This sharing may take the form of visiting a neighbour, pastoral counselling, humanitarian aid, rehabilitation, advocacy, development, or being a go-between to link the margins with the ‘powers’ at the centre. The *healing* community

<sup>18</sup> Sigrun Møgedal and Anne Skjelmerud, ‘Misjon og diakoni’, in Jan-Martin Berentsen, Tormod Engelsviken and Knud Jørgensen, *Missiologi i dag* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2004), 342.

<sup>19</sup> For the following, see *Mission in Context*, 44-51.

understands itself as broken and vulnerable – and only therefore able to be wounded healers for others, via personal care, institutions, intercession.

### Convergence

The voices in these chapters come from various contexts and corners, and look at evangelism and *diakonia* from different perspectives. Even so, one may sense a growing convergence across the boundaries:

- Evangelism and *diakonia*/social engagement should be kept together as integral components of the task of the church in mission.
- There is a common and growing understanding of the connection between micro- and macro-perspectives in a world of spiritual yearning, social need and a creation under attack. We must deal with both causes and symptoms.
- There is a connection between individual and collective responsibility. The search for reconciliation, the love of my neighbour, responsibility for God's creation and the cry for justice must join hands.

\* \* \*

This volume will be one of the last in the Regnum Edinburgh Centenary Series. It may therefore be appropriate to conclude with a quote from the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference in 1910. It is not a quote directly related to evangelism and *diakonia*, but to the larger framework of God's mission. The 1910 conference has often been accused of too much optimism and of focusing on expansion and the human agent in evangelism. But here is what the conference in 1910 also said:

It is the Spirit of God who alone has the power to convict of sin... The genuine fruits of the Spirit, as shown in repentance, conviction, restitution, and the making up of longstanding quarrels, have afforded convincing proof that God alone brings home the gospel with power to the hearts and consciences of men.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Commission I, 'Carrying the Gospel to All the Non-Christian Word', in John Mott, *Addresses and Papers of John Mott* (New York: Association Press, 1947), Vol. V, 28.

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